

Marines pack up and head out, page A5

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Marines, soldiers spend time with kids, page A3

OBSERVATION POST

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS

July 1, 2011

Since 1957

Vol. 54 Issue 26

Littleton Hall wins best messhall in Corps

DIANE DURDEN
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

The Combat Center's commanding general, Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy III, presented the Maj. Gen. W.P.T. Hill Memorial Award to the food service personnel from Littleton Hall Messhall June 16, naming them the best in the Food Service Contracted Garrison Mess Hall category, one of four categories in which messhalls Marine Corps-wide compete.

The W.P.T. Hill Memorial Award, established in 1985, is an annual competition recognizing food service excel-

lence at Marine Corps installations around the globe.

Littleton Hall, operated Sodexo Government Services and Combat Center food service Marines have competed for the award for the past six years, losing by one half of a point each time. This is the first time they have won.

"The key to winning is the partnership between Sodexo and the Marine Corps," said June Richardson, the area operations manager for Sodexo. Richardson credits the hard work and team spir-

See MESS, A6



DIANE DURDEN

The nearly three-foot-tall trophy is prominently displayed at the end of the main food line at Littleton Hall. The messhall is the 2011 recipient of the Maj. Gen. W.P.T. Hill Memorial Award for Best Food Service Contracted Garrison Mess Hall.



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Construction equipment belonging to Engineering Company, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, is blasted with sand at the Lavic Lake training area after the unit built new helicopter landing pads at the site Tuesday.

MWSS-374 builds new Osprey helicopter landing pads

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

An installation the size of the Combat Center comes with lots of maintenance, ranging from road repairs and replacing firing targets to building landing pads for the many types of aircraft that fly in to support training.

To help keep the maintenance down on V-22 Osprey helicopters, due to poor landing pads, the Marines and sailors of Engineering Company, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, headed out June 18, to create nine new helicopter landing pads,

at Lead Mountain, Emerson Lake and Lavic Lake.

"It has been going well, and we are ahead of schedule," said 1st Lt. Gary Antilla, the executive officer for Engineering Co., MWSS-374. "Once we got the aggregate [a form of concrete] to the site, the Marines put forth outstanding effort and a lot of hours in the graders and earth moving equipment. We are wrapping up the project now for nine HLZ pads that are a lot better than the ones they had before."

As the Marines worked day-after-day, hours of

See MWSS-374, A7



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

After days of hard work and sweat, nine new helicopter landing pads were constructed by the Marines and sailors of Engineering Company, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, at Lead Mountain, Emerson Lake and Lavic Lake June 18-30.

Security transferred to Afghan Forces in Helmand's capital

CPL. ADAM LEYENDECKER
II MEF (FWD)

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – The sacrifices made by Afghan and coalition forces are beginning to

make a difference in the Helmand province capital city of Lashkar Gah, where insurgents used to thrive and flourish by seizing control of poppy fields and safe houses.

Ten years into the war,

Lashkar Gah is becoming the first major city in Afghanistan to be controlled completely by Afghan National Security Forces as coalition forces transfer the responsibilities to them.

The process began when Afghan National Army led Operation Qala Sharqay started, June 19, with the Afghan soldiers from the 3rd Brigade, 215th Corps.

"Our young men are ready to take over the security operations," said Brig. Gen. Sheren Shah, commanding general of 3rd Brigade, 215th Corps. "The coalition forces have done a great job at preparing and mentoring us for this process. We are confident in our abili-

ty to handle this task."

At the crack of dawn, Afghan soldiers from Engineer Company, 3rd Brigade, immediately pushed toward setting up a patrol base that would establish security for the northeast side of Lashkar Gah. Carrying lumber, setting up tents, sawing wood, driving nails and raising the flag for locals to see from miles away, the soldiers did not stop working even in the midst of gunfire. The only thing that would stop the Afghan soldiers from their hard labor was the sun disappearing in the western horizon. Yet, the work would continue the following morning.

From the planning to the

See AFGHAN, A7



CPL. ADAM LEYENDECKER

An Afghan National Army soldier stands by the Afghanistan flag after establishing a location for a patrol base to be built during Operation Qala Sharqay, northeast of Lashkar Gah, Helmand province, June 19.



CPL. ADAM LEYENDECKER

An Afghan National Army soldier mounts a truck after establishing a location for a patrol base to be built during Operation Qala Sharqay, northeast of Lashkar Gah, Helmand province, June 19. ANA soldiers are set to take over security operations in Lashkar Gah.

Officials seek input to update MWR services

TERRI MOON CRONK
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON – Defense Department officials intend to use input gained from customer satisfaction surveys to bolster Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs and meet the up-to-date needs of service members and their families, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy said today.

Officials are electronically sending 600,000 surveys to military installations worldwide, Robert L. Gordon III said. The survey is the first of its kind to collect input from all components of the U.S. military, including National Guardsmen and reservists, he added.

The survey includes 135 questions that address a range of offerings from fitness centers to libraries, and automotive services to leisure activities.

Officials hope to have survey data returned in about three weeks, Gordon said.

"If [service members] can turn it around quickly, we can soon understand how we're doing and see how we can get better," he said. Sent randomly, the survey takes about 20 minutes to complete, he added, and the answers are kept confidential and anonymous.

"We want to get a sense of exactly what our service members and their families are using [at MWR] so we can tailor it to our multigenerational

force," Gordon said.

Recognizing the differences in multigenerational needs is essential to members of the armed forces, he noted.

"The younger service members might use different types of equipment in our fitness centers [than older troops], and library services is another area where our millennial generation – ages 18 to 29 – is more likely to use online service, while others use books," he said.

The MWR survey does not include data from family members since valid contact information was not available for them. Because of this, Gordon emphasized that service members should keep their families in mind when filling out the survey.

"Don't just think about yourself," he said, "Think about your families. It's important because we want to make sure your families have access to the very best services that we can provide them."

Gordon noted the need for survey data. "In our last survey, we were able to pinpoint that our fitness centers were an area of concern for our service members and families, so we focused on that in terms of improvement across the force, and we intend to do the same with this survey."

"If you get it, please fill it out quickly, and know that your opinion counts and will make MWR better for you and your family members," he added. "Quality of life is important to us."

Hey Combat Center fans!
Check out the official MCAGCC
social media sites at:

flickr <http://www.flickr.com/thecombatcenter>

You Tube <http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>

facebook <http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>

Protect yourself this summer, with a two-minute read

SHARI LOPATIN
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

More Americans are diagnosed with skin cancer each year than cancers of the prostate, breast, lung, colon, uterus, ovaries and pancreas – combined.

All together, says the American Cancer Society, that equals 2 million new cases of skin cancer a year, making it more common than any other cancer. The majority of skin cancers are caused from too many UV rays – which can come from the sun, or tanning beds.

With summer here, now is a great time to get educated on skin cancer and learn how to prevent it.

The three types of skin cancer
According to the National Cancer Institute (NCI), three types of skin cancer are the most common:

1. Basal Cell Skin Cancer: These cancer cells rarely spread to other parts of the body, so they are the least deadly.
2. Melanoma: The deadliest type of skin cancer, melanoma begins in skin pigment cells and is most likely to spread to other parts of the body.
3. Squamous Cell Skin Cancer: These cancer cells sometimes spread to other parts of the body, but not as much as melanoma.

More information on these three skin cancers can be found from the NCI here: <http://1.usa.gov/SkinCancer>.

How to protect yourself
The American Cancer Society says if caught early enough, skin cancer can usually be treated effectively.

“Finding possible skin cancers doesn’t require any x-rays or blood tests—just your eyes and a mirror,” the society says on its website. Individuals can check their own skin, preferably once a month, for any suspicious growths or changing moles.

People should also limit their exposure to the sun. Besides wearing sunscreen, the Cancer Society suggests slipping on a T-shirt, wearing a hat and sporting some sunglasses. Also, stay away from tanning beds and sunlamps.

For more healthy living tips, visit TriWest’s Healthy Living Portal at <http://www.triwest.com/healthyliving>

Centerspeak

How are you celebrating the 4th of July?

Opinions expressed in Centerspeak are not necessarily those of the OBSERVATION POST, the Marine Corps or the Department of Defense.



STAFF SGT. TIMOTHY ENGELBRECHT
COMPANY A, MARINE CORPS COMMUNICATION-ELECTRONICS SCHOOL

“Hanging out with friends at Laguna Beach and watching the fireworks.”



PFC. TANNER PERSHALL
COMPANY B, 1ST BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

“Going to Six Flags and the beach.”



LANCE CPL. ALBERT ALBA
WEAPONS COMPANY, 1ST BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

“Come to the firework show here and probably barbecue.”

Hot Topics

FIREWORKS SHOW

Celebrate our nation’s independence with a fireworks show at the Combat Center at 9 p.m., on July 4. The show, sponsored by MCCC, is predicted to be one of the largest in the area. For more information, call 830-5086.

X-BOX GAME NIGHT

There will be a free X-Box Game Night at the Lifelong Learning Library July 5, starting at 5 p.m. All ages welcome. Call 830-6875 for more information.

MOTHER GOOSE LAP TIME

The Lifelong Learning Library is offering a Mother Goose Lap Time event for parents and children, aged infant to 2 years old, July 6. Call 830-6875 for more information.

LUNCH & LEARN

Join the Marine Corps Family Team Building staff for a free Lunch & Learn Series afternoon at the MCFTB room in building 1551, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. July 6. Call 830-4163 for more information.

WOMEN’S VARSITY SOFTBALL TRYOUTS

Tryouts for the Women’s Varsity Travel Softball Team will be at the Felix Field Sports Complex at 6 p.m., July 7. For more information, call 830-4092.

FREE KIDS BOWLING

Kids bowl free through Aug. 13 during Summer at Sandy Hill Lanes Bowling Center. Children up to age 17. 18-year-olds in high school welcome. 1 to 9 p.m., with a two-game limit per child. Registration required. Kids must be accompanied by an adult. Standard shoe rates apply. For information call 830-6422.

Marine Corps History

July 4, 1801

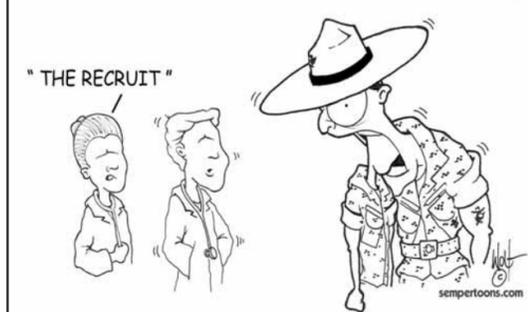
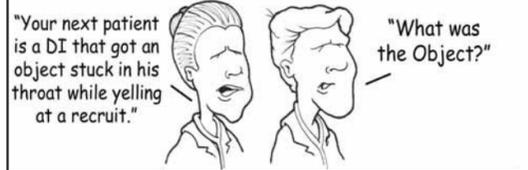
President Thomas Jefferson reviewed the Marines, led by the Commandant of the Marine Corps Lt. Col. William W. Burrows and the Marine Band, on the White House grounds. The smartly uniformed Marines performed drills and fired various salutes in observance of the new nation’s 25th anniversary.



Immediately report any suspicious activity which may be a sign of terrorism, including:

1. Surveillance
2. Suspicious questioning
3. Tests of security
4. Acquiring supplies
5. Suspicious persons
6. Trial runs
7. Deploying assets

830-3937



SEMPERTOONS: CREATED BY GUNNERY SGT. CHARLES WOLF, USMC/RET.

SUDOKU #2222

	1			2			3	
		4				1	5	
	6			7			8	
	9	7	8			4	6	1
5								3
6	3	1			2	5	9	
	7			1			4	
	2	3				6		
	5			9			2	

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2010 HOMETOWN CONTENT

Combat Center Spotlight

Name: Bob Piirainen
Hometown: Palmdale, Calif.,
Unit: Traffic Safety/ Motorcycle
Job title: Lead Rider Coach, Traffic Safety Manager and Motorcycle Traffic Safety Manager
Job duties: Oversee entire motorcycle safety program to ensure that there are enough training days available for the Marines and sailors aboard the installation to make the Marine Corps requirements.
What do you like most about your job?: “When the new riders get it, and to watch the smile on their face and enthusiasm and confidence level increase so much.”
What is your most memorable moment during a rider class?: “Honestly when Lance Cpl. Brennan Baum, [now a fellow rider coach] was doing a particular exercise, I was 99.9 percent sure he was going to trash himself all over the place, and he barely squeaked it out.”
Significant achievements: becoming a rider coach, life as it is right now with my wife and more than 20 years government service.
Hobbies: Running, work on car, listen to music, swim and hanging out with family and friends.
What made you start riding motorcycles?: “Growing up in Palmdale is nothing but desert, and my other friends had them so I picked it up and fell in love with it.”
How long have you been riding?: 32 and a half years.



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

What safety practices have allowed you to never crash in a city environment?: “The biggest one I tell my students and riders while I’m out there is when I was in my early twenties I had what I considered an old guy tell me that if you don’t look out for everything around you, you are never going to make it. I thought he was just an old guy and doesn’t know what he is talking about, and then I had that one close call. Ever since then, I am always looking for what’s out there, what may come into my lane and basically try to hurt me.”
Time at Combat Center: 15 years, one month.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

[Puzzle solutions on A4]

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
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17					18					19				
20				21				22						
23				24			25		26				27	28
29			30			31		32			33			
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	39	40				41					42			
43				44				45						
46			47		48			49		50		51	52	53
54				55			56		57			58		
		59				60		61			62			
63	64						65				66			
67						68					69			
70							71					72		

- ACROSS**
1. Fitzgerald forte
 5. Singer James or Jones
 9. Little rascal
 14. Kipling’s “Rikki-Tikki—”
 15. Like khakis
 16. French capital, in song
 17. “___ Old Cowhand”
 18. Kind of molecular link
 20. Marker feature
 22. King’s domain
 23. To’s companion
 24. Half a fortnight
 26. Word before monkey or gun
 29. Stocking stuffer?
 31. Ardor
 33. Use a swizzle stick
 34. Hosp. staffers
 36. Regrets deeply
 38. Bach’s “Minuet ___ Major”
 39. Object of ridicule
 43. Sportscaster McCarver
 44. 9D or 10EEE
 45. Japanese honorific
 46. Castle basements, in some horror movies
 48. African grassland
 50. Brutish one
 54. Islands vacation, perhaps
 56. Elite Navy diver
 58. Pre-Lenten carnival site
 59. Cataloguer of yore
 61. Europe’s western most country
 63. “I Walk the Line” singer
 66. Plenty mad
 67. Upturned
 68. Prefix with cumulus
 69. Ratchet engager
 70. Bacon piece
 71. Soy-based soup
 72. Eyelid swelling
- DOWN**
1. Leaves no tip to
 2. Paparazzo’s need
 3. Arthurian paradise
 4. Windshield shading
 5. Aviator Rickenbacker
 6. Saint-___ (French resort)
 7. Letter before upsilon
 8. The ans. to this clue, e.g.
 9. Asparagus serving
 10. Sends a telegraph to
 11. Like potpourri
 12. Chess pieces
 13. ___ XING
 19. Like snakes and worms
 21. Jew’s-harp sounds
 25. Nutmeats
 27. Go down
 28. Joule fraction
 30. Play about Capote
 32. Dog days mo.
 35. Chilled to the bone
 37. Nag’s digs
 39. Whopper creator
 40. Many oater attacks
 41. Suffix with ion or lion
 42. “Blastoff!” preceder
 43. Gentle handling, initially
 47. “Burnt” crayon color
 49. Believers like Franklin and Jefferson
 51. Biblical landfall
 52. Strong and lean
 53. Take baby steps
 55. Pooch that said “Arf!”
 57. Allergy-season sound
 60. Con job
 62. They may be read or sealed
 63. Mr. Six-pack
 64. Come-___ (marketing ploys)
 65. He whipped Foreman in ‘74

OBSERVATION POST

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Operation Purple helps military children

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Combat Center Marines joined Fort Erwin, Calif., soldiers in Big Bear, Calif., to spend time with children at a very special summer camp.

Camp Nawaka, in Big Bear, was just one of many camps around the country hosting Operation Purple, which brought together children whose parents are deployed, will soon be deployed or who were deployed within the last year.

"Operation Purple gives kids whose parents are deployed a chance to meet other kids whose parents are deployed," said David Craig, a member of Soldiers and Families First, out of Nevada. "It is not like going to another camp and being the only kid in that situation and the other kids don't understand what they are going through."

The camp counselors and staff said their biggest reward is seeing their work pay off with the children.

"It's a wonderful experience to see all the kids come



Sergeant Kareem Apulliam, food services specialist with Headquarters Battalion, teaches the campers of Mustang cabin how to drill during Operation Purple at Camp Nawaka, Big Bear, Calif., June 23. Operation Purple invited Marines and soldiers to come out and spend a day with the kids.



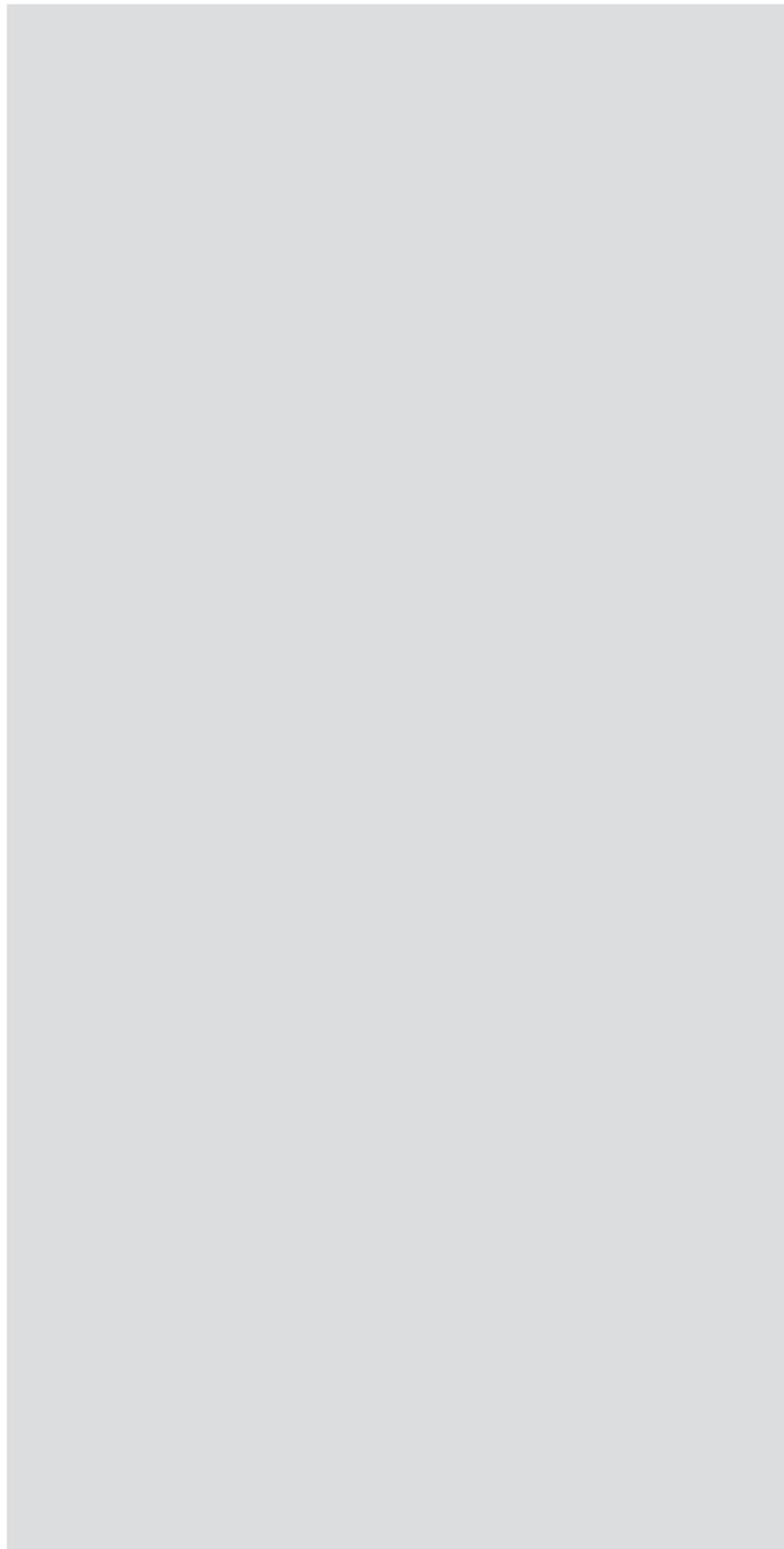
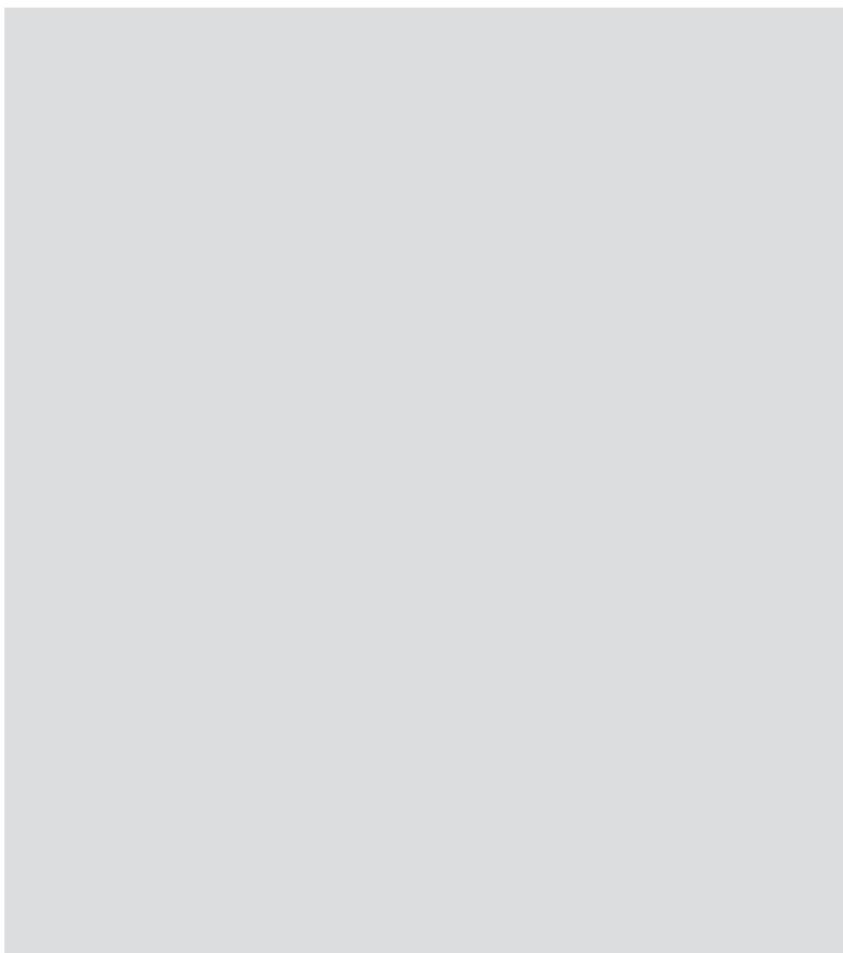
A K-9 dog handler high-five's campers after a demonstration of the Combat Center's military working dogs during Operation Purple June 23.



A Combat Center military working dog tackles a K-9 dog handler during a demonstration.



Sergeant Kareem Apulliam, a food service specialist with Headquarters Battalion, learns how to fire a bow and arrow with some help from the campers.



Military intelligence Marines speak on recent accomplishments

STAFF SGT. CHRISTOPHER FLURRY
2ND MARINE AIRCRAFT WING (FWD)

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – The military intelligence community of 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) said they are finding new ways to stay ahead of insurgents in Afghanistan.

New software now enables the Marine Corps intelligence analysts to more quickly survey a suspected insurgent's past activity and social ties, with the goal of providing a more accurate forecast of what he may do in the future, explained Cpl. Oscar Machuca, an intelligence analyst for the deployed wing.

"We can more easily recreate historical events so that we can better make decisions about the future," said Machuca, a Pecos, Texas, native. "It's able to link what they've done. It's able to link criminal activity. I try not to make assumptions I make assessments."

The assessments Machuca and the other aircraft wing intelligence analysts make go to help pilots in determining the threat of a particular location before they fly there. Machuca said he typically spends his time analyzing helicopter landing zones so that



STAFF SGT. CHRISTOPHER FLURRY

Second Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) intelligence Marines are using new technologies and techniques to stay ahead of insurgents in Afghanistan.

aircrews are aware of any insurgent activity that may be going on at any given time.

"It's important [the pilots] know where the biggest threat is," said Machuca. "That way they know if they'll need escorts, or if it's a more secure location."

Machuca said the intelligence products the Marines prepare are provided to the squadrons supporting the

aircraft wing for various missions, from close-air support to troop insertions and extractions.

"When they rely on us, they're putting the pilots' lives in our hands," said Sgt. John Panakal, an intelligence analyst with 2nd MAW (Fwd.), and a native of Miami. "That's a good thing, because that's what we're here for."

Additionally, based on the data they acquire and analyze using the new software, the military intelligence Marines are also able to assist combined ground and air forces in southwestern Afghanistan in pinpointing and neutralizing enemy threats.

"Over the past month, we were able to take out a major threat, based on our assessments," said Machuca,

who like most of the aircraft wing's intelligence Marines is deployed to Camp Leatherneck from Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C.

The incident, according to Gunnery Sgt. Moises Vilca, concerned removing a weapon from insurgent hands, which could have been detrimental to aircraft, Marines and their Afghan and coalition partners operating in Afghanistan's Helmand province.

"We're responsible for that Marine, for that [private first class] and for keeping him alive," he said.

Vilca, an intelligence analyst chief with 2nd MAW (Fwd.), said neutralizing the threat was a combined

See INTELL, A6

SJA CORNER

How is child support determined?

CAPT. SHANNON MAWSON

LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICE

Often times a Marine will come into the Legal Assistance office with questions about child support and how it is determined.

They are told they owe a certain amount of money, followed up with confusing paperwork coupled with income and expense sheets. It can become very overwhelming to a Marine.

In order to determine how much child support you owe, the first step is to determine a person's income. Federal and state tax returns are often required for determining a person's income. However, you cannot rely solely on a tax return to determine a service member's income.

The definition of income is determined by state law. Therefore, you need to look to your own state's laws to determine what goes into income for the purpose of determining child support. Some states exempt nontaxable income when calculating child support, but most states do not. They consider all pay and allowances when determining child support.

A Marine's leave and earnings statement is the first place to look when determining income. An LES shows a Marine's gross income, or their total entitlements. Total entitlements consist of pay and allowances. Pay is the monthly base pay based on a Marine's grade and years of service. Pay can also include special skills such as flight pay for pilots or "jump pay" for paratroopers. Bonuses, such as re-enlistment bonuses, are also a source of income to determine child support. Pay items are generally taxable. However, there are exceptions to every rule. To find out what pay items are not taxable, go to www.dod.mil/dfas/militarypay.html.

Allowances are items such as Basic Allowance for Housing, and Basic Allowance for Subsistence. These allowances are exempt from taxation. Marines very often become confused about why their BAH and BAS are being considered for the determination of child support when they are nontaxable allowances. The federal regulations controlling a state's child support guidelines says a state must consider all earnings and income of the non-custodial parent, it does not matter whether it is taxable or nontaxable. The significance of a taxable or nontaxable income is for the purpose of garnishment.

If income is taxable, it can be subject to garnishment for the enforcement of child support. What this means is if there is a court order for the garnishment of a Marine's pay for child support, that amount of money cannot be taken from a nontaxable source of income. It will be garnished only from a taxable source of income, such as base pay.

If a Marine has any questions about child support, they can contact the Legal Assistance Office at 830-6111 to schedule an appointment.

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

S	C	A	T	E	T	T	A	S	C	A	M	P	
T	A	V	I	D	R	A	B	P	A	R	E	E	
I	M	A	N	D	O	U	B	L	E	B	O	N	D
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E	S	S	A	Y	M	I	S	O	S	T	Y	E	

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

9	1	5	4	2	8	7	3	6
7	8	4	6	3	9	1	5	2
3	6	2	1	7	5	9	8	4
2	9	7	8	5	3	4	6	1
5	4	8	9	6	1	2	7	3
6	3	1	7	4	2	5	9	8
8	7	9	2	1	6	3	4	5
4	2	3	5	8	7	6	1	9
1	5	6	3	9	4	8	2	7

31st MEU, BLT 2/7 headed to Australia

LANCE CPL. GARRY J. WELCH
31st MEU

WHITE BEACH, OKINAWA, Japan – More than 1,800 Marines and sailors with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit embarked the USS Essex (LHD 2) and USS Germantown (LSD 42) Tuesday, in preparation for exercise Talisman Sabre 2011 to be held in Australia.

The Marines and sailors loaded about 90 vehicles and more than 120 containers and pallets of gear onto the ships. This was done within 48 hours to ensure the ships left on schedule.

“The hardest part about the MEU on-load is ensuring that we have the proper gear packed in the appropriate location,” said Capt. Robert Schwaab, the assistant logistics chief for the 31st MEU. “This has to be done so that regardless of what mission or task we are given, we can respond in the best manner possible.”

That capability has proven necessary, as the MEU has participated in five humanitarian aid missions over the last three years, including involvement in Operation Tomodachi after a the recent earthquake and tsunami struck northeast Japan in March.

During this patrol, the 31st MEU is scheduled to participate in exercise Talisman Sabre 2011.

“The 31st MEU looks forward to the partnership with Australia and their military forces,” said Col. Andrew MacMannis, the commanding officer of the 31st MEU. “This exercise



LANCE CPL. GARRY J. WELCH

Marines and sailors with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, board USS Essex (LHD 2), Monday. The 31st MEU is preparing to participate in exercise Talisman Sabre 2011. TS11 demonstrates the United States' and Australian commitment to their military alliance, and enhances stability and security throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The 31st MEU is the only continually forward-deployed MEU, and remains the nation's force-in-readiness in the Asia-Pacific region.

increases our readiness and advances regional security in the Pacific. We look forward to validating our combat readiness and interoperability as part of a combined joint task force.”

Marines from the Command Element; Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines; Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265 (Reinforced) with attached

Marine Attack Squadron 214, and Combat Logistics Regiment 31 will participate in the exercise.

Talisman Sabre is a biennial exercise, so this will be the first time most Marines with the MEU participate in it.

“I'm really looking forward to going to Australia,” said Lance Cpl. Elijah E. Wheeler, a Marine with Combat Logistics Battalion 31, 31st MEU. “This

is a once in a lifetime event, and I will gain a lot from experiencing it.”

In addition to being the first time many 31st MEU Marines and sailors will set foot on Australia, this event will also make history as occurring during the 60th anniversary of the Australia, New Zealand, United States security treaty.

The ANZUS Treaty is a

defense agreement which was signed in 1951 by Australia, New Zealand and the United States in an effort to reestablish peace after WWII. It became effective in 1952.

Today, the ANZUS security treaty is the military alliance which binds Australia and New Zealand and, separately, Australia and the United States to cooperate on defense matters in the

Pacific Ocean area.

TS11 demonstrates the United States' and the Australian commitment to their military alliance, and enhances stability and security throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

The 31st MEU is the only continually forward-deployed MEU, and remains the nation's force-in-readiness in the Asia-Pacific region.



LANCE CPL. GARRY J. WELCH

Marines and sailors of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit board USS Essex (LHD 2) with all of their gear, Tuesday.



LANCE CPL. GARRY J. WELCH

Marines and sailors with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, load gear onto USS Essex (LHD 2) Tuesday.

New living areas to bring aviation Marines closer to flight

CPL. SAMANTHA H. ARRINGTON
2ND MARINE AIRCRAFT WING (FWD)

CAMP BASTION, Afghanistan – Marines and sailors in Afghanistan are nearing completion on a major land excavation project for new living areas for 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) Marines who work on the flightline at Camp Bastion.

Currently, the Marines live at Camp Leatherneck, but work in the hangars along Camp Bastion's nearly 12,000-foot runway. The Marines' daily movement from one camp to the other can take up to 45 minutes.

“We are trying to give these Marines a closer place to live to their work areas,” explained Staff Sgt. Jefferson Brink, the project manager for Marine Wing Support Squadron 272.

MWSS-373, stationed out of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., began the project early 2011 prior to changing over in February with MWSS-272, deployed out of Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C. The Marines are working with the help of sailors from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 7, deployed out of Naval Construction Battalion

Center Gulfport, Miss.

“When we first got out here the land was bumpy and rocky, which meant we had a lot of work to do,” said Brink. “It can be rough sometimes out here working on this project with the 100-plus degree weather and the dust storms, but we're making great progress.”

The area of land chosen for construction of the new living areas has large underground rock formations, which presented a challenge in the progress of the project, said Brink.

“It's been hard for us to estimate how long it will take to dig through hardened rock, and that was a curve ball in our operation,” said Brink. “It's taking a little longer than planned to get this project done because of the rock.”

The area of land for the project is about 1,300-by-800 feet, comparable to three football fields. Upon its completion, the Marines and sailors will have moved more than a half-million cubic yards of earth, Brink said.

“I've been in the Marine Corps for 10 years and this is the biggest project I've ever done,” said Brink, a native of Eureka, Calif. “For my Marines to stumble upon a

project like this, it's a great opportunity.”

“Back home we don't really do this – definitely no heavy land work like this,” said Lance Cpl. Matthew P. Riley, a heavy equipment operator with MWSS-272, and a native of La Plata, Md. “This is what I signed up to do, and I'm learning a lot.”

The area of land the Marines and sailors are leveling will not only hold new living areas, but also a dining facility, a recreation center and showers.

“As far as morale goes, it's going to be a blessing to the flightline Marines,” said Brink. “As a Marine, if you've got a chow hall, a recreation center, living and working quarters all in the same area, you're in a good spot and you feel very fortunate.”

Once the ground-leveling project is completed, hired contractors are slated to begin building the new living areas for Marines working on the runway, said Brink.

“There will be a significant increase in mission proficiency when the living areas are built,” said Sgt. Maj. William Oldenburg, the Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 267 sergeant major. “With the Marines living and eating in close proximity to the



CPL. SAMANTHA H. ARRINGTON

Lance Cpl. Josh L. Coulter, a logistics vehicle system operator with Marine Wing Support Squadron 272, and a native of Suwannee County, Fla., refuels a bulldozer being used to excavate land for new living areas on the flightline at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, June 23. Once completed, the project will include living areas and dining and recreation facilities for Marines with 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward)'s aviation squadrons. “We are trying to give these Marines a closer place to live to their work areas,” explained Staff Sgt. Jefferson Brink, the project manager for MWSS-272.

hangars it will cut down on a lot of transit time.”

HMLA-267, deployed out of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., is one of several Marine Corps squadrons that will have a new home at Camp Bastion

once the construction project is complete.

“This is going to be a really big benefit for the Marines,” said Oldenburg. “They will be able to enjoy the little time they have off and not spend it traveling

back and forth to work.”

Connect with 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Fwd) throughout the deployment. Stay up to date with the latest 2nd MAW (Fwd) news, photos and videos at <http://www.facebook.com/2ndmawfwd>.

NMCRS holds luncheon for departing honoree member



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Raymond Caldwell, director of the Combat Center's Navy Marine Corps Relief Society, presented their departing honoree, Alison Clardy, with an engraved vase as a thank you for all her hard work during a luncheon in her honor at the Village Center June 24. Clardy served as the official mentor for the organization's volunteers and is the wife of Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy, the Combat Center's commanding general. The pair are headed to Washington, D.C., where Brig. Gen. Clardy will report as the director of operations for Headquarters Marine Corps.

MESS, from A1

it of both civilian employees and Marines for winning this year's award.

"How can you say you don't want to be the best?," said Staff Sgt. Stephen Targos, supply chief, base food services. "That's what the trophy signifies."

Targos also credited teamwork as a contributing factor to the messhall's success.

"There's no way that one individual can win an award such as this," Targos said. "It takes the effort of everyone."

Facilities are judged in a multitude of areas. Extremely detailed inspections of sanitation, quality of food, presentation, customer service and the environment, which includes outside the building as well as the dining and kitchen areas, are conducted.

Judges grade messhalls on details like menu compliance, serving accurate portion sizes, using correct utensils and ensuring equipment is working properly and maintained in good condition.

One portion of the judging is strictly subjective and cannot be measured with a scale, customer satisfaction. Members of the judging team interview diners.

Marines are always honest about the quality and taste of the food they are served said Richardson.

"This is pretty chill, relaxing," said Pfc. Jonathan Ramirez, a student with Company A, Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School, about the messhall's dining area. His favorite meal comes from their Chinese food menu.

"It's some of the best I've

had around Twentynine Palms," he said.

The staff's dedication to quality food is well known throughout the rest of the Combat Center as well.

"They work hard to prepare good food for the Marines," said Sgt. Christopher Roberts, a vehicle commander with 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion. Littleton has a great set-up and friendly

staff, he said.

As the food service staff relish in this year's win, their nearly three-foot-tall trophy displayed prominently at the end of the main food line, they continue to focus on quality food and customer service.

"It's what we do every day," said Richard. Her attitude, and others like it, will win them the trophy again and again.



DIANE DURDEN

The Combat Center's commanding general, Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy III, presents the Maj. Gen. W.P.T. Hill Memorial Award to the food service personnel from Littleton Hall Messhall June 16. The messhall was named best in the Food Service Contracted Garrison Mess Hall category, one of four categories in which messhalls Marine Corps-wide compete.

INTELL, from A4

effort of Marines aviators, ground troops, and the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities

of unmanned aerial vehicles.

"Fusing - it was successful because of the coordination of ground, air and ISR assets," Vilca said, who is also a Miami native.

The weapon's position was tracked by both ground troops and UAVs, and it was destroyed by the precision-guided bombs of a Marine Corps attack jet.

Vilca said in addition to working closely with Marines on the ground, he sees value in giving the aircraft wing's analysts experience with ground units. So instead of relying only on modern techniques of intelligence collation, the Marines also travel to the various areas they support to see those locations first hand.

"Going to ground, it helps you to have a new perspective," Machuca said, who recently spent time in Kajaki with U.S. Marines operating there.

"It's one thing to read about it, it's another thing to meet that person in charge of the battlespace," said Vilca, who is on his fifth deployment, having four previous tours in Iraq. "That's where the [counter-insurgency] is right now, on the ground level, on the company level."

In addition to working in close concert with other Marines both in the air and on the ground, the 2nd MAW (Fwd.) analysts said they also must work hand-in-hand across Afghanistan with other NATO International Security Assistance Force partners.

"When we have the extra coordination and intelligence, it makes us that much more effective," Vilca said. "Working together helps in the overall mission of the coalition."

That overall mission, Vilca said, is to help create a safer, more stable home for the people of Afghanistan.

"To remove insurgents off the battlefield and protect the civilian population," Vilca said. "That is one less bad guy they have to worry about. It's about letting people live normal lives."

Connect with 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) throughout the deployment. Stay up to date with the latest news, photos and videos at <http://www.facebook.com/2ndmawfwd>.



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Construction vehicles with Engineering Co., Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, waits to be loaded on to transportation vehicles for the trip back to main side at Lavic Lake after The MWSS-374 constructed new helicopter landing pads at the site Tuesday.

MWSS-374, from A1

behind the scenes work kept all the moving parts running smoothly.

"We had to coordinate all the gravel coming in," said Sgt. Duane Kampa, the site non-commissioned officer in charge with Engineering Co. "At [Lavic Lake] alone, we had 83 dump trucks come in and to make sure they were poured out in the right spots. [We also had to] mark out all the 120-by-120 [foot] pads with 200 feet inbetween them."

The different construction sites across the Combat Center each held unique challenges for the Marines to work around.

"The ground work was

real sketchy at Lead Mountain because a lot of terrain was messed up and terrible, so the initial grain was rough," said Lance Cpl. Shane Tucker, a heavy equipment operator with Engineering Co. "Once we got in our trucks and they started coordinating where the trucks were going, everything just went smoothly from then on."

Since the mission began just days before the summer solstice and the desert had already started heating up, every safety precaution was taken to prevent heat casualties.

"We brought out a refrigeration unit, two air conditioners and generators to provide a cooling tent," said

Antilla. "We cycle the operators in-and-out, make sure they are not logging too many hours in the sun on the heavy equipment. [We're also] making sure they are drinking a lot of water, [that there is a] Corpsman on site and IV bags [are] on standby."

The unit finished their job two days ahead of schedule, and still managed to complete annual training requirements while working.

"It does fulfill a lot of the [units] training requirements, [including] earth movement and heavy equipment," said Antilla. "This is something the Marines get a lot of value out of because this is something they are going to do when they get in-country."



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Marines with Motor Transportation Co., Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, deliver fresh water for Engineering Co. as the company finishes out the final two days of constructing helicopter landing pads at Lavic Lake Tuesday.



CPL. ADAM LEYENDECKER

An Afghan National Army soldier guides an equipment operator as they work into the evening during Operation Qala Sharqay located northeast of Lashkar Gah, Helmand province. During the operation, ANA soldiers worked long hours despite being under fire from insurgents.

AFGHAN, from A1

execution of the operation, the Afghans were fully in charge with coalition forces present to offer suggestions.

"The Afghan soldiers are acutely tuned in to the needs of the community and very savvy when it comes to knowing what needs to be done to quell the insurgency," said Lt. Col. Giles Woodhouse, commanding officer of 3rd Mercian Warriors in charge of the 3rd Brigade Advisory Group. "I believe their sufficient ambition and pride will see them through success."

Though the 3rd Brigade was just formed 18 months ago, the improvement and development of the soldiers shows the determination and resilient character

of the brigade, said Woodhouse, native of Wiltshire, England.

When enemy insurgents tried to halt the progress of the operation, the ANA sent out their infantry and the engineers kept building.

Determined, the ANA silenced the enemy weapons on several occasions during the first two days of the operation. There was no doubt in watching the events that took place during the first few days that the Afghan forces were very much capable of deterring an enemy trying to penetrate into the city.

"Our men are going to have a positive impact on the security situation and have success," said Maj. Fatah Moheb, executive officer of 4th Battalion, 3rd Brigade. "The soldiers are having a

good impact on the locals and establishing a relationship with them. The people are happy we are here."

Throughout the area, Afghan soldiers conducted shuras with the locals to gauge the needs of the population. Having lived in their shoes, the Afghan soldiers are able to understand the interests of the community.

Through the connection and interaction with the local Afghans, combined with the improved war tactics of the 3rd Brigade, coalition and Afghan leaders alike see the professionalism and strides Afghan security forces have made. The transfer of security operations in Lashkar Gah to Afghan forces is just the beginning of the vision coalition forces have in Helmand province.

PURPLE, from A3

together from all the branches of the military," said Letty Herendez, the camp director. "They are all enjoying themselves and that everyone knows what they are going through

"It is very rewarding for us to get these kids away from that atmosphere

where they are constantly missing their parents. Here they have something to occupy their minds for at least a week," she said

The children agreed that the camp is a good place to meet others like them.

"You get to meet more people than you normally do that know what you are going through," said Kaitlin

Key, a 13-year-old camper.

Key added that the activities, including rock climbing, canoeing, arts and crafts, discussions and archery, helped make the camp a fun experience.

The soldiers showed off their Humvees while the Marines spent their day talking with the kids, joining in camp activities and

answering any questions.

"I had one-on-one conversations on the canoes with each of the kids about their parents and just seeing how they feel about it," said Lance Cpl. Maurina Rios, and administrative clerk with Installation Personnel Administrative Center. "Just talking to them and asking them how they feel about

their parents moving from place-to-place [was a learning experience.]"

Marines from the Combat Center's K-9 unit also stopped by for a quick show of what their dogs can do.

"It is such a good time," said Lance Cpl. Jose Rivera, a K-9 handler. "I enjoy doing this, having people informed about what the dogs can do. It's for the kids, [because] they love to see some action. There are a lot of kids that love animals, and there might be one day that they want to do this. The kids have the opportunity to watch what we do and have more opportunities in the future."

No matter how much the Marines enjoyed their time at Big Bear, they knew

the real joy was helping the kids who also serve the country by sacrificing time away from their parents.

"It was pretty awesome to interact with the kids and find out their stories," said Lance Cpl. Roberto Despoiu, an orders clerk with IPAC. They are all looking for friends because they are moving around a lot, and I guess life is pretty stressful for them since their parents move around so much."

"Operation Purple camp is a huge help to the kids. We have had kids come back and say that camp changed their life," Craig added. "So the more kids, the better off the kids will be. I don't think deployments will stop anytime soon, so it is important to keep this program going."



CPL ANDREW D. THORBURN

Lance Cpl. Kristin Allen, a legal clerk with the Installation Personnel Administrative Center, talks with the campers of Operation Purple about what it is like being a Marine during a visit to Camp Nawaka, in Big Bear, Calif., June 23.

Combat Center Trader Ads

AUTOMOTIVE

2001 BOMBARDIER DS650. Immaculate. Can be seen at lemon lot. \$3,000 OBO. 819-9353.

2007 CR85R HONDA. \$1,500 OBO. 366-7626

2002 XR80R HONDA. \$800 OBO. 366-7626

CLASSIC 1957 CHEVY PICKUP. 350 engine, 3 speed automatic, \$6,900 OBO. 361-3509.

2007 SUZUKI BOULEVARD. Black and chrome, 1600 CC, \$3,000 in extras included. Asking \$12,500. 401-3739.

MISC.

GOLF CLUBS. Ping Eye 2 Irons I-SW \$225. Slazenger forged blades 2-PW \$200. Assorted putters and wedges. Call 413-4015.

MOVING SALE: Like new grill, beds, furniture, kitchen items. All items very cheap. Call Sergio at 562-704-0366.

BUNK BED WITH MATTRESSES. White metal, \$200. 366-7626

STORAGE CONTAINER. An 8 x 10 foot rollup locking door, steel container in excellent shape. \$2,800. Call 362-5293.

EIGHT PIECE DINING SET. Very nice tile top, solid wood, light finish set that features an extra long, rectangle, legless table with removable center leaf. Includes six chairs and a two-seat bench. Very heavy and durable, yet semi-formal set. A must see. \$645. Call 362-5293.

NORDICTRACK CX1000: Elliptical workout \$300 OBO. 361-3509

FIREWOOD. Approximately two cords of dried, split, quality miscellaneous wood. Personally cut and hauled from Big Bear. Includes kindling. Sorry, delivery is not possible. \$295. Call 362-5293

BABY ITEMS: Solid wood baby crib, walker, stroller, wooden horse and more. All in excellent condition. Call 217-3310.

The deadline for submitting Trader Ads is noon Wednesday, for the upcoming Friday's newspaper.

Trader Ad forms are available at the Public Affairs Office and may be filled out during normal working hours at Bldg. 1417. Ads

may also be submitted through e-mail, but will only be accepted from those with an @usmc.mil address. If you are active duty, retired military or a family member and do not have an @usmc.mil address you can go to the PAO page of the base Web site at: <http://www.29palms.usmc.mil/dirs/pao/>

and complete a request to publish an ad.

The limitations for ads are: 15-word limit, limit of two ads per household and the Trader may be used only for noncommercial classified ads containing items of personal property offered by and for individuals authorized to use this service. Such ads must

represent incidental exchanged not of sustained business nature.

Ads for housing rentals will not be considered for the Combat Center Trader.

To have a "House For Sale" ad run in the Observation Post, applicants must provide

Permanent Change of Station orders and have the ad approved by Base Housing. This ensures the Combat Center Trader is not used for commercial real estate endeavors.

Ads are run on a first-come, first-serve, space available basis. If you have questions please call 830-6213.



COMBAT CENTER BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

**AIDEN JOHN RAIGER**

Born to James and Andrea Raiger
June 13, 2011

ARIANNA MARIE ORLOWSKI

Born to Samuel and Danielle
Orlowski
June 9, 2011

LAMAR D. TOWNSEND, JR.

Born to Lamar Townsend and
Elizabeth Asanogutierrez
June 13, 2011

ABEL JOSIAH GAVALDON

Born to David and Samantha
Gavaldon
June 11, 2011

ISABELLA NEVE WHITE

Born to Brittany and Devon White
June 11, 2011

PRESLEY LYNN ESHELMAN

Born to Bryan and Abby Eshelman
June 9, 2011

JAXEN TREVOR SEWARD

Born to Trevor and Bryanne Seward
June 5, 2011

JAREK COLE THOMPSON

Born to Justin and Jessica Thompson
June 4, 2011

EASTON LEVI BRAGG

Born to Garrett and Brittany Bragg
June 4, 2011

DAKOTA KOENE WARD

Born to Chad and Tania Ward
June 3, 2011

DAMION RAYSHAWN**MARCOS BROWN**

Born to Deangelo Brown and Tu
Chong
June 1, 2011

KATHERINE DANIELLA**PARK**

Born to Joseph and Kasha Park
June 2, 2011

ARIANNA LEANNE**TURNER**

Born to Jessie and Amber Turner
June 3, 2011

PEYTON RUTH COLLINS

Born to Shawn and Amber Collins
May 31, 2011

ILDE MARGARUTTE**LAFANTAINE**

Born to Matthew and Theresa
Lafontaine
May 31, 2011

AVRI SKYE BROUGHTON

Born to Twanna and Reginald
Broughton
May 25, 2011

JAYDEN BROOKE**LEVINEFANE**

Born to Ezra and Danielle Levinefane
May 25, 2011

KAITLYN MARIE**WOODBIDGE**

Born to Mark and Blanca
Woodbridge
May 23, 2011

ELENI DESPINA YANEZ

Born to Damon and Melissa Yanez
May 18, 2011

BRADY ALAN SKILLINGS

Born to Michael and Andie Skillings
May 20, 2011

ALANNA RENEE**HUDDART**

Born to Evan Huddart and Sara
Johnson
May 21, 2011

LIAM GRAY NIXAN

Born to Zachery and Myra Nixon
May 18, 2011

COMBAT CENTER RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Sunday**Immaculate Heart of Mary**

8:45 a.m. - Confessions+
9 a.m. - Rosary
9:30 a.m. - Catholic Mass*
9:30 a.m. - Children's Liturgy
of the Word
4 p.m. - Choir Practice
4:15 p.m. - Confessions+
4:30 p.m. - Rosary
5 p.m. - Catholic Mass
Christ Chapel
9 a.m. - Calvary
Fellowship (Contemporary
Worship*)
9 a.m. - Children's Church
10:30 a.m. - Redemption
(A blend of traditional and
contemporary worship
10:45 a.m. - Children's
Church*)

Weekday Events**Immaculate Heart of Mary**

Mon.-Fri. 11:45 a.m.-Catholic
Mass

Christ Chapel

Mon. - Fri., noon - Prayer

Tuesday**Christ Chapel**

9 a.m. - Christian Women's
Fellowship* (Sept.-May)

Immaculate Heart of**Mary**

3:30-5:30 p.m. - Military
Council of Catholic Women

Wednesday**Immaculate Heart of****Mary**

First Wednesday, 6 p.m. -
Baptism preparation class
and 7 p.m. - Knights of
Columbus

Thursday**Immaculate Heart of****Mary**

9 a.m. - Adult Class
6 p.m. - Children RCIA
6:30 p.m. - RCIA (Sept.-April)
7 p.m. - Gr. 7 and
Confirmation

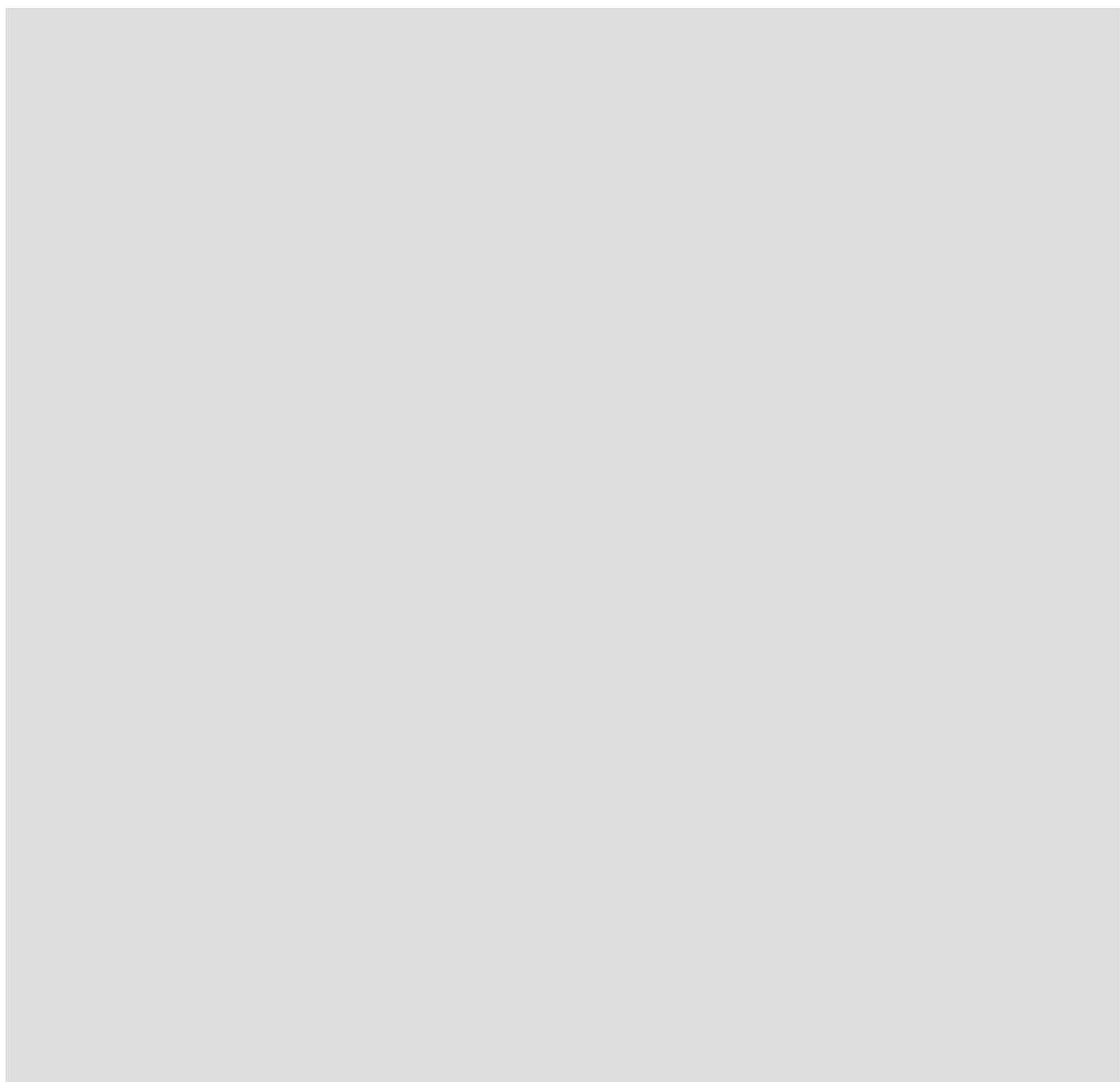
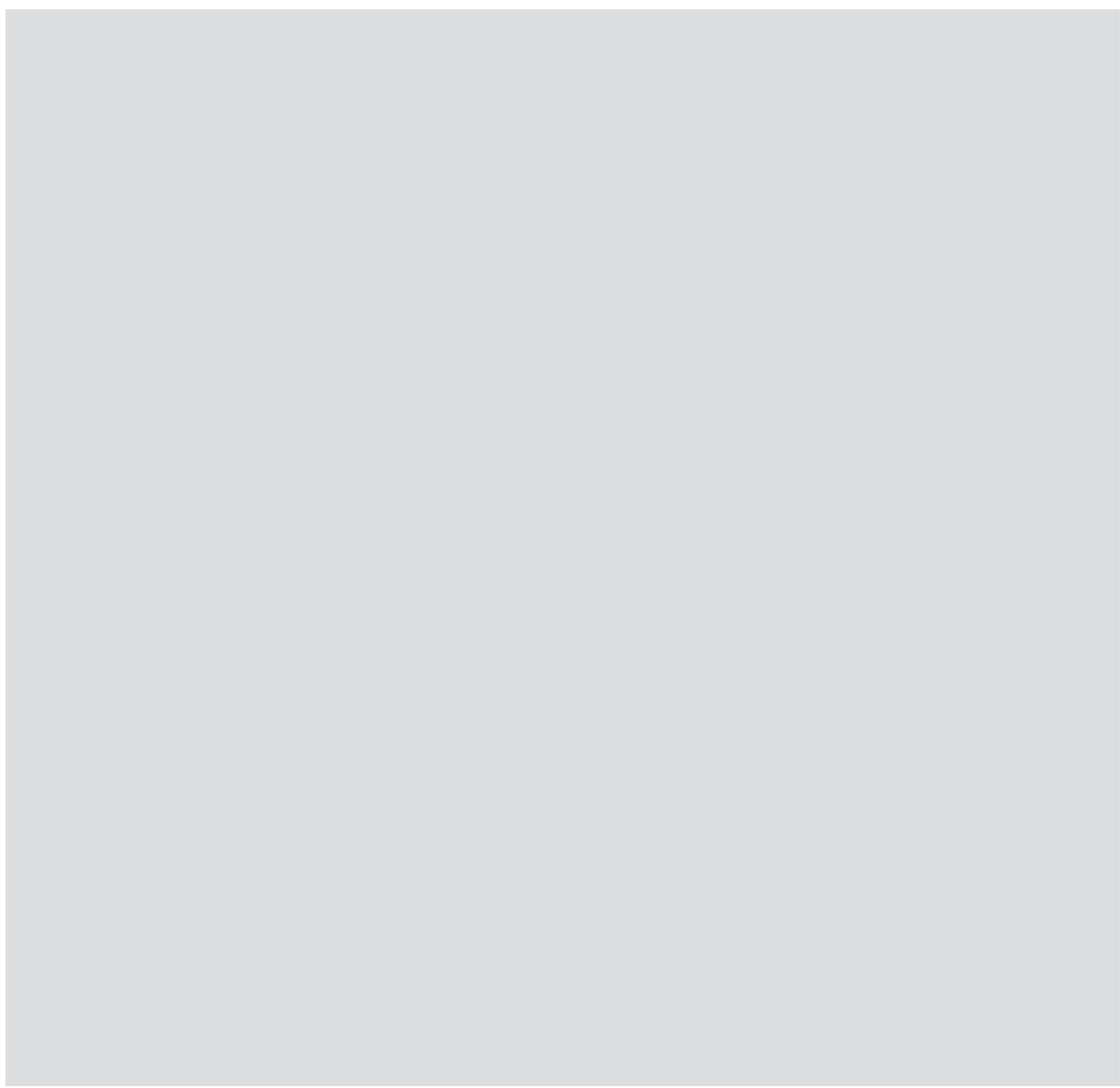
Friday**Immaculate Heart of****Mary**

First Friday each month,
12:15 p.m.,
4:30 p.m. - Exposition/
Adoration Most Blessed
Sacrament

Legend

* Indicates child care is pro-
vided + Call 830-6456/6482
for confession appointments

Muslim prayer space is available in the Village Center, room 87.
Jewish prayer space is available in the Village Center, room 93.
For more information call 830-5430.





MCCES Reds are softball champions

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
 LANCE CPL. D. J. WU**
 COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The softball season came to a close June 23 with the Commanding General's Intramural Softball League Championships at Felix Field. The championship came down to the MCCES Reds and PMO Chaos.

Both teams fought hard throughout the tournament and the entire season. PMO Chaos went undefeated in the regular season, but lost in the playoffs and had to make it through the loser's bracket to earn their place in the championship game.

MCCES Reds went undefeated in the playoffs and had the advantage in the championship game. PMO Chaos would have to defeat MCCES Reds twice to win it all.

The teams went into the final game with confidence and high hopes.

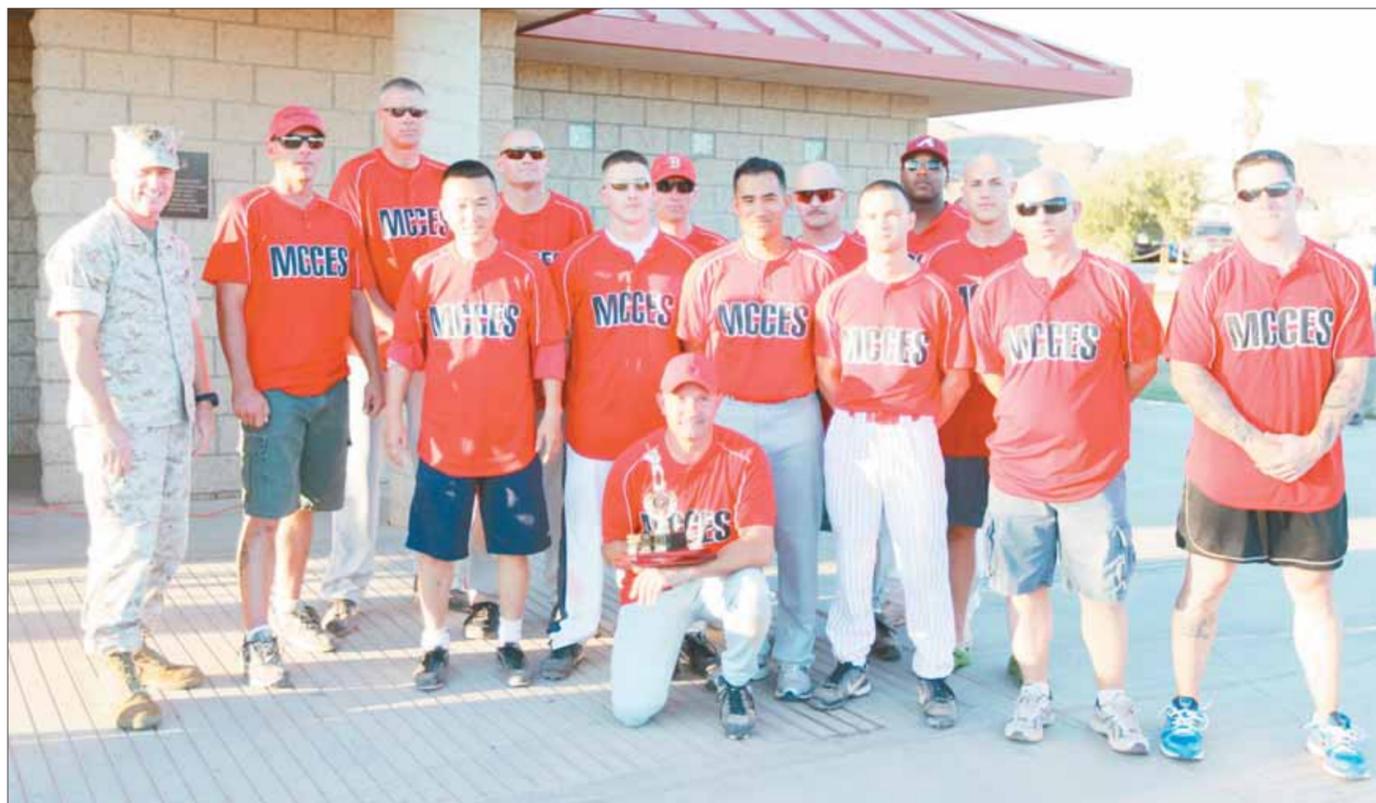
Defense was on the mind of the coaches from both teams. They both knew the team that fielded the ball best would come out on top.

"MCCES is a great hitting team," said John Maddox, the coach for PMO Chaos. "We should be able to compete with them. And it's all up to defense if the bats come alive."

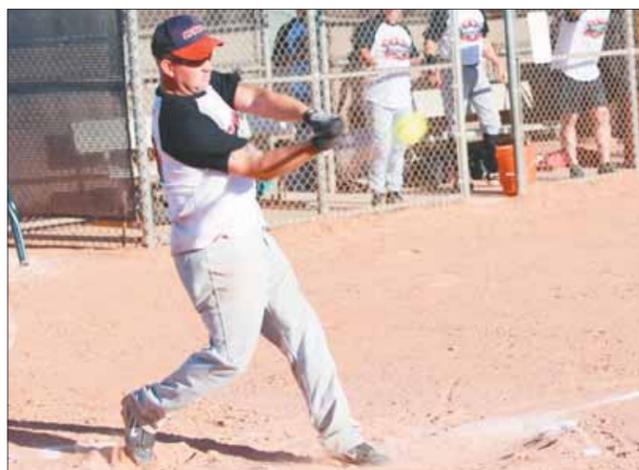
With the teams trading runs throughout the game, the offensive competition remained tight.

In the end it did come down to defense. At the bottom of the 6th, MCCES Reds held the lead 12-11, and it would remain that way until the game ended.

MCCES' stellar defense and tough pitching kept PMO Chaos from scoring in the final inning and help the Reds capture



MCCES smile after being crowned champions of the Commanding General's Intramural Softball League at Felix Field June 23. The MCCES Reds went undefeated during the regular season and fought hard in the tournament, beating PMO in the championship game 12-11.



Chris Hicks, catcher for PMO Chaos, swings for a run. Unfortunately, their bats were silenced in the final inning and MCCES Reds won the championship with their superior field play, 12-11.



Insu Paek, pitcher for MCCES Reds, high-fives his coach, Clay Barber, after the final out of the championship game, leading to their win over PMO Chaos 12-11.

1st Tanks remain undefeated after regular season finale



EMILY ANDERSON

A player from the 1st Tanks team [right] dribbles the ball away from an opponent during a Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League game against HQBN at Felix Field Tuesday.



EMILY ANDERSON

Players from HQBN [right] and a player with 1st Tanks battle for possession of the ball.



EMILY ANDERSON

Isaac Solorio, a player for 1st Tanks, shields the ball from an HQBN player to gain control during a Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League game at Felix Field Tuesday. 1st Tanks won the game 1-0, leaving Tanks with the best record of the season.

See **SOFTBALL**, B4



Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Friday: Social Hour with food, 5 to 7 p.m. followed by DJ Gjettblaque, 8 to 11 p.m., Ladies Night
Saturday: DJ Gjettblaque 8-11 p.m.
Thursday: Social Hour, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Fridays: Social Hour with food, 5 to 7 p.m.
Monday: Free gourmet bar food 5 to 7 p.m.
Wednesday: Free gourmet bar food, 5 to 7 p.m.
Thursday: Social Hour, 7 to 9 p.m.

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Fridays: Dinner, full menu, 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., Social Hour, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Monday: Steak night and full dinner menu 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Monday-Friday: All-Hands lunch, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Wednesday: Full dinner menu, 4:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Thursday: Social Hour, 5 to 7 p.m.

Combat Center Officers' Club

Monday-Friday: All-hands lunch, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Monday: Steak night, 5 to 8 p.m.
Thursday: Taco Night, 5 to 7 p.m.

For complete calendars visit <http://www.mccs29palms.com>.

Local Events

Pappy and Harriet's Weekend Line-Up:

Solid Ray Woods

The blues and soul musician will perform
When: 8 p.m., Friday, July 1

Amanda Jo Williams and Jeffertiti's Nile

The Americana/country band performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, July 2
Where: 53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
For more information, call 365-5956 or visit <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

Willie Boy's Weekend Line-Up:

Ghost Train followed by Club Willie's

The rock/country group are now Willie's regular band
When: 7 to 10 p.m., Friday and Saturday, July 1 and 2, followed by a DJ for dancing until 2 a.m.
Where: Willie Boy's Saloon and Dance Hall, 50048 Twentynine Palms Highway, Morongo Valley
For more information, call 363-3343 or visit <http://www.willieboys.com>.

Summer Movies in Luckie Park, "Despicable Me"

When: 8:30 p.m. Thursday, July 7
Where: Luckie Park near the corner of Utah Trail and Joe Davis Drive in Twentynine Palms on the north-facing wall of the racquetball courts.

"A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum"

Theatre 29 presents the famous comedic play
When: 7 p.m., Friday and Saturday, July 1 and 2
Where: Theatre 29
73637 Sullivan Road, Twentynine Palms
For more information call 361-4151 or visit <http://www.theatre29.com>

Lower Desert

The Free Summer Tribute Band Series for July

The series begins with a Lynyrd Skynyrd tribute band
Nuthin Fancy at 8 p.m. on July 1, then the following week is INXS Tribute Band **INXS-IVE** at 8 p.m. on July 8
Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella
For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit <http://www.spotlight29.com>.

The Monkeys

The comedic television band performs
When: 9 p.m., Friday, July 15
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinoresort.com>.

Queen Latifah

Hip-hop's first lady turned movie star performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 13
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, July 1

6 p.m. – Prom, Rated PG
9 p.m. – Something Borrowed, Rated PG-13
Midnight – Fast Five, Rated PG-13

Saturday, July 2

11 a.m. – **Free Matinee:** Alice in Wonderland, Rated PG
2 p.m. – Hoodwinked Too, Rated PG
6 p.m. – Thor, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – Jumping the Broom, Rated PG-13
Midnight – Bridesmaid, Rated R

Sunday, July 3

2 p.m. – Pirates of the Caribbean 4, Rated PG-13
6 p.m. – Priest, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – Pirates of the Caribbean 4, Rated PG-13

Monday, July 4, Independence Day

2 p.m. – Hoodwinked Too, Rated PG
6 p.m. – Thor, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – Bridesmaids, Rated R

Tuesday, July 5

7 p.m. – Fast Five, Rated PG-13

Wednesday, July 6

7 p.m. – Prom, Rated PG

Thursday, July 7

7 p.m. – Hoodwinked Too, Rated PG



COURTESY PHOTO

The original 1940s "Green Lantern" was a railroad engineer who discovered a magic talking lamp that bestowed him with a green glow and an arsenal of superpowers. Now, 70 years later, hotshot test pilot Hal Jordan, played by Ryan Reynolds, transforms into Earth's first member of an elite squadron of intergalactic peacekeepers.

'Green Lantern' crams clichés into movie mess

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"Green Lantern"

Starring Ryan Reynolds, Blake Lively, Tim Robbins and Angela Bassett
Rated PG-13

The latest superhero saga to hit the big screen adheres to a rigid color scheme: Green is good, yellow is bad, and Ryan Reynolds' eyes are brown...until they glow blue.

Got it? Good – because you'll need all the navigational help you can get to make it through "The Green Lantern," an unfocused, CGI-driven mess of a movie.

As a popular DC Comics character that's been through several shades of comic-book mythology since he was introduced in 1940, the original Lantern was a railroad engineer who discovered a magic talking lamp that bestowed him with a green glow and an arsenal of superpowers.

Now, 70 years later, hotshot test pilot Hal Jordan (Reynolds) is reluctantly knighted as one of an elite squadron of intergalactic peacekeepers – and transformed into Earth's first member of the Green Lanterns Corps.

The movie is banking on the considerable eye-candy charms of Reynolds, its leading man, who's



COURTESY PHOTO

Ryan Reynolds plays Hal Jordan, a test pilot who is transformed into a green-tinted protector of the cosmos.

given plenty of opportunity to showcase his buff physique both in and out of his jade-colored, custom-fitted bodysuit.

But Reynolds, so effective in other movie roles playing dashing handsome, otherwise more-or-less ordinary guys, doesn't seem quite up to the superhero stuff. He's less than convincing as a green-tinted protector of the cosmos with some of the most awesome power in the universe in his fingertips.

There are other problems, too. The story rambles, cramming and cobbling together templates from a number of other, better, often iconic movie franchises, including "Star Wars," "Superman" and "Top Gun."

The special effects aren't

all that special. A space menace, meant to be horrific as it makes its way across the cosmos to devour Earth, looks like a computer-generated Halloween porch decoration made with a wad of dreadlocks. The romantic subplot, between Hal and his one-time squeeze/current boss Carol Ferris (Blake Lively), never catches any real spark or sizzle.

The 3-D is a waste. Two fine supporting actors, Tim Robbins and Angela Bassett, are given far too little to do. The quips, jokes and zippy one-liners that you might reasonably expect in a movie based on a comic book are in woefully short supply.

And too often,

Reynolds just looks silly in his Lantern suit. His ex-lover even breaks out in giggles the first time she gets an up-close look at him, seeing instantly through his ridiculously thin disguise. "Hal? Did you really think I wouldn't recognize you just because I can't see your cheekbones?!" she asks.

In a movie season that's already had "Thor" hammer up the box office, and with the much-anticipated, red-white-and-blue "Captain America" still to come, this subpar superhero saga is already looking wan and washed out by comparison. In a couple of months, this Lantern's green glow will likely be long gone.



COURTESY PHOTO

The Green Lantern's eyes glow blue when he taps the most awesome power in the universe.

Combat Center Leisure

Desert Detours: Thursday summer movies at Luckie Park



Welcome to "Desert Detours," a series that follows our correspondents around on their explorations of southern California. The "out-of-five" palm tree rating scale offers a glance at how worthwhile the writer considers a place to be. Locales will be judged on their accessibility, atmosphere, fun, cost and facilities. Keep an eye out every week for new shenanigans and hot tips on cool things to do.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DIANE DURDEN

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

My sister and her family recently spent their vacation here in Twentynine Palms.

They are from a small town in Wisconsin, so they were accustomed to the small town feel. Being a good hostess, I felt the need to entertain them. And not that I'm not personally entertaining enough for them, but my pre-teen nieces were looking for something... Well, let's just say, they wanted something else.

That's where the Thursday Summer Movies at Luckie Park came into play. Once a week, every Thursday, the Twentynine Palms Park and Recreation Department provides a free outdoor movie. Yep, that's right, free. There's no better price than free.

Moviegoers gather on the grassy field next to the racquetball courts, laying out blankets and setting up lawn chairs, just as the desert sun set. Movies are scheduled to begin at 8:30 p.m. or as soon as it's dark enough to see the movie on the screen.

Did I say screen? OK, it's

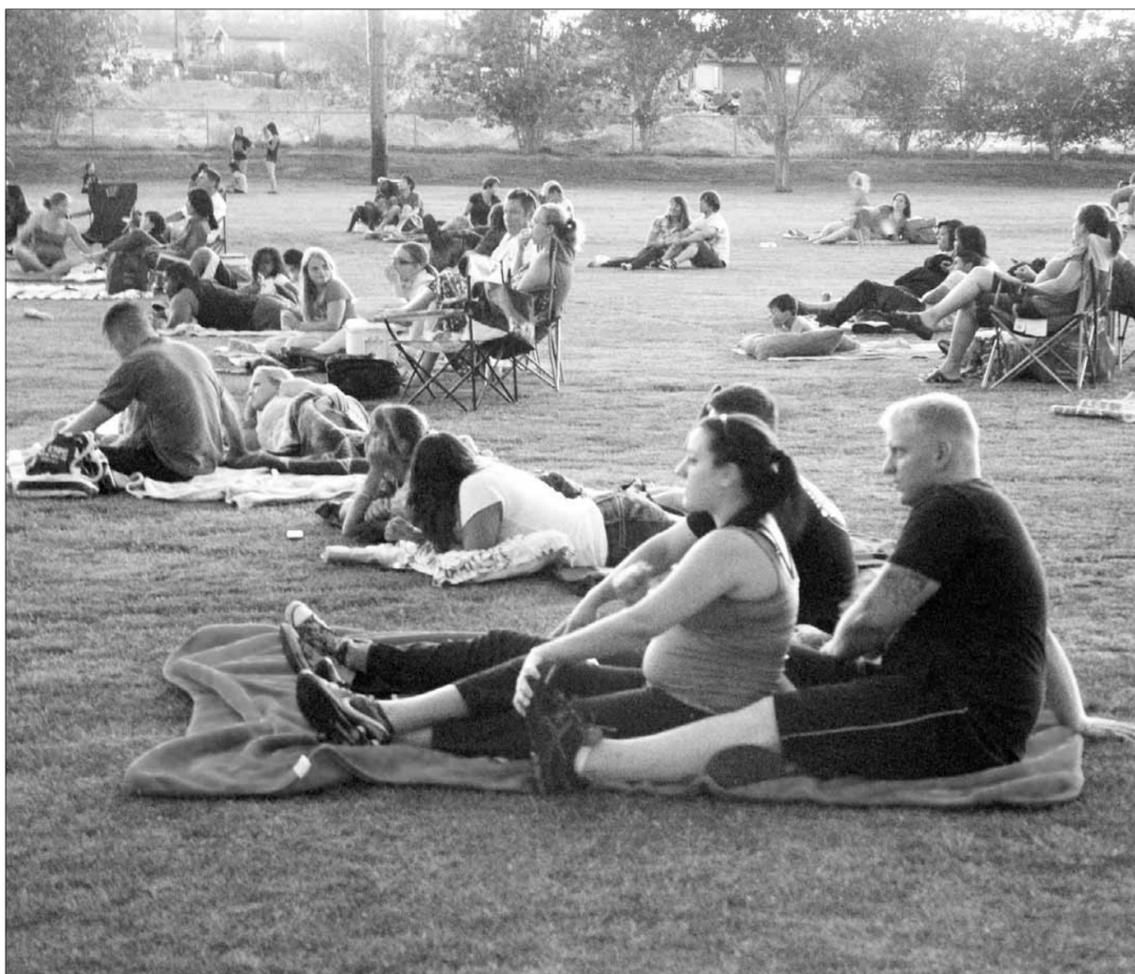
not a "screen," it's the outside wall of the racquetball courts. The wall is the perfect size to view the movie from anywhere on the field. Projecting the movies onto the wall, along with the surround sound like speaker system gives this theater under the stars the perfect movie watching atmosphere.

Bring your own blanket or chair to make yourself comfortable. There aren't any of the park's picnic tables on this part of the field. You can also bring a cooler with your own drinks and snacks. Just remember, this is a family event, so please leave the alcohol at home.

Last week's movie, *How to Train Your Dragon*, was the first in the park's summer line-up, which includes several fairly recently (2010) released movies, all kid-friendly, which makes Thursday nights in the park into a truly family fun night.

Upcoming movies include *Despicable Me*, *Nanny McPhee Returns*, *Shrek Forever After* and *Megamind*.

Even though my family has now left to return to Wisconsin, I'll be headed back to Luckie Park with my



Pick your spot on the spacious field to watch the Thursday Summer Movie at Luckie Park. Presented by the Twentynine Palms Park and Recreation Department, the free movies provide affordable family entertainment.

blanket in hand for this four-palm rated night of movies under the stars.

Editor's Note: "Desert Detours" is a weekly series exploring opportunities for Marines and sailors from a firsthand perspective. All material included therein is the opinion of the writer and does not imply an endorsement by the U.S. Marine Corps or the Department of Defense.



Pillows and blankets help make this family fun night cozy and comfy for everyone. Refreshments are available for purchase or families can bring their own.



The outside wall of Luckie Park's racquetball courts makes for the perfect movie screen, and bringing a chair or blanket to sit on with some homemade popcorn creates the perfect family night.

Prefer your news from the web?

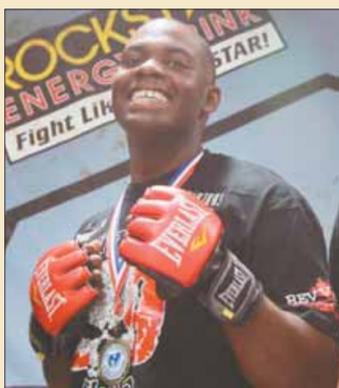


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Athlete of the Week



Name: Dahlen Wilson
Hometown: Toledo, Ohio
Recognition: Gold Medalist in the USA Pankration National Championships and US World Team member.
Weight class: 190 pounds.
What is your favorite part of the sport?: The training, because what you put in is what you get out of it. "How well you train dictates how well you do."
Do you have any advice for aspiring athletes?: "Go for it. Once your mind is on a goal, don't go second guessing yourself."



PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. D. J. WU



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

The umpire calls "play ball," starting the championship game of the Commanding General's Intramural Softball League Playoffs at Felix Field June 23.

SOFTBALL, from B1

the championship title.
 "We won, and that's all that matters," said Clay Barber, coach of MCCES Reds. "I've been on this team four years, and it's good to finally win."
 The team reveled in their win. After placing third in the last three softball seasons, MCCES Reds can rest easy and look forward in defending their title next year.



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

James Batman, a player for MCCES Reds, lends a hand as the first base coach in during the championship game.