

iPad was grand prize at SMP pool party, page A5

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MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS

OBSERVATION POST

New VMU-3 detachment is 'go' for launch, page A6

July 15, 2011

Since 1957

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Futuristic sim trainer debuts

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Virtual gaming has been improving drastically over the years, and the Marine Corps is using the same technology to help train Marines.

The Virtual Battle Simulation 2 is the Combat Center's newest addition to its list of videogame-like trainers, joining the Supporting Arms Virtual Training and the Combined Arms Command and Control Tactical Upgrade System.

"VBS 2 is a 3-D simulation that you play from a first-person perspective," said Maj. Ben Brown, a simulation officer with Operations and Training. "VBS 2 allows you to take [convoys, patrols, tanks and any other unit] and call their respective supporting fixed, rotary or indirect fire agencies and see it on the battlefield."

With the new VBS 2, the younger Marines who grew up playing video games should be able to grasp the

See SIM, A3



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LANCE CPL. TYLER J. WARREN

The Combat Center's newest simulator, the Virtual Battle Simulation 2, allows fire support teams to train as a group, practice convoys and patrolling, training and many other scenarios including custom ones designed by their command. The trainer is open to all units aboard the Combat Center.

Leadership Scholar Program keeps military students competitive

MCCS PRESS RELEASE

HQMC (MR), QUANTICO, Va. – The Marine Corps Leadership Scholar Program is available to help qualified Marines seeking to earn an undergraduate degree when they transition back to civilian life after separation from active duty or retirement.

Originally launched with the California State University System, the program has grown and been formalized Marine Corps-wide. There are currently 85 campuses around the nation who are participating in this program.

Among the participants are the California State University System, University of North Carolina System, Virginia Tech, Columbia, Colgate, Auburn, University of New Mexico, and Colorado State-Pueblo.

"The recent Commandant's Planning Guidance directed that transition assistance programs be revolutionized to better support transitioning Marines," said Beth Morgan, the director of Higher Education Initiatives for Marine Corps Community Services, who manages the LSP program. "This new program is one of those initiatives to help Marines who are interested in obtaining an undergraduate degree when they leave active duty or retire."

Institutions dictate all academic criteria and other requirements. But to be eligible for the LSP, Marines must be high school graduates and possess a minimum combined score of 70 or higher on the Armed Forces Qualification Test and a General Technical score of 115 or higher, Morgan added. The requirements for admissions are determined by the individual college or university and vary by institution, but many also require the SAT or ACT tests.

"The advantage of working through the LSP versus applying on your own is that with the LSP, the college or university guarantees admission to Marines who meet their standards," she said. "Even where there is no guarantee, LSP has established direct lines of communication with the admission office, and an LSP recommendation adds weight to the application. It essentially provides an extra look."

Colleges and universities are looking for qualified veterans, and this program helps

See STUDENTS, A7

31st MEU arrives in Australia for exercise Talisman Sabre 2011

CAPT. CALEB EAMES

31ST MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT

CAMP ROCKY, AUSTRALIA – About 550 Marines and sailors with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit arrived in Australia July 7, with more scheduled to arrive in the coming days, all to participate in exercise Talisman Sabre 2011.

The USS Germantown (LSD 42) docked in Townsville, Australia, with approximately 500 Marines and sailors of the 31st MEU aboard, in preparation for the biennial training event which strengthens defense ties between the two countries.

Additionally, about 50 infantry and mortarmen with Weapons Company, Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, 31st MEU arrived at Camp Rocky, Australia, to participate in a joint live fire exercise with Australian

See 31ST MEU, A3



LANCE CPL. BRENNAN O'LOWNEY

Marines and sailors with Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Battalion Landing Team, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, walk along a flight line after landing in Rockhampton, Australia in preparation for 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.



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Marines and sailors with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, stand in formation for the Post and Relief Ceremony of Sgt. Maj. Troy Black, the outgoing sergeant major, and Sgt. Maj. Rafael Rodriguez, the oncoming sergeant major, at Felix Field July 7.

'Cutting Edge' welcomes new sergeant major, says farewell to Black

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Sergeant Maj. Rafael Rodriguez relieved Sgt. Maj. Troy Black as the sergeant major of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment during a Post and Relief ceremony at Felix Field July 7.

The Marines and sailors with the Cutting Edge formed up into their companies on Felix Field to witness the exchange of the noncommissioned officer's sword, signifying the pass-

ing of leadership from Black to Rodriguez.

Rodriguez, who just graduated from the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy in Fort Bliss, El Paso, Texas, spoke of his excitement at being stationed with the unit.

"I am extremely happy and excited to be a part of this battalion [and] the rich tradition in it," said Rodriguez, a native of Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic. "I am looking forward to leading this battalion along with Lt. Col. [Seth]

Folsom, [the battalion commanding officer.]"

With the responsibilities and duties passed on to Rodriguez, Black knew from his two years with the battalion that what made them great under him will continue under Rodriguez's leadership.

"[It was the] leadership in the Marines, great officers, great staff NCOs and the leadership dedication in the NCOs and below that really made the battalion

See 3/7, A8



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

[Right] Lt. Col. Seth Folsom, the battalion commanding officer for 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, hands Sgt. Maj. Rafael Rodriguez, the oncoming sergeant major for 3/7, a noncommissioned officer's sword, signifying his appointment as the unit's top enlisted Marine, during a Post and Relief Ceremony at Felix Field July 7.

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>

Tips to save children from drowning

SHARI LOPATIN

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Three children die every day from drowning. It's the leading cause of death from an injury for children ages 1-4 years old, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mid-summer is primetime for water fun, but it can also be deadly if parents aren't careful.

The Red Cross Summer Water Safety Guide states more than 90 percent of families with young children will spend time in the water this summer. And almost half of them plan to swim in places with no lifeguard.

What does this mean? You need to take responsibility for your children's safety around water. Here are six tips from the Red Cross and the CDC to keep your children safe:

1. **Learn CPR.** Seconds count if your child falls into the water. You could be the lifesaving support until paramedics arrive. Contact your local Red Cross chapter or your local fire department to learn when CPR classes are available.

2. **Supervise your children constantly around water.** Never leave the supervision to an older child, and avoid distractions yourself when watching your kids. This includes around bathtubs, swimming pools and natural bodies of water, such as the ocean or a lake.

3. **Secure pools with proper barriers.** Install a four-sided fence around your pool. It should have self-closing and self-latching gates.

4. **Always wear life jackets.** Even if your kids know how to swim, they should always wear life jackets around natural bodies of water. For younger or inexperienced swimmers, they should wear life jackets around all water, even pools.

5. **Make sure everyone in your home knows how to swim.** Have young kids? Enroll them in age-appropriate swim courses. If you still need to learn, sign up for classes immediately.

6. **Have lifesaving equipment available nearby.** This includes reaching or throwing equipment, such as a lifesaver and rope; a cell phone; lifejackets; and a first aid kit.

For more important water safety tips, visit <http://www.triwest.com/watersafety>.

Centerspeak

JUNIOR ENLISTED:

What is an interesting fact about you very few people know?

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



PFC. ASHLEY BURNETTE

CONSOLIDATED MATERIAL SUPPORT CENTER

“Not many people know that I like to paint.”



LANCE CPL. HARLEY MARTIN

COMPANY A, MARINE CORPS COMMUNICATION-ELECTRONICS SCHOOL

“I like oysters. I'm like a connoisseur of oysters.”



LANCE CPL. T.J. CURTIS

WEAPONS COMPANY, 1ST BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

“I can pour beer really well. I can keep the foam down with maximum fillage.”

Hot Topics

FOOTBALL COMPETITION

The Commanding General's Intramural Football League season begins Aug. 29, and ends Dec. 10. Entry deadline for teams will be Aug. 5. There is a mandatory coaches meeting July 20 and Aug. 10 at 10 a.m. in building 1341. All active duty members and their families, DOD employees and civilian contractors of at least 18 years of age are eligible to play. Team sizes are limited to 40 players and two coaches with an unlimited roster. Games will be Mondays and Wednesdays, 6 to 8 p.m. at Felix Field. For more information, call 830-4092.

TEXAS HOLD 'EM

The Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament, hosted by the SNCO Club, is July 16. Doors open at 2 p.m., game starts at 3 p.m. Buy-ins are \$20 for early registration, or \$25 at the door. There will be limited free finger foods and prizes. Open to all NCOs and above, as well as spouses. Call 830-5035 for more information.

MARINE POOL PARTY

All active duty service members are invited to a summer pool party at the Training Tank from 6-10 p.m. July 22. There will be a DJ, food, prizes and beer, for those of age with ID. No outside alcohol or pets allowed. Call 830-5086 for more information.

Marine Corps History

July 18, 1918

The 4th Brigade of Marines began an attack near Soissons, France, as part of a three-division counterattack against the Germans. In the first two days of battle, the brigade sustained 1,972 casualties.



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

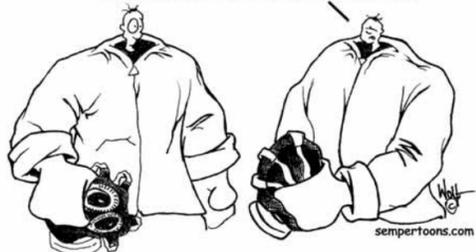
1. Surveillance
2. Suspicious questioning
3. Tests of security
4. Acquiring supplies
5. Suspicious persons
6. Trial runs
7. Deploying assets

830-3937

4 HOUR TIME LIMIT IS UP!!!, GET THOSE GAS MASKS OFF!!



Wheeww, those drills are killers, huh?



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

SUDOKU #2235

1						2		3					
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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2010 HOMETOWN CONTENT

WATERED DOWN

[Puzzle solutions on A7]

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52							53	54				55	56	57
58							59				60			61
62								63				64		
65								66					67	

- ACROSS**
1. First Hebrew letter
 6. Word before job or set
 10. Its HQ is in Brussels
 14. ___ Dame
 15. Prefix meaning "high"
 16. In the center of
 17. Part of a Revere alert
 19. "La Bohème" heroine
 20. Acetyl suffix
 21. Tabloids twosome
 22. Bering's countrymen
 23. Bond's first film foe
 25. Snappy comeback
 26. Hawkins of Dogpatch
 29. Fairly modern
 32. Mighty mounts
 34. Fixes, as a ball game
 35. "That ___ no lady..."
 38. "Get lost!"
 41. Not yet on the sched.
 42. Panhandler's income
 43. Like "Romeo and Juliet"
 44. Duller of the senses
 46. Lott of politics
 47. Gone bad
 50. Game played with armies
 52. Actress Berry
 53. Nut job
 55. Sonny's sibling
 58. Hardly gentlemanly
 59. Site of an 1845-47 retreat
 62. Exploitative type
 63. Nobelist Wiesel
 64. Navel unlikely to collect lint
 65. Uncle ___ rice
 66. Look after
 67. Destinations of some tee shots
- DOWN**
1. Aardvark morsel
 2. Rob of "The West Wing"
 3. School on the Thames
 4. Prayer bench
 5. "Playboy" nickname
 6. Home of the Wright Brothers
 7. "So what ___ is new?"
 8. Goblet part
 9. Hyundai rival
 10. Football's "Broadway Joe"
 11. Essential ___ acids
 12. Track official
 13. Keats or Shelley
 18. Container for recyclables
 22. Flan and frappé
 24. Rhode Island's state tree
 25. Conservatives, collectively, with "the"
 26. NCO rank
 27. Get from ___ (progress a bit)
 28. "It's ___ vu all over again!"
 30. Dadaist Max
 31. Producer of a zinger
 33. Kegler's headache
 35. Carry on
 36. Of a similar nature
 37. Shakers or Mennonites
 39. "Hallelujah, ___ Bum"
 40. Buttercup family member
 44. They became football's Titans
 45. Ate into
 47. Sage brush or mistletoe
 48. DVR button
 49. Of time past
 51. Likeable leader
 53. Collard greens, e.g.
 54. Actor Ken or Lena
 56. Minute amount
 57. Salon sound
 59. Drenched
 60. Commandment word
 61. ___ Plaines, Illinois

Combat Center Spotlight

Name: Kristina Becker
Hometown: Tucson, Ariz.
Unit: G-5, Community Plans and Liaison Office
Job title: Community Relations Officer
Job duties: Foster community partnerships and outreach between the Combat Center and communities throughout the Morongo Basin.
What is your favorite aspect of your job?: "I get to meet new people every day. It's a really rewarding job, when you see events as they come full circle, not just bits and pieces of things."
Favorite event you have coordinated?: "The Palm Springs Veteran's Day Parade. We were able to get a tank into the parade."
Hobbies: "Swimming, Wine Tasting Club, do-it-yourself home improvement projects and playing with my son."



DIANE DURDEN

Time at Combat Center: Six years
What do Kristina's co-workers say about her?: "She is always professional. She goes the extra mile to ensure the Combat Center's 'Good Neighbor' policy is incorporated into events," said Michael King, G-5 operations officer.

OBSERVATION POST

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SGT. PETE THIBODEAU

Marines with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, the battalion landing team for 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, arrive for exercise Talisman Sabre 2011 at Camp Rocky, Rockhampton, Australia, July 7, 2011. The alliance with Australia is one of the United States' most important defense relationships and a central pillar for national security strategy, based on shared values and a common commitment to peace and security.

31ST MEU, from A1

Defense Forces.

"We are looking forward to the joint weapons training and the joint live-fire with the naval guns and the Royal Australian Air Force. Working jointly with them is something we don't otherwise get a chance to do," said Capt. Zeb Philpott, Weapons Company Commander, BLT 2/7. "In your whole career, you might not get to see the type of naval gunfire we'll see here. We will have U.S. and Australian ships firing with us."

The company of Marines will serve two purposes, said Philpott. First, they will be doing joint fire support coordination with the Australians and higher headquarters, while communicating and practicing the transfer of fire control. Secondly, the mortar teams will provide indirect mortar support and marking for the Australian Air Force and U.S. planes.

The 31st MEU's BLT will have 81mm mortar teams and fire support coordination all working together to get the job done during the joint live fire exercise.

"It will be great to work with another military in their country," said Lance Cpl.

Matthew Haines, an infantryman with Weapons Co., BLT 2/7, from Mussila, Mont. "This will be good experience. We want to learn how they do business and show them how we work too."

Elements of Combat Logistics Battalion 31 also arrived to conduct bilateral military police and explosive ordnance training.

"We'll be working with the Australian police forces," said Lance Cpl. Brett Chilson, a military policeman from Binghamton, N.Y., with CLB-31. "Hopefully we will get to ride along on actual police operations and see some new things."

The joint police work helps to enhance partnerships between the Australian and U.S. military forces.

"I'm looking forward to seeing what they have to offer training-wise and learning from them," said Lance Cpl. Kevin Smith, a military policeman with CLB-31. "We will be observing law enforcement operations, and we are excited to be working hand in hand with the Aussies and learning from each other."

In addition to the participation in the ground in Australia, about 15 members of the 31st MEU command

element will also participate remotely aboard USS Essex.

"We are very happy to come out to work with Australians," said Maj. Eric Mattson, 31st MEU Talisman Sabre evaluator. "We will be observing the U.S. and Australian combat maneuvers, evaluating their skills and ensuring that things are done correctly and professionally. This will be a good chance to validate our skills and at the same time get some good training with Australian forces."

This is the first deployment of the 31st MEU since returning from participation in Operation Tomodachi in Northeast Japan during March and April.

"The 31st MEU looks forward to the partnership with Australia and their military forces," said Col. Andrew MacMannis, commanding officer, 31st MEU.

"This exercise 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."

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



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

William Kelly, a Deployed Virtual Training analyst with Operations and Training, prepares an air strike simulation with the Virtual Battle Simulation 2 at Building 1655 Wednesday.

SIM, from A1

controls quickly and be able to focus more on the training, said William Kelly, a Deployed Virtual Training analyst with Operations and Training.

"We have taken a first-person shooter videogame and modified it for the Marine Corps, and through programming we are able to network [multiple systems] together," said Kelly. "[It] puts Marines in a 3-D environment and trains them using the same vehicles and procedures to accomplish their training objectives."

The difference between the VBS 1 and VBS 2 is comparable to the difference between playing a two player Nintendo 64 game and playing a multi-player, multi-console, Shoot-'em-up game on Xbox Live.

The VBS 2 is able to perform the same training as the more widely known SAVT, but Brown emphasized that it is not a replacement for it.

"SAVT is definitely a good environment for training facts," Brown said. "What we were looking for is an environment where we could have multiple fire support teams train at a time."

Also like the SAVT, the VBS 2 is able to lay the whole battlefield out before the students as they call in for support, thanks to three big-screen TVs.

"The big advantage to having three big screens

comes when you are calling in for air," Brown said. "[Students can] look around to make sure it is not going to hit anything that's not supposed to, and the air space is clear."

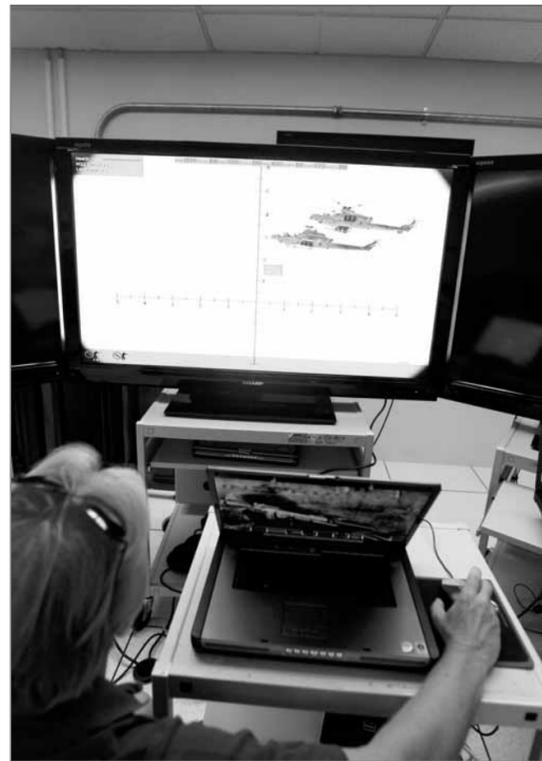
Another advantage the VBS 2 has is that Marines can learn more than just their Fire Support Team drills in the scenarios.

"You can have a convoy moving along and something happened that makes them want to engage their

FiST," Brown said. "They can do the FiST drill, then go back to their convoy operations."

One of the best aspects about these trainers is they are open to everyone, infantry or not. All a unit has to do is call to schedule a date.

For more information on the VBS 2 and other simulation training available aboard the Combat Center or how to schedule unit training, contact Brown at 830-8439.



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Helicopters are available for strikes along with planes and artillery through the Virtual Battle Simulation 2 at Building 1655 aboard the Combat Center.

Track proves best place to test motorcycle rider limits

BOB PIIRAINEN

CENTER SAFETY

Flying down the back straightaway, I have the throttle pinned.

My bike is screaming as I push her to the Rev limiter. I grab a taller gear and break the 100-miles-per-hour mark. In an instant the next corner is upon me.

I firmly apply the brakes and begin my deceleration. Timing is key, and I don't want to turn in too soon. As I approach it, the corner's entrance becomes bigger. I make a quick downshift and slowly release the clutch. I can feel the weight of my motorcycle pushing me forward and I can feel the rear end of my bike become light.

Anticipating the turn, I repositioned my body forward and in. I lay my bike into the turn and complete the release of my clutch lever. My

rear tire begins to slide under the stress. My bike is telling me that she didn't like that.

I came in too hot this time, but I'll have it dialed in for the next go around. But I can't worry about that now, I've already committed to the corner. I continue to dive deeper into the turn holding my throttle steady and can feel the asphalt scrape across my knee puck.

Midway through the turn I can see my exit and my steady throttle becomes a gradual

acceleration.

As my bike stands taller, I roll on more and more. Soon I am shooting out of the exit and down the next straightaway to get ready for the next curve.

At the end of the ride, I park under the shade and pause for a moment to try and catch my breath from the rush I just experienced. My pumping adrenaline makes it difficult for me to sit down, but I force myself to take a seat and recharge for the next

round. Sweat dripping from my head, I gulp water and notice that my heart is pounding and my hands are shaking.

Oh yeah, it was a good ride. And in an instant I realize, this is the place for speed.

Nowhere on the street can you experience this type of exhilaration. Nowhere on the street can you test your

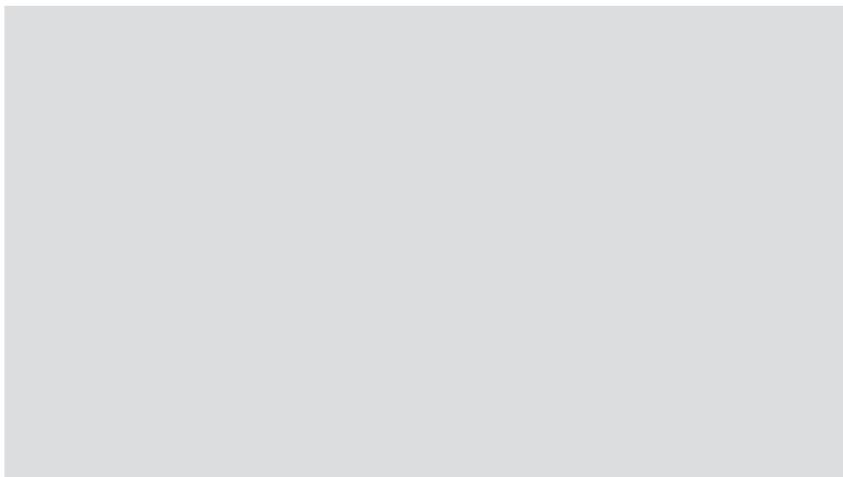
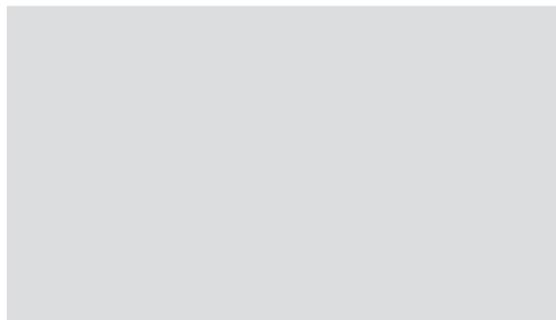
limits safely. Nowhere on the street can you discover your bike's capabilities.

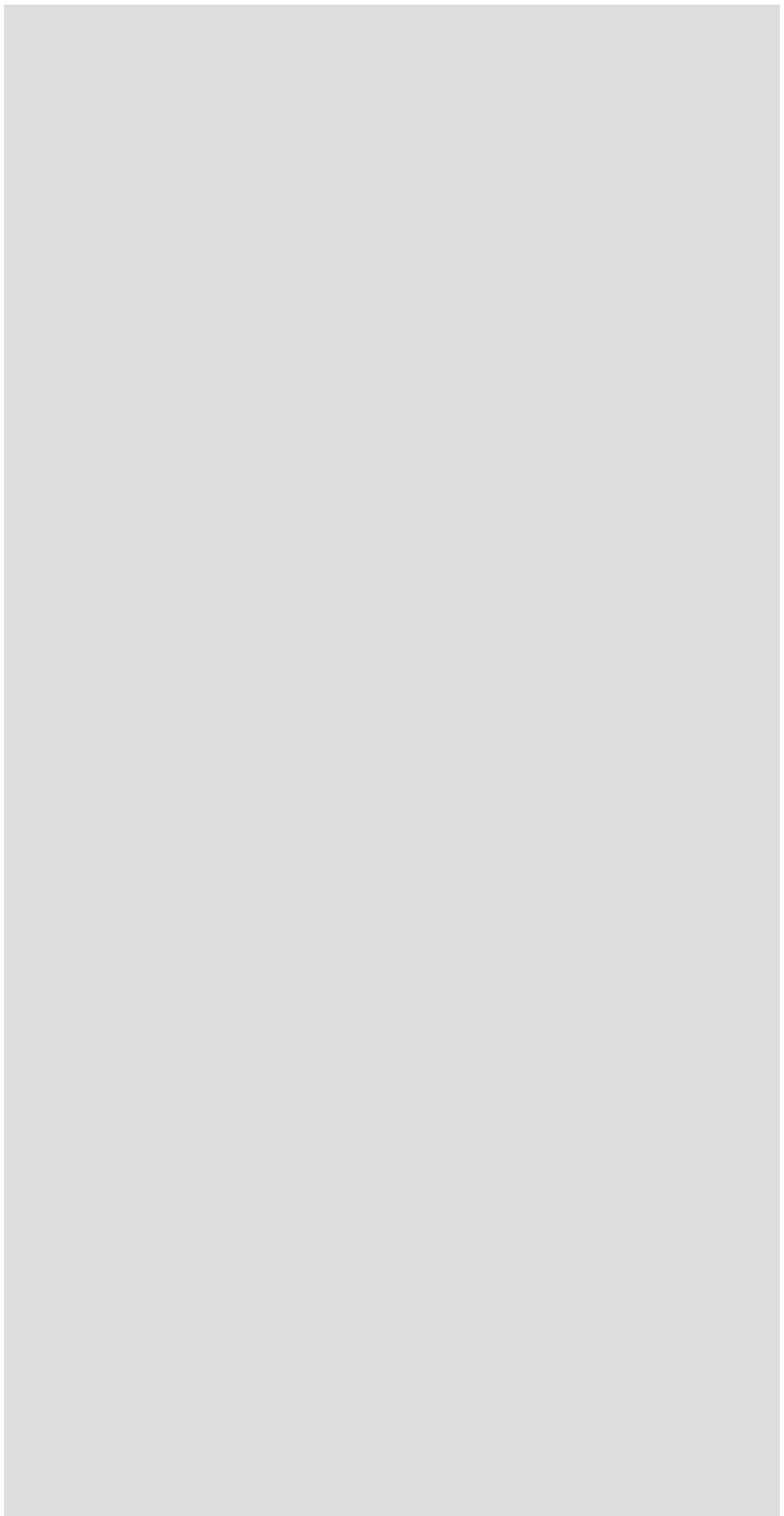
The track is where speed happens, and the track is the only place where you can set yourself apart from other riders. This is the place to test your riding limitations, not on some freeway littered with drivers who aren't looking

out for your safety or on a back road with dangerous potholes and sand patches.

If you are a sport bike rider and want to understand what level you are truly at, then I challenge you to join me on the track, and we can take your riding skill to the next level.

For more information, call Center Safety at 830-6154.





SMP makes splash with Marine, sailor pool party



A Marine takes full advantage of the blow-up slide as his friends cheer him on from the sidelines.



PHOTOS BY LORA COWAN

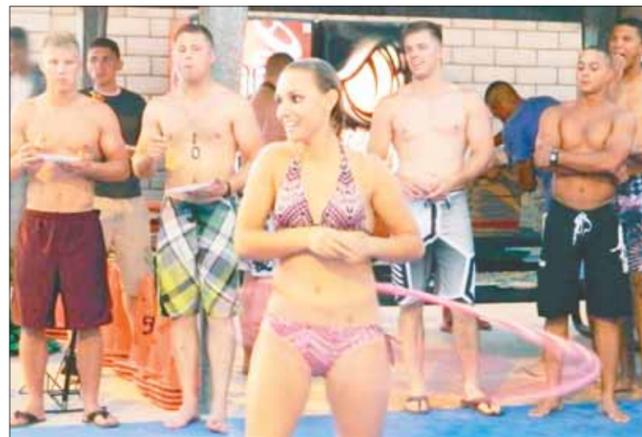
Marines and sailors have a ball playing in the Training Tank pool July 9 during the Combat Center's Single Marine and Sailor Program's first pool party. The event was judged a great success and the rosters revealed 252 active duty service members showed up to enjoy the festivities, said Lora Cowan, the installation's SMP coordinator. The event included music, alcohol-free refreshments, a prize drawing and several competitions including hula-hoop, giant Jenga, cannonball and belly-flop contests.



Marines groove to the beat as a KQ 92 DJ rocked the Training Tank.



A free drawing was the "ticket" to taking home prizes, the most coveted of which was an iPad, which went home with Lance Cpl. Elis Batista, from Headquarters Battalion.



Private First Class Sandra Martins makes hula-hooping look easy as she holds out for first place in the hula-hoop contest. Martins took home a supercharged water gun as a prize.



Private Krystin Morales [left] and Pfc. Mercury Stoddard concentrate on balance as they compete in the Jenga contest. The two claimed victory a short time later, and both took home remote control cars.



Even after the sun disappeared below the horizon, the SMP partygoers don't slow down as they continue to toss a giant beach ball back and forth.

Marine Corps UAVs get new home in Afghanistan

CPL. SAMANTHA H. ARRINGTON

2ND MARINE AIRCRAFT WING (FWD)

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Marine Corps unmanned aerial vehicles have a new home at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan.

Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3 formed a new detachment located here to help 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) provide intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support in southwestern Afghanistan.

The new detachment became fully operational when it launched its first unmanned aerial vehicle from Camp Leatherneck, an RQ-7B Shadow, in support of 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment June 30.

The unmanned aerial vehicle squadron began planning for a detachment at Camp Leatherneck prior to its deployment from Twentynine Palms, Calif., explained Maj. Matt L. Walker, the officer in charge of VMU-3 Marines at Camp Leatherneck.

The deployed Marine unmanned aerial vehicle squadrons have traditionally maintained multiple operating points for UAVs, including Camp Dwyer, Combat Outpost Payne, and Forward Operating Bases Edinburgh and Delaram II.

“The squadron took a look at where our UAVs were going to be positioned, and the area we were capable of flying missions over before we deployed to Afghanistan, and saw that we had some uncovered areas,” said Walker. “We thought about how we could better position ourselves to support ground troops. When the advance party of VMU-3 Marines deployed to Afghanistan, the idea of having a second detachment located at Leatherneck was presented to 2nd MAW (Fwd).”

The proposal to 2nd MAW (Fwd.) was approved, and within a month the squadron was set up and fully operational on Camp Leatherneck, Walker said.

“A portion of the decision to set up a detachment at



CPL. SAMANTHA H. ARRINGTON

Cpl. Aaron H. Gibson, Cpl. Joe A. Barnard, both unmanned aerial vehicle technicians and Lance Cpl. Randy C. Akazeze, a supply clerk cross-training into the unmanned aerial vehicle technician job field, all with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3, prepare an RQ-7B Shadow for the first operational launch of a VMU-3 UAV from Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, June 30.

Camp Leatherneck was preparation for the summer fighting season,” he said. “We can better support dismounted patrols and we can help protect the troops on the ground.

“We will do everything we can to give those Marines on the ground the coverage and eye in the sky they need,” Walker added.

Marine Corps UAV squadrons use small, light-

weight vehicles able to stay in the air for several hours to supply Marines and their coalition partners with aerial information throughout combat missions.

“We are in the best posi-

tion to support Marines on the deck across Regional Command Southwest, which is what this is all about,” said Walker. “This move just gives us greater flexibility with the area we can fly over.”

“I think this move was a great idea,” said Cpl. Ryan P. Pavin, an unmanned aerial vehicle operator with VMU-3, and a native of Chicago. “I knew at first it would be a lot of work to get set up but I think we can do a lot to help the Marines on the ground and get the information they need.”

In preparation for the UAV squadron’s move, engineers and heavy equipment operators with Marine Wing Support Squadron 272 leveled and flattened the ground for the new VMU-3 runway, and MWSS-272 expeditionary airfield Marines followed behind, laying down aluminum matting used as the UAV landing strip.

“It took the engineers approximately 10 days to do the ground work,” said Staff

See VMU-3, A8

Experienced Afghan soldier teaches alongside Marines

CPL. ADAM LEYENDECKER

II MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE (FWD)

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Earlier this year when Afghan National Army Sgt. Sarajadin was a student at the Joint Non-commissioned Officer Course at the Joint Sustainment Academy Southwest, he studied not for himself, but for his fellow soldiers.

Sarajadin aspired to be an instructor like the Marines who taught his course. That day soon came. Following his JNCO course’s graduation in April, his Marine instructors determined that the per-

formance and leadership that Sarajadin displayed qualified him to serve alongside them, and to help teach future classes of Afghan National Security Forces.

“The idea is to pick the student who best understands the concepts of the course and has shown a willingness to take charge,” said Staff Sgt. Jacob M. Hayes, staff non-commissioned officer in charge for the JNCO course at JSAS, and a native of Westchester, Pa.

Before Sarajadin set foot in JSAS, he already had combat experience. He had faced numerous improvised explosive devices during operations.

Now, during the current

JNCO course here, Sarajadin uses that experience to teach Afghan soldiers how to patrol and use battlefield tactics to fight insurgents. His countrymen learn how to clear buildings and how to form battle formations in urban and rural areas.

Using his personal experience with IEDs, Sarajadin recently taught his students how to locate IEDs and how to properly set up a 360-degree perimeter around the hazard area and wait for a disposal team to arrive and destroy the device.

Students are better able to learn and grasp these and other concepts taught by Sarajadin because of his ability to relate to their situations, said Hayes.

“I am proud of my Afghan instructor,” said ANA Sgt. Parwaz Barkzai, a student attending the JNCO course. “He’s been through

everything we have been through, and now he is taking the lead to teach us so we can be better.”

Sarajadin and his Marine counterparts hope to find more prospective Afghan students who can make a similar transition from student to instructor.

“My responsibility is to take care of the students so that some day they can do what I’m doing,” said Sarajadin. “I want to develop more Afghan instructors so we can stand on our own feet. The greatest things I learn from Marines are that they are smart. I want to make sure that the students leaving JSAS are also smart.”

Sarajadin will see his current students graduate from the JNCO course on July 16, and said the class features a couple of students who could become instructors like himself.



CPL. ADAM LEYENDECKER

Afghan National Army Sgt. Sarajadin, an instructor at Joint Sustainment Academy Southwest, gives a demonstration during the Joint Non-commissioned Officer Course aboard Camp Bastion, Helmand province, June 30. Sarajadin hopes to find other Afghan instructors so that the Afghan National Security Forces can make the transition to teaching their own at the academy.



Whatever you're looking for, you can find it in the **Observation Post Classified** section

SJA CORNER

Implied warranty of habitability

CAPT. SHANNON MAWSON

LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICE

Landlords have a duty to ensure their rental units are habitable. The California Supreme Court and California landlord/tenant law, states there is an implied warranty of habitability for all rental units.

What are the landlord's responsibilities for repairs under the implied warranty of habitability? Prior to renting out a unit, the landlord must make sure that it is fit to live in.

If problems arise when the tenant is living in the unit, the landlord must repair any problems that would make the unit uninhabitable. California law has listed in detail exactly what makes a rental unit uninhabitable.

The following conditions are expressly listed in California's landlord/tenant laws or California's case law:

- Lead hazards that endanger the occupants or the public.
- A structural hazard.
- Inadequate sanitation or a nuisance endangering the health, life, safety, proper-

ty or welfare of the occupants or the public.

- Substantially lacking effective waterproofing and weather protection of roof and exterior walls, including unbroken windows and doors.

- Substantially lacking plumbing facilities in good working order, including hot and cold running water, connected to sewage disposal system.

- Substantially lacking gas facilities in good working order.
- Substantially lacking heating facilities in good working order.

- Substantially lacking an electric system, including lighting, wiring and equipment in good working order.

- Substantially lacking clean and sanitary buildings, grounds, free from debris, filth, rubbish, garbage, rodents and vermin.

- Substantially lacking adequate trash receptacles in good repair.

- Substantially lacking floors, stairways and railings in good repair.

Additionally, all rental units must have a working

toilet, wash basin and bathtub or shower in a private ventilated room; a kitchen with a sink that cannot be made of an absorbent material such as wood; natural lighting in every room through windows that can open at least halfway or skylights (if there is no window, then there must be a fan to provide mechanical ventilation); safe fire or emergency exits leading to a street or hallway; operational deadbolt locks on the main entry door of rental units and operable locking or security devices on windows; working smoke detectors; ground fault circuit interrupters for swimming pools; and antisuction protections for wading pools in apartment complexes.

If a unit does have a condition that makes it uninhabitable, renters must give the

landlord notice of the condition and an opportunity to fix it before they seek damages, use a "repair and deduct" remedy or decide to terminate their lease or rental agreement.

The best way to give notice to a landlord of an uninhabitable condition is to call the landlord and then follow up the phone call with a letter stating the uninhabitable condition in writing. Mail the letter by certified mail with a return receipt requested. Keep a copy of the letter with the return receipt as well as photographs of the uninhabitable condition specified in the letter for evidence.

If you have any questions about how to handle a rental unit with uninhabitable conditions, make an appointment with a legal assistance officer at 830-6111.

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

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ADVERTISEMENT

STUDENTS, from A1

them find them.

"Marines are already valued and respected members of campuses around the country," Morgan said. "They bring a unique diversity along with maturity, leadership and self-discipline. The LSP is available to help Marines who want to

continue their education and become better prepared to compete in today's tough job market."

To learn more about the LSP and if the university you want to attend is participating, visit <http://www.LeaderShipScholarProgram.com> (launching soon) or contact Morgan at 429-4124 or beth.morgan@usmc.mil.

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

M-F 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

* Indicates child care is provided

+ 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.

Combat Center Trader Ads

AUTOMOTIVE

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

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.

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

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

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.

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

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

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

COLLECTIBLE SPORTS, SCI-FI CARDS: Baseball, football from mid 80's to 90's. Star Trek and Star Wars collectible cards too. Individual heroes, team sets or make an offer on the whole collection. Call Stephen at 567-7921.

YOUR FREE AD HERE

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.

3/7, from A1

successful for the past two years," Black said.

Rodriguez said that focusing on leadership will be the focus of his time here as well.

"I am all about brilliance at the basics, the basic founda-

tion that has made Marines successful throughout our whole history," he said.

Black only asked one thing of Rodriguez as he steps in to take his place as the new sergeant major of 3/7.

"Never let the Marines down," he said.



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Sergeant Maj. Troy Black, the outgoing sergeant major for 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment [right]; and Sgt. Maj. Rafael Rodriguez, the oncoming sergeant major for 3/7, wait to be called to Lieutenant Colonel Seth Folsom, the battalion commanding officer for 3/7, during a Post and Relief Ceremony at Felix Field July 7.



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Lieutenant Col. Seth Folsom, the battalion commanding officer for 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment; Sgt. Maj. Rafael Rodriguez, the oncoming sergeant major for 3/7; and Sgt. Maj. Troy Black, the outgoing sergeant major for 3/7, salute the colors during the pass and review of a post and relief ceremony at Felix Field July 7.



CPL. SAMANTHA H. ARRINGTON

Corporal Aaron H. Gibson, an unmanned aerial vehicle technician with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3, and a native of Jacksonville, Fla., prepares an RQ-7B Shadow for the first operational launch of a VMU-3 UAV from Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, June 30. Deployed Marine Corps UAV squadrons use small, lightweight vehicles able to stay in the air for several hours to supply Marines and their coalition partners with aerial information throughout combat missions.



LANCE CPL. ROBERT R. CARRASCO

Lance Cpl. Josue Rodriguez, a machine gunner with Marine Wing Support Squadron 272, maneuvers a M1165A1 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle belonging to Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3 on Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, June 24.

VMU-3, from A6

Sgt. Cory D. Sikes, the expeditionary airfields chief for MWSS-272, and a native of Holdrege, Neb. "It took us seven days to lay the matting, and we completed it all well under our estimated completion date."

MWSS-272, deployed out of Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C., supports 2nd MAF (Fwd.) through ground refueling, aircraft recovery, firefighting, expe-

ditionary airfield services and more.

"MWSS-272 had a huge part in helping us get set up here in the new location," said Walker. "Without them none of this would have happened."

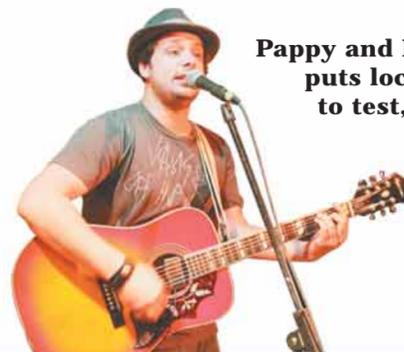
Not only did MWSS-272 prepare the VMU-3 runway and operations area, the support squadron also convoyed to Camp Dwyer to pick up the new detachment's equipment and transport it to Camp Leatherneck.

"The convoy was completed on a very short timeline," said Gunnery Sgt. Donald Rogers, the MWSS-272 operations chief, and native of Mauston, Wis. "We loaded all of their gear they would need for operations and delivered it to the new compound on Camp Leatherneck."

"Within three days, we had UAVs in the air, doing test flights and our working areas constructed," said Walker. "The speed the MWSS had in completing its mission made our mission easier."

For the UAVs themselves, the squadron convoyed some of the aircraft, and flew others from Camp Dwyer to their new home at Camp Leatherneck.

"VMU-3 has proven that the Shadow is expeditionary," said Walker. "We've proven that we can move about the battlespace if we need to, quickly and efficiently."



Pappy and Harriet's puts local talent to test, page B3

Patriotic tee time a hole-in-one day

STORY AND PHOTOS BY EMILY ANDERSON
 PUBLIC AFFAIRS INTERN

Golfers from around the Combat Center came to the Desert Winds Golf Course for the Red, White and Blue Golf Tournament July 8.

The tournament was in honor of Independence Day, which was just a few days prior to the competition.

The four-man scramble tournament made it possible for golfers of all different ages and abilities to compete on a more even playing field. In a four-man scramble, teams of four golfers play the best ball at each hole and keep one score for the team instead of playing all four balls.

"It's important that we have this kind of competition because it brings people together," said Chuck Mastropalo, course manager for the Desert Winds Golf Course. "It brings golfers together. Both experienced players and inexperienced players can play together in this game, and that's a big thing."

For more information on upcoming golf events, call the Desert Winds Golf Course at 830-6132.

The course is open from 6 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. for regular play every day, weather permitting. Building opens at 6 a.m., with games beginning at 6:30 a.m. All rentals must be returned by 8 p.m.



Lance Ritter lines up a putt during the Red, White and Blue Golf Tournament July 8.



Bert Swift holds onto his follow-through during the Combat Center's Red, White and Blue Golf Tournament at Desert Winds Golf Course July 8.



Golfers enjoy the panoramic view during the Combat Center's Red, White and Blue Golf Tournament at Desert Winds Golf Course July 8. The event was a four-man scramble in honor of Independence Day, which was only a few days prior to the tournament.

3rd CEB knocks undefeated team out of championships



SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

A 3rd CEB player prepares to kick the ball to teammates during a Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League playoff game against 1st Tanks at Felix Field Monday. The 3rd CEB team won 2-1, and faced Headquarters Battalion in the championship game Wednesday.



EMILY ANDERSON

A player from 3rd CEB leaps to head the ball before the players from 1st Tanks can get to it during a Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League playoff game at Felix Field Monday.



SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

A 1st Tanks player maneuvers around a 3rd CEB midfielder.



SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

A 3rd CEB player tries to settle the ball and move it up field around 1st Tanks players.



SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

The goalkeeper for 1st Tanks dives for a ball and misses after a player with the 3rd CEB shoots a penalty kick.

Check back next week for championship results



Liberty Call

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: Request Night, DJ Gjettblaque 8-11 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 10:30 p.m., Salsa Night
Social Hour, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Saturday: Texas Hold'em Tournament at 3 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.
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:

The Rescue Band with Solid Ray Woods, J.P. Houston, followed by a late show with Phaxanation and the Dust Kickers with Crater Creator

Solid Ray Woods will perform his raw soul review, Phaxanation describes themselves as Indie psychedelic
When: The first show is at 7:30 p.m., and the late show starts at 10 p.m. on Friday, July 15

Zapf Dingbats

Improvised music reminiscent of dawg music or gypsy jazz
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, July 16
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 15 and 16
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 Movie in Luckie Park, "Shrek Forever After"

When: 8:30 p.m. Thursday, July 21
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 15 and 16
Where: Theatre 29
73637 Sullivan Road, Twentynine Palms
For more information call 361-4151 or visit <http://www.theatre29.com>.

Yucca Valley Summer Music Festival, New Caribbean

Island music, reggae, Soca and Calypso
When: 7 p.m., Saturday, July 16
Where: Theatre 29
73637 Sullivan Road, Twentynine Palms
For more information call 361-4151 or visit <http://www.theatre29.com>

Lower Desert

George Thorogood and the Destroyers

The bad-boy rocker performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, July 30
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Diana Ross

The Motown diva/actress performs
When: 8 p.m., Friday, Sept. 9
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinosort.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, July 15

6 p.m. - Jumping the Broom, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. - Bridesmaids, Rated R
Midnight - Hangover 2, Rated R

Saturday, July 16

11 a.m. - **Free Matinee.** Kung Fu Panda, Rated G
2 p.m. - Kung Fu Panda 2, Rated PG
6 p.m. - Pirates of the Caribbean, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. - The Conspirator, Rated PG-13
Midnight - Priest, Rated PG-13

Sunday, July 17

2 p.m. - Judy Moody, Rated PG
6 p.m. - **Sneak Preview.** Captain America, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. - X-Men: First Class, Rated PG-13

Monday, July 18

7 p.m. - Pirates of the Caribbean, Rated PG-13

Tuesday, July 19

7 p.m. - Hangover 2, Rated R

Wednesday, July 20

7 p.m. - Jumping the Broom, Rated PG-13

Thursday, July 21

7 p.m. - Bridesmaids, Rated R



COURTESY PHOTO

Tom Hanks wrote and directed the movie, and played the title character, Larry Crowne, who after losing his job returns to school and falls in love with his teacher, Mercedes, played by Julia Roberts.

Even Hanks, Roberts can't sell lightweight fantasy

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"Larry Crowne"

Starring Tom Hanks and Julia Roberts
Rated PG-13

Tom Hanks plays a displaced worker who goes back to school and falls in love with his teacher in "Larry Crowne," which slaps a sunny Hollywood smile on the mean ol' recessionary blues in a lightweight tale of career reinvention, romantic rejuvenation... and motor scooters.

Hanks, who also wrote and directed the movie, plays the title role, a middle-aged manager unceremoniously axed in the opening scene from his job at a big-box retail store. "Times are tough," he's told. Nevermind that he's been there for nearly 20 years, he's the best



COURTESY PHOTO

Trying to return to a simpler, less expensive life-style, Larry trades in his SUV for a fuel efficient scooter

employee on the floor and he truly loves his job, Larry's let go because he doesn't have a

college education and therefore will never be upper-ladder, front-office material.

Sorry, Larry. He unsuccessfully pounds the pavement before enrolling for a couple of classes in a community college, docking his gas-guzzling SUV for a fuel-efficient retro scooter and falling back on his two decades of kitchen skills in the U.S. Navy for a job as a short-order diner cook.

Julia Roberts plays one of Larry's instructors, Mercedes, a bit recessed herself, stalled on her academic track and unhappily hitched to an Internet-porn-addicted husband, Bryan Cranston from TV's "Breaking Bad." The supporting charac-

ters are played by a solid, pedigreed cast, including George Takei of TV's original "Star Trek," Pam Grier, standup comedian Cedric the Entertainer, Hank's real-life wife, Rita Wilson, and Grace Gummer, whose resemblance to actress mom Meryl Streep is striking. But they're all mono-dimensional, one-note, sitcom-esque silhouettes, given little to do except provide an ethnically mixed comedic background.

You may feel the inevitable emotional connectivity that eventually brings Larry and Mercedes together, but most of the rest of the story is a real stretch. The whole movie has an overly tweaked, only-in-Hollywood feel, widely distanced from the real world as anyone in the audience will recognize it.

Do you really believe Larry would be taken under wing, on his first day of classes, by a beautiful "scooter chick," British actress Gugu Mbatha-Raw, from TV's short-lived series "Undercovers," or that she and her "gang" would take him on as a personal makeover project? Or that Larry's kooky classmates seem as real as the "sweat hog" cutups from "Welcome Back, Kotter"?

In the end, even Hanks and Roberts, two of Hollywood's most likeable mega-stars who are as likeable as ever, can't quite sell the rom-com fantasy that "Larry Crowne" wants you to buy - at whatever double-digit price you're asked to pay at the box office.

Times are tough, and movie tickets are expensive. Sorry, Larry.

Combat Center Leisure

Desert Detours: Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace



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
SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN**

EDITOR / PRESS CHIEF

Tucked into the 1940s old Western movie set where Gene Autry and the Cisco Kid made names for themselves as Western superstars, is a rustic saloon that attracts everyone from local yokel hipster types to dusty, nomadic bikers.

My first ever five-palm rated Detour, Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace, located four winding miles off of Highway 62 on Pioneertown Road in Yucca Valley, is known to many as a hidden hotspot housing some darn good folk, country and blues music.

It is known to others simply as the best place to grab a cup of coffee and a bowl of their famous homemade chili.

Other menu items include the Nachos Von Rabbit, created by desert rocker Jesika Von Rabbit, front woman for Gram Rabbit; and Pappy's Steak Salad, a veritable mini-mountain of Santa Maria

BBQ and mixed greens with pico de gallo, tomatoes and shredded cheese.

My favorite is, and will always be, the grilled cheese. This is no ordinary sandwich. Theirs is a sweetly crunchy cheese confection that even the most demanding of dairy connoisseurs can appreciate. Add tomatoes, and c'est magnifique.

Whatever your reasoning for heading out to the palace, you can't beat the vibe, and outdoor seating offers an unmatched view of the millions of stars seated in the desert's night sky.

Some days, Pappy's is filled rafter-to-rafter with a lively crowd surging to the beats of the many musicians who grace their stage. Bands like local celebrities Gram Rabbit and Queens of the Stone Age, and indie-rock favorites like Band of Horses and the Arctic Monkeys have all called P&H home for a night.

On other days, as few as 10 or 15 diehard Pappy's fans will be shuffling

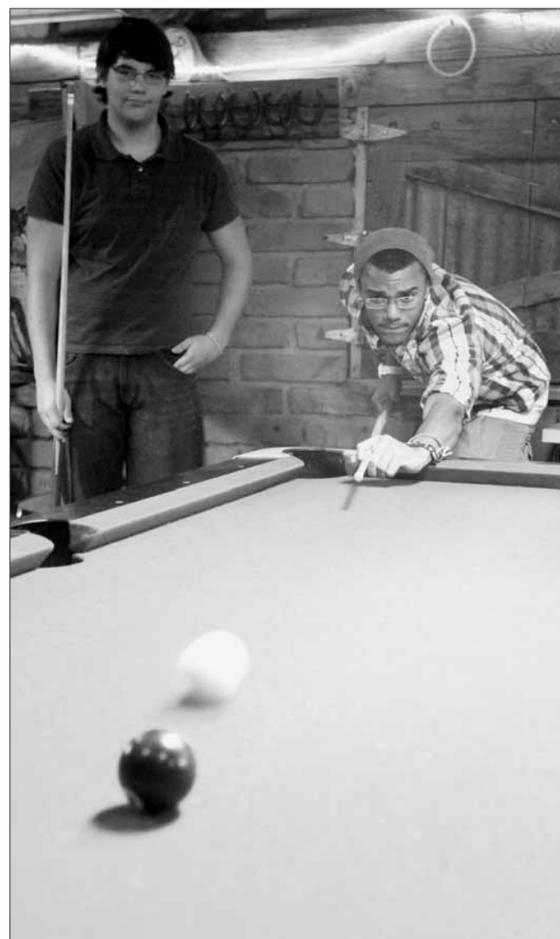
See DETOURS, B4



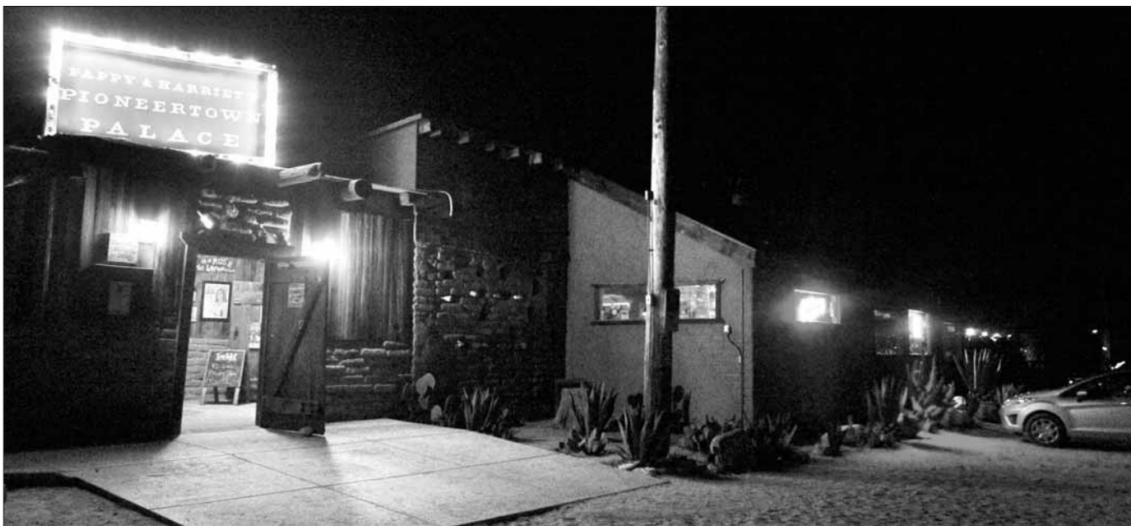
A travelling duo makes their debut in the desert during Ted Quinn's Open Mic Night at Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace. Open mic nights are every Monday.



Local musicians collaborate during Ted Quinn's Open Mic Night at Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace.

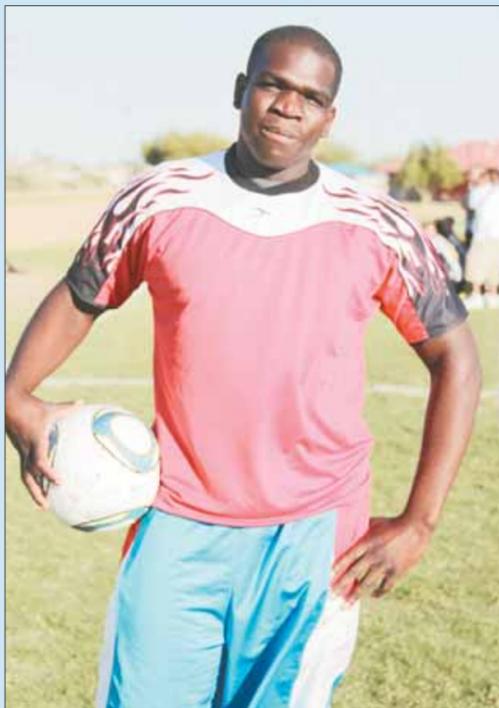


Locals take up a round of pool at Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace, located four miles off Highway 62 in Yucca Valley.



Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace sits nestled into a 1940s movie set that served as the background for films featuring the Cisco Kid, Gene Autry and Annie Oakley.

Athlete of the Week



EMILY ANDERSON

Name: Maxwony Jean

Hometown: Houston

Position: Center midfield and defender for the Headquarters Battalion intramural soccer league team.

What do you enjoy most about the sport?: "The chaos. People bouncing all over the place. It's my first time playing, so just the whole experience all together."

Do you have any advice for aspiring athletes?: "Just go out there, and do it. Even if you don't understand what's going on, get out there, and you'll learn as you play."



SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

Travelling musician Riz takes a bow after his set during Ted Quinn's Open Mic Night at Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace. The one-man roots band is making his way along the California coast.

DETOURS, from B3

around, pool stick or chilled Mason jar of beer in hand.

These are my favorite days. Ones where you can kick back, chill out with an ice cold beverage and count how many interesting people you run into.

If you want to check out the local, as-of-yet-undiscovered talent, wander in on Monday nights during Ted Quinn's Open Mic Night.

I've seen and heard everything from full bands getting stage experience to local poets belting out their latest spoken word masterpieces.

The joint is closed Tuesday and Wednesday, but has shows scheduled every Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, rather than just the two-day weekend gigs most venues boast.

Tonight features The Rescue Band with Solid Ray Woods at 7:30 p.m., then

Phaxanation and The Dust Kickers & Crater Creator at 10 p.m. The bluesy Zapf Dingbats will be coming up from their home in San Diego Saturday night. Sunday is home of the Sunday Rock and Roll Services, where local musicians gather to jam and trade songs at 7 p.m.

This week's sets are all free. Some shows do have a \$10 cover charge though, like the upcoming Jessica

Lea Mayfield & Ferraby Lionheart concert July 22.

Just check P&H's website at <http://www.pappyandharriets.com> for updated schedules and pricing.

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.