

3/3 TOWs the line, page A3

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Marine runs "A Mile in Their Shoes" event, page B1

OBSERVATION POST

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS

September 9, 2011

Since 1957

Vol. 54 Issue 36

'America's Battalion' fires away

CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Communication is key, but it's even harder when the sounds of suppressing machinegun fire, M-16's and shoulder-launched multipurpose assault weapons echo throughout the

Combat Center's Range 410A Wednesday.

Marines with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, employed a variety of weapons systems during their platoon-size attack. Company I cleared trenches, conducted tactical sight exploita-

tions and suppressed an onslaught of enemy advances at Range 410A, all for their upcoming company-sized training event.

"We're doing our platoon maneuvers in preparation for our main event," said 1stSgt Robert Rice, the Co. I first sergeant. "It's just the basic fundamentals as a platoon. We're meeting our objective of preparedness for the company live-fire and maneuver."

Lance Cpl. Michael Barboza, an assault squad leader with Co. I, 3/3, said it's not just about the weapons systems.

"Personally," said the Traverse City, Mich., native, "it's just training my new guys, getting them comfortable shooting the SMAW and getting them comfortable with moving while there is [suppressive fire]. I'm just trying to get my new guys up to speed."

The machinegun chatter on top of Machinegun Hill kept the enemy at bay while Marines in the trenches cleared the way.

"This helps coordinate our guns," said Lance Cpl. Tyler Connor, a team leader with Co. I, 3/3, while scanning the area for a counter attack. "It's also good training for the advancement of



CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Marines with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, train with the Shoulder-Launched Multipurpose Assault Weapon during platoon sized attacks on objectives at Range 410A Wednesday.

See FIRES, A6

MCX open for business



PFC. ALI AZIMI

Service members and families wait in line for the grand opening of the new Marine Corps Exchange.

New exchange, one stop shopping for Marines and family members

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Yesterday marked the end of years of anticipation for the Combat Center Community as the new Marine Corps Exchange's doors opened for business.

"I have been here since 2008, and they were talking about it. I thought I wasn't going to see it because I am leaving here soon but I got to be here at the grand opening," said Cpl. Marino Mora-Herrera, a motor transport operator with Headquarters Co., 7th Marine Regiment. "It's awesome, they have a bigger selection than the old one and they have food, Starbucks, hot dogs and pizza."

The wait was worth it as the patrons entered the Marine Corps Exchange for the first time and saw the open floor concept showing off the huge size and selections available.

The new MCX's larger floor plan accommodates expanded men's, women's and children's clothing and shoe departments, uniform sales and a food court.

Some features previously only available at the Home Store, like outdoor and toy departments are also now making their permanent residence at the MCX.

"We wanted to make it as much of a one-stop-shopping experience for the Marines as we could," said Patrick Rooney, the deputy director of business opera-

tions at the MCX. "This is a fresh vision of the base exchanges and will help give the Marines a reason to shop on base instead of driving to Palm Springs."

Situated around the the main floor are other amenities, including a Starbucks Coffee, Walters Pizzeria, Nathan's Famous, Mark Pi's Express, the Intermision Café, a barbershop, GNC Live Well, and the new Recreation Information, Tickets and Tour office.

"When you think about our commandant's priority of keeping faith with the Marines and their families, there is no finer example of that than this fine facility," said Brig. Gen. George W. Smith Jr. "It is going to serve hundreds of thousands of Marines and their families for decades to come."

New MCX hours:

Open 7 days a week
6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Holidays:
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Shops inside MCX:

Intermission Café
Nathan's Famous
Walter's Pizzeria
Mark Pi's Express
Recreation Information
Tickets and Tours
GNC Live Well
Barber Shop
Starbucks Coffee

Tanks, infantry team up, train up



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

A simulated rocket propelled grenade cripples a tank with Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, during the clear stage of the Enhanced Mojave Viper training for 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion at range 220 Sept. 5.

See story and photo spread on pages A4 and A5

Medals awarded before 'Cutting Edge' returns to combat

LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Third Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, awarded one Bronze Star Medal with a Combat "V" and two Purple Heart Medals Sept. 2 at Liberty Field.

When given with a "V" for

valor, the Bronze Star is the fourth highest medal in the U.S. Armed Forces.

1st Lt. Joshua Waddell, the executive officer for Company I, 3/7, was recognized with this honor for his actions in Sangin, Afghanistan, last year.

On Sept. 13, 2010, Waddell, then a platoon commander, and

his Marines were surrounded by more than 50 Taliban fighters and taking fire by almost every direction. He employed his platoon in an effective defensive position to repel the enemy's 10-hour-long assault. His leadership was directly responsible to for the superb performance of his platoon

and the efforts of the insurgents kept at bay. Waddell then exposed himself to enemy fire in order to gain identification of enemy targets. The platoon suffered no casualties, while the Taliban forces suffered more than 22 confirmed killed or wounded.

"It was the first major offensive we did since the [British] pulled out," Waddell said. "I work with phenomenal Marines, and they carried us through it. I can't take any credit. They did everything."

"The British Royal Marines were watching from their [forward operating base] from a distance, and apparently we had a cheering section," Waddell said. "It was their first time seeing U.S. Marines in action. We are proud to go back and fight with our brothers."

His father, Mark Waddell, a former Navy Seal, presented his son with the Bronze Star.

"It was a huge honor [to get it from him]. Something I will



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

1st Lt. Joshua Waddell, the executive officer for Company I, 3/7, is presented his Bronze Star Medal by his father, Mark Waddell, a former Navy Seal and enlisted commander.



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Col. Austin Renforth, the 7th Marine Regiment commanding officer, speaks to the Marines of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, days before they leave on their deployment at Liberty Field Sept. 2, just after an awards ceremony.

See MEDALS, A6

Protect your smile during play

COL. JEFF CHAFFIN
TRICARE DENTAL CARE BRANCH

If you or your child participates in sports or other recreational activities, you know the importance of protective gear. Wearing protective gear is essential for safe play and shielding fragile body parts from severe damage and injuries.

One good way to protect your teeth is by wearing an athletic mouth guard during any activity that could cause harm or injury to your mouth. The TRICARE Dental Program covers enrollees for one custom fitted athletic mouth guard at a 50 percent cost-share, per consecutive 12-month period.

Athletic mouth guards help to prevent broken and chipped teeth, cuts inside the mouth and tongue, even nerve damage and tooth loss possible during some activities. Using an athletic mouth guard may also reduce the rate and severity of concussions, according

to the American Dental Association.

Athletic mouth guards absorb some of the shock experienced from a blow to the head, and help to distribute it evenly.

According to the ADA an athlete is 60 times more likely to suffer injury to their teeth or mouth when not wearing an athletic mouth guard. Even in non-contact sports like gymnastics and biking, athletic mouth guards are shown to help prevent injuries.

There are several types of athletic mouth guards available. Many stores sell preformed and "boil and bite" mouth guards that are not covered by the TDP. These are generally less expensive options than having your dentist custom-fit a piece for you, however they will most likely not fit as well and may be uncomfortable to wear.

Your athletic mouth guard should fit comfortably, and not restrict your breathing or speech.

It should be easy to clean and made of a resilient, tear-resistant material. Visit your TDP-participating dentist and talk about the best option for you and your children.

Athletic mouth guards are easy to care for and should be taken care of properly.

Make sure you clean your mouth guard after each use, either by brushing with a toothbrush and toothpaste or by washing with cool, soapy water and rinsing with clean water.

You should regularly wash your mouth guard with soap and water and carry it in a sturdy, well vented container.

Don't leave the piece in the sun because extreme heat can affect the shape and fit of your mouthpiece.

Finally, take your mouth guard to each dentist appointment so that your dentist can check for proper fit and damage or wear.

Your dentist can answer any questions you might have about use or care.

This Week in Combat Center History

Reprinted from the Observation Post dated Sept. 12, 1957. Vol. 7, No. 35

1st AW mobile column moves 260 miles in four days

AUTHOR: UNKNOWN

The **1** 1st AAA AW Battalion, under the command of Lt. Col. W.F. Lloyd, embarked Monday, Sept. 9th, on a four day field problem which took in most of **2** MCB, 29 Palms. This **3** problem was unique in the fact that during their stay in the field, 275 men of the battalion traveled over 260 miles by tracked vehicle.

The problem began Monday morning with firing exercises. The battalion left that morning with an indirect shoot in AAA I area where the unit conducted field exercises in the area and journeyed through **4** X-Ray, Fox, and Easy Areas in order to reach the Sunshine Mine in the Charlie area of the base. The column consisted of 16 **5** M42 tanks and many other auxiliary transport vehicles such as jeeps, gasoline supply trucks, chow trucks, and other supply carriers needed for sustenance of the troops.

While in the Sunshine Mine area the men of the battalion were tested on military subjects, including infantry tactics and other fields unrelated to the to the artillery field. The tests were given to determine the winner of the **6** Battalion Commander's Trophy.

During their stay in the field, the troops fired all small arms, including the 30 and 50 caliber machine guns, anti-tank weapons, and the submachine gun. The men of the battalion also got a taste of **7** ABC warfare in the tear gas chamber taken along for training purposes.

1st AW will return to the main area on Friday. To date the spirit of the men has remained high. The spirit of the organization was reflected in the skills and attitudes of the men of the battalion, during the firing exercises and movement phases.

1. 1st AAA AW Battalion or 1st Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Bn.
2. Marine Corps Base, 29 Palms, is the name of the installation before it became the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms. The name changed in 1979.
3. The "problem" was a phrase used to describe what we now call an "exercise" or an "operation."
4. Ray, Fox, Easy Areas and Sunshine Mine were training areas on the Combat Center in 1957.
5. M42 Tanks were tanks used from 1952 until 1959, it was replaced with the HAWK missiles during the Vietnam War. When the missile performed poorly, the M42A1 tank was developed and used in Vietnam. The system was retired in 1988.
6. The Battalion Commander's Trophy was most likely an incentive for a battalion wide competition in order to keep morale high during the exercise.
7. "ABC warfare" refers to atomic, biological, or chemical weapons.

Reprinted from the Observation Post dated Sept. 4, 1964. Vol. 8, No. 36

1st LAAM Bn. to field for nine-day **1** FFEF

AUTHOR: UNKNOWN

The **2** 1st LAAM Battalion - taking Labor Day seriously - literally moved into the field Tuesday in execution of a nine-day, first-of-its-kind tactical training and field firing exercise.

Commanded by LtCol Bert Code, the 1st LAAM Missilemen are deploying, digging-in and camouflaging their weapons and equipment in their assigned mission of defending the vital airfield and area of NO DANG GUD in the X-RAY area. According to Col Cook, **3** the problem marks the first time a local missile battalion

has operated completely - administratively and logistically - in the field utilizing mount-out gear.

Previous battalion exercises of the "Anthill" variety are designed to test mount-out capabilities while simulating movement from base camp to embarkation.

Going a step further for the first time, the 1st LAAMS training exercise is simulating problems and conditions that are likely to confront Marine Missilemen during movement from debarkation to the enemy objective stage.

On Sept. 9, the 1st LAAMS will conclude their field exercise with a Hawk shoot.

1. FFEF, or "final field exercise."
2. 1st LAAM Battalion or 1st Light Anti-Aircraft Missile Bn.
3. The "problem" was a phrase used to describe what we now call and "exercise" or an "operation."

OBSERVATION POST

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Hot Topics

INTRAMURAL FLAG FOOTBALL

The Intramural Flag Football League is starting up and will be held Sept. 20 to Dec. 15 at Del Valle Field. Must be active duty, family member or DoD employee. For more information call MCCS Sports at 830-4092.

TEXAS HOLD 'EM TOURNAMENT

On Sept. 10 at 7 p.m. the Single Marine Program and Drug Demand Reduction are teaming up to host a Texas Hold 'em Tournament in the Taco Bell lobby. There will be prizes given. For more information or to sign up call the SMP at 830-4767.

SOUNDS OF FREEDOM

The fourth annual Sounds of Freedom concert will be held at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field on Sept. 24 at 6 p.m. The event includes food vendors and a concert with the Combat Center Band, Toy, and headliner, Uncle Kracker. This event is open to all MCCS eligible patrons.

DESERT WINDS GOLF COURSE

Every Wednesday for active duty, the greens fees will be \$10 all day. Every Thursday for DOD employees, the greens fee will be \$15 all day. Come down, be active and have fun. For more information, call 830-6132.



Eagle Eyes

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 #2292

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2011 HOMETOWN CONTENT

HOT TIP

[Puzzle solutions on A4]

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ACROSS

1. Catches some rays
5. Suffix with auto or bureau
9. Roman Empire invaders
14. "...or ___ me?"
15. Bank takeback
16. Come to terms
17. Symbol of stubbornness
18. Wallet wad
19. "Maria ___" (40s hit)
20. They're tipped
23. Crocket's last stand
24. Poetic pugilist
25. Erie Canal mule
28. Subway standee's aid
32. Strait of Messina monster
34. Start of MGM's motto
37. British nobles
39. Sashimi fare
40. They're tipped
44. Kumquat's shape
45. Boyfriends
46. ___ - cone (Summer treat)
47. Part of CORE
50. Gloomy, in poetry

DOWN

1. Animated movie
2. "The ___" (Tavern order)
3. Nabisco wafer
4. Gets really ticked
5. Moat critter, for short
6. Russo of "Get Shorty"
7. Givvons et al
8. Puccini heroine
9. Language that gave us "banshee"
10. Look like a wolf
11. Bald
12. Cackler
13. Ross or Sargasso
21. Observer
22. Two of the racing Unsers
26. Green Mountain Boys leader
27. Will Roger's prop
29. Wet behind the ears
30. Fine horse
31. Practiced, as a trade
33. Doorbell-
34. Be gaga over
35. Hertz, to Avis
36. Carnival stands
38. Telephone button
41. Biblical priest
42. Be contrite
43. Crammers' worries
48. Most fit
49. "___ darlin'" (Jazz standard)
51. Speak from memory
54. Lighter brand
56. Virginia's ___ Caverns
57. Former New York mayor Abe
58. Chuckleheads
60. Thumb-twiddling
61. Sahanan
62. Civil Rights activist Parks
63. Make-or-break time
64. Touch-tone four
65. Turn tail

3/3 preps for war with TOW, Javelin missiles

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
CPL. REECE LODDER**

3RD BATTALION, 3RD MARINE REGIMENT

Cloaked by darkness in a silent wilderness, two teams of anti-tank missilemen itched with anticipation to reign destruction from afar.

Time passed and each Marine received his turn to fire. The surrounding world evaporated as they climbed into the tactical vehicle's turret. They mounted and prepared their deadly weapon, gripping it with purpose and sighting in through lenses of adrenaline.

Anti-tank missilemen and machine gunners with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, practiced firing Javelin and Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided missiles at the Black Top Range Training Area at the Combat Center Aug. 28 and 29.

The TOW gunner ran through pre-firing procedures and was cleared to fire.

"Fire in the hole, fire in the hole, fire in the hole!" he screamed.

There was a pop and then waiting – one-one thousand, two-one thousand. A fiery orange back blast erupted from the rear of the missile and the silver flash screamed through the air toward its target far across the desert.

The missile quickly found the target and created a tumultuous blast of fire. Only seconds later, a thundering boom rocked the mountain as the missile exploded. The next shooter stepped up, loaded a new missile and eagerly waited to fire.

"We shoot rifles and machine guns, but the TOW missiles are bigger and louder," Lance Cpl. Galen Murphy-Fahlgren, an anti-tank missileman with Weapons Company, 3/3, said. "Shooting them is a rush."

Murphy-Fahlgren and the other missilemen are part of the company's Combined Anti-Armor Teams 1 and 2 – teams organized to destroy enemy tanks and armored vehicles.

The CAAT Marines train to employ two missiles in anti-armor warfare — the Javelin and TOW. The medium Javelin missile tracks and neutralizes



Cpl. Aaron Pickett, an anti-tank missileman with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, fires a Javelin missile from the front of a humvee during the Enhanced Mojave Viper training exercise at the Combat Center's Black Top Range Training Area Aug. 29.



Anti-tank missilemen with Weapons Company, 3/3, crouch next to a humvee as a fellow missileman fires a Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided missile during the EMV training exercise.

static and moving targets up to 2,500 meters away using a thermal optic system. The heavy TOW missile locks onto targets up to 4,200 meters away with an infrared signature.

"Tanks can't shoot past 3,200 meters, so we can hit them with a TOW missile a kilometer before they can shoot us," the 22-year-old Murphy-Fahlgren, from

Canton, Mich., said. "This gives us a huge advantage."

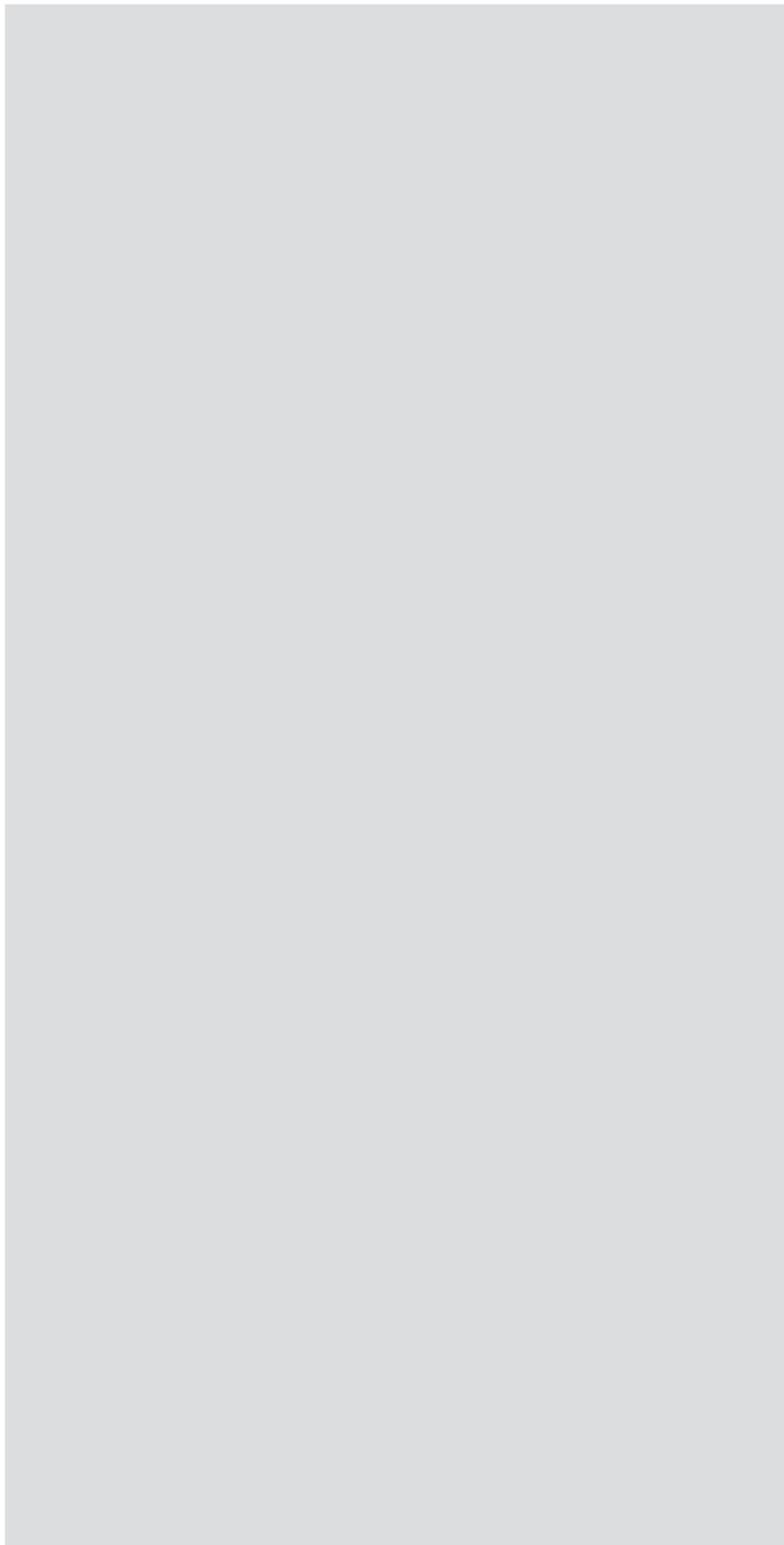
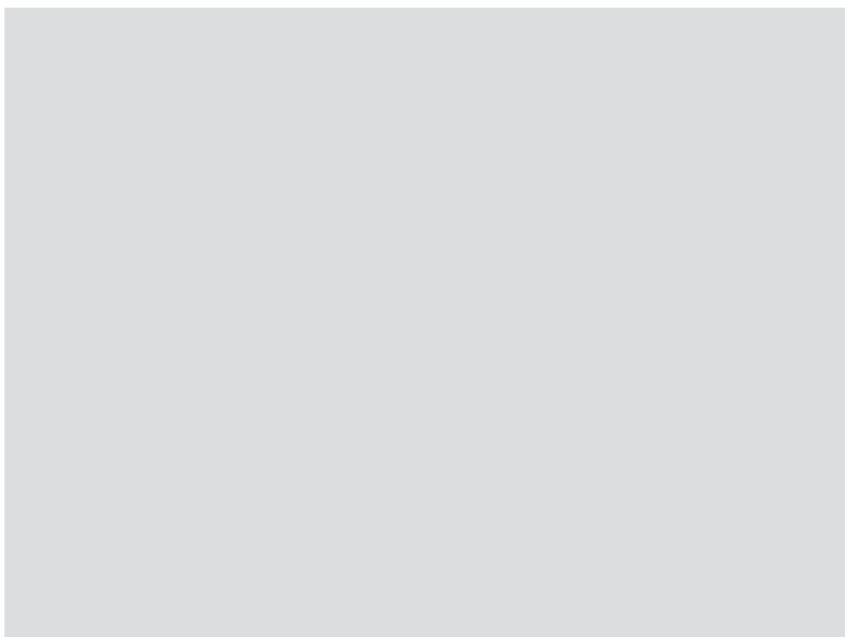
Their stage for the training, the 35-day Enhanced Mojave Viper training exercise, is preparing them for an upcoming fall deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

At EMV, the CAAT

See TOW, A6



Lance Cpl. Cody Blessing, an anti-tank missileman with Weapons Company, 3/3, prepares to load a missile for firing during the EMV training exercise. Blessing, 18, is from Perryville, Mo.



**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN**

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines are trained to fight as a team, using everyone's strengths and weaknesses to accomplish the mission. This goes on from the individual fire team level to battalions of different job fields coming together for mission accomplishment.

The Marines and sailors of 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, along with support from Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, perform platoon sized clearing exercises in the "Clear, Hold, Build-1" training during Enhanced Mojave Viper at Range 220 Monday.

"This is the first time, as a unit, we have trained with tanks and we have learned more in one morning, with practical application, than a week in the classrooms," said 1st Lt. Logan Deffner, 1st platoon commander with Co. D, 1st LAR.

"This is a good opportunity for the younger Marines because most of them have never operated with another unit and don't see the bigger picture [outside what their individual jobs are,]" said Gunnery Sgt. Eliesel Rivera, the platoon sergeant for Co. A, 1st Tanks. "For the infantry guys today, this lets them see what the tanks can do for them."

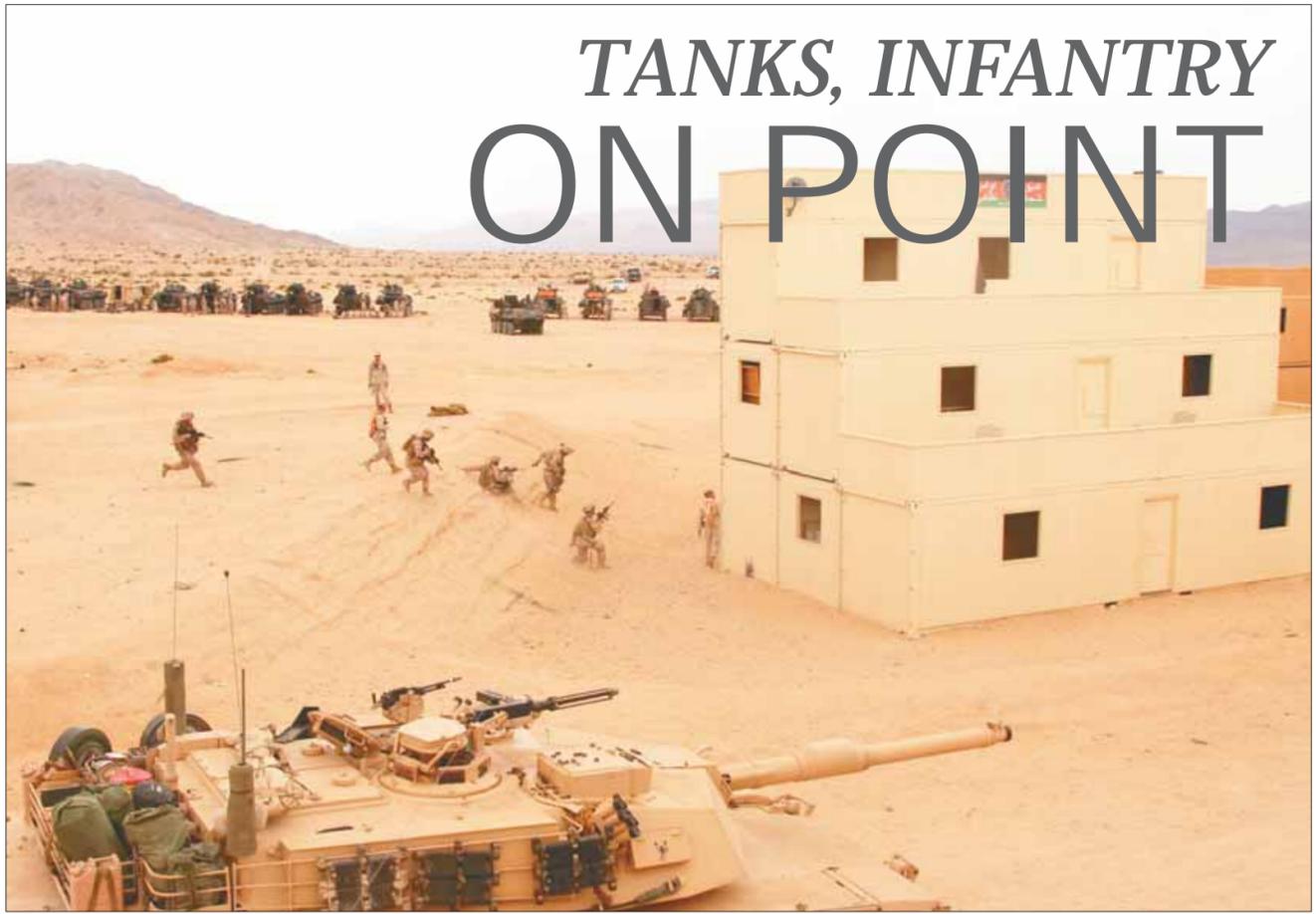
In addition to having tanks available for support, the unit also had bomb sniffing Labrador retrievers embedded with the units.

"We have sent the dog ahead of us and he found some IEDs so we maneuvered around them and continued with the mission," said Lance Cpl. Richard Morton, a dog handler with Co. D, 1st LAR.

The dog had helped the unit avoid multiple IEDs and proved the old saying 'smooth is slow and slow is smooth' helps keep Marines alive, he added.

Once the Marines made it into the buildings, Deffner stressed that every Marine keep their eyes open for any potential threats of danger.

"Everyone is an information gatherer," Deffner said. "If you see something that could be important, don't keep it to yourself, start passing it up your chain of command."



An M1A1 Abrams tank with Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, provides support for 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion Marines as the infantry Marines run toward the next objective during the clear stage of the Enhanced Mojave Viper training at Range 220 Sept. 5.

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN



A simulated improvised explosive device is set off as a Marine with 1st LAR Battalion performs the clear stage of the EMV at Range 220 Sept. 5.

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

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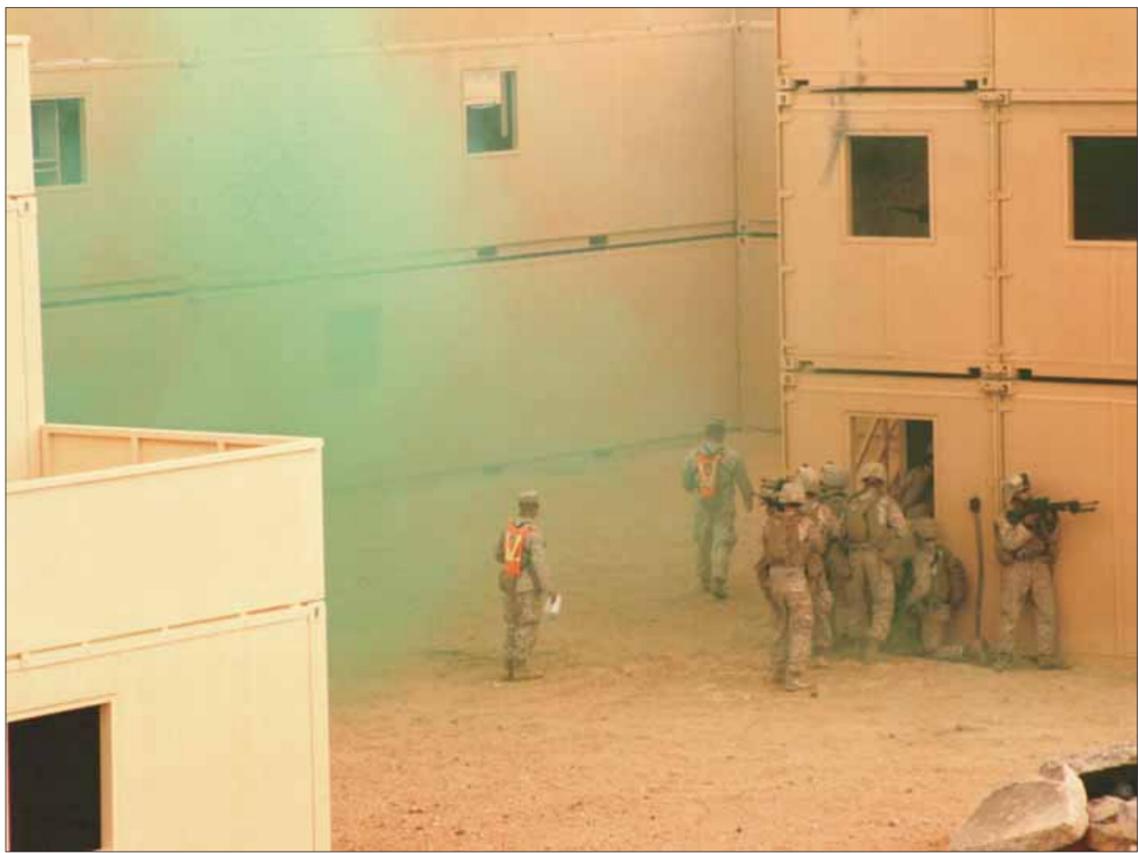
CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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ADVERTISEMENT



Marines with 1st LAR Battalion bound to the enemy position and move a simulated casualty to a secure location during the clear stage of the EMV training at Range 220 Sept. 5.



PHOTOS BY CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Marines with 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion breach an enemy controlled building using green smoke for added concealment during the clear stage of the Enhanced Mojave Viper training at Range 220 Sept. 5.



Marines with 1st LAR Battalion move a simulated casualty to a secure location during the clear stage of the EMV training at Range 220 Sept. 5.



CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Lance Cpl. Brandon Lee [front] a machine gunner with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, lays down suppressive fire with his M240G while Lance Cpl. Tyler Connor, a team leader with Co. I, 3/3, directs the machine gun bursts during a platoon size attack at the Combat Center's Range 410A Wednesday.



CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Marines with Co. I, 3/3, engage an enemy target after securing a trench at the Combat Center's Range 410A Wednesday.

FIRES, from A1

the riflemen.”
 “Like every unit there's going to be parts where we need to work on but we manage,” added Lance Cpl. Brandon Lee, a machine gunner with Co. I, 3/3 and a native of Cottonwood, Ariz.
 Company I hit the range with four platoons. The platoons continued to work on their communication through the exercise building on their efforts for CHB-2.
 “The whole objective is go up with numerous types of fires to the final objective, said Rice. “It's the final preparation for Saturday's evolution. They're getting the basic fundamentals [of working as a platoon.]”

TOW, from A3

Marines are practicing the same ranges as the other line companies, polishing infantry tactics, shooting machine guns and operating out of tactical vehicles.
 In Afghanistan's Helmand province this fall, they'll mainly conduct dismounted security patrols. They'll eagerly await the opportunity to employ the

missiles – like when an enemy fighter is spotted planting an improvised explosive device, or when a passageway into a compound needs to be cleared, Sgt. Jose Portillo, an anti-tank missileman with Weapons Company, 3/3, said.
 When they aren't patrolling or firing missiles, they'll observe the enemy using the two systems' thermal and infrared optic systems.

“In a seven-month deployment, these Marines might only have one or two chances to fire the missiles,” 1st Lt. Douglas Kansier, CAAT-2's platoon commander, said.
 “The job-specific training they're doing now may be used for only 30 seconds on deployment, but they're practicing until it's automatic,” Kansier, 25, from Lincoln,

Neb., said.
 The opportunity to fire the missiles is rare, so EMV is helping pairs the missilemen's knowledge of the system with personal confidence, Portillo, 25, from Lawrenceville, Ga., said.
 “If they can go into the deployment knowing they can hit the target, they'll hit it when the opportunity arises in country,” Portillo said.



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

[From left] 1st Lt. Joshua Waddell, who received a Bronze Star Medal, 1st Lt. Schyler Newson and Cpl. Zane Kutch, who both received Purple Heart Medals. The three medals were presented at an awards ceremony at Liberty Field Sept. 2.

MEDALS, from A1

never forget,” Waddell said.
 The two Purple Heart Medals, were awarded to Cpl. Zane Kutch, wounded Aug. 23, 2010, and 1st Lt. Schyler Newson wounded Aug. 18, 2010, both in Afghanistan.
 This ceremony took place mere days before “The Cutting Edge” Marines once again stepped foot in Sangin, Afghanistan. The Marines of 3/7 were the first to take the control of Sangin from British forces last year, and are now returning to continue their job during what they refer to as “Sangin II.”
 “There's a few things I

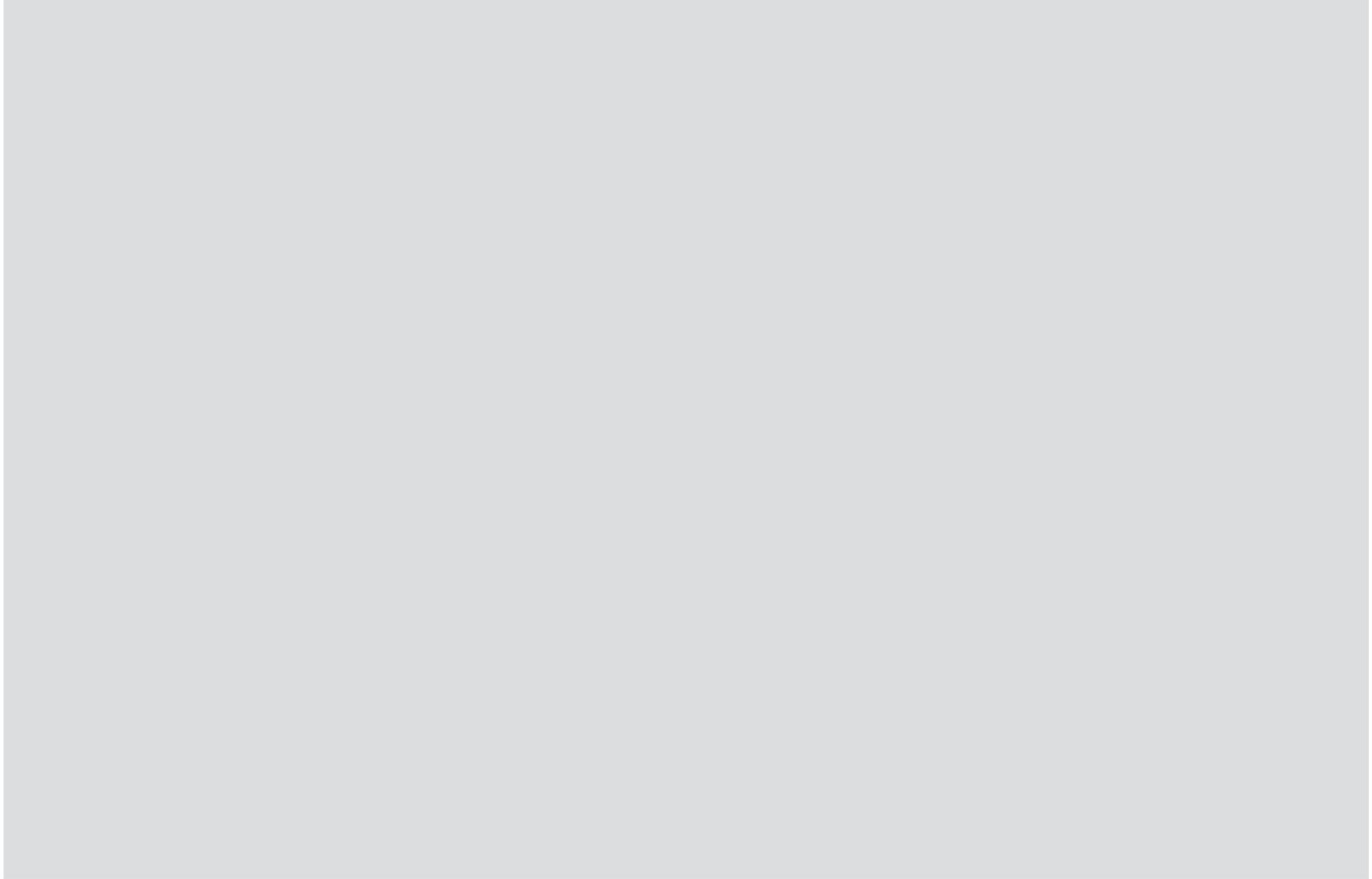
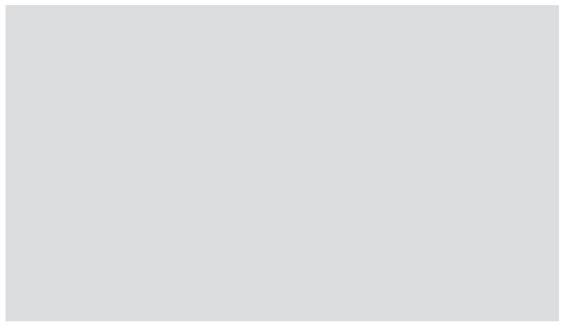
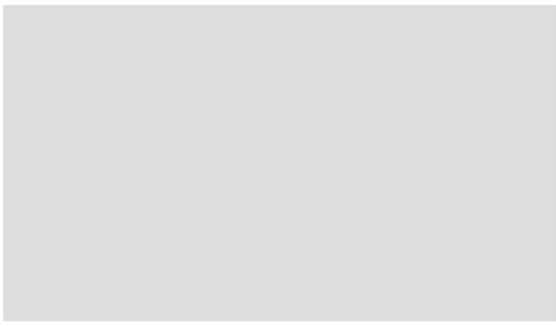
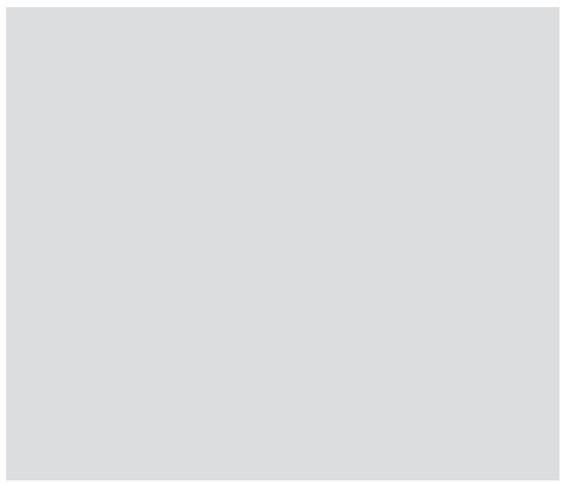
remember when I go over,” said Col. Austin Renforth, the 7th Marines commander, as he spoke to his Marines.
 “One, we as men are different, and we are especially different because we came into the Marine Corps. We have chosen a life with a sense of purpose. We always look for those experiences that give you a sense of purpose. You don't get it in garrison. You get it in combat.
 “Dedicate yourself to your unit, mission and brother,” Renforth said. “We would rather die than let our brother die. That's who we are. I will see you guys back here in seven months, and the first beer is on me.”



CPL. REECE LODDER

Anti-tank missilemen with Weapons Company, 3/3, watch as a fellow missileman fires a Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided missile from a Humvee during the Enhanced Mojave Viper training exercise at the Combat Center's Black Top Range Training Area Aug. 29.

 <p>Visit the official MCAGCC facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter</p>	 <p>The Combat Center has its own YouTube channel. Find it at http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO</p>	 <p>The Combat Center has its own Flickr photo and video streams. Find them at http://www.flickr.com/thecombatcenter</p>
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WeekINPhotos

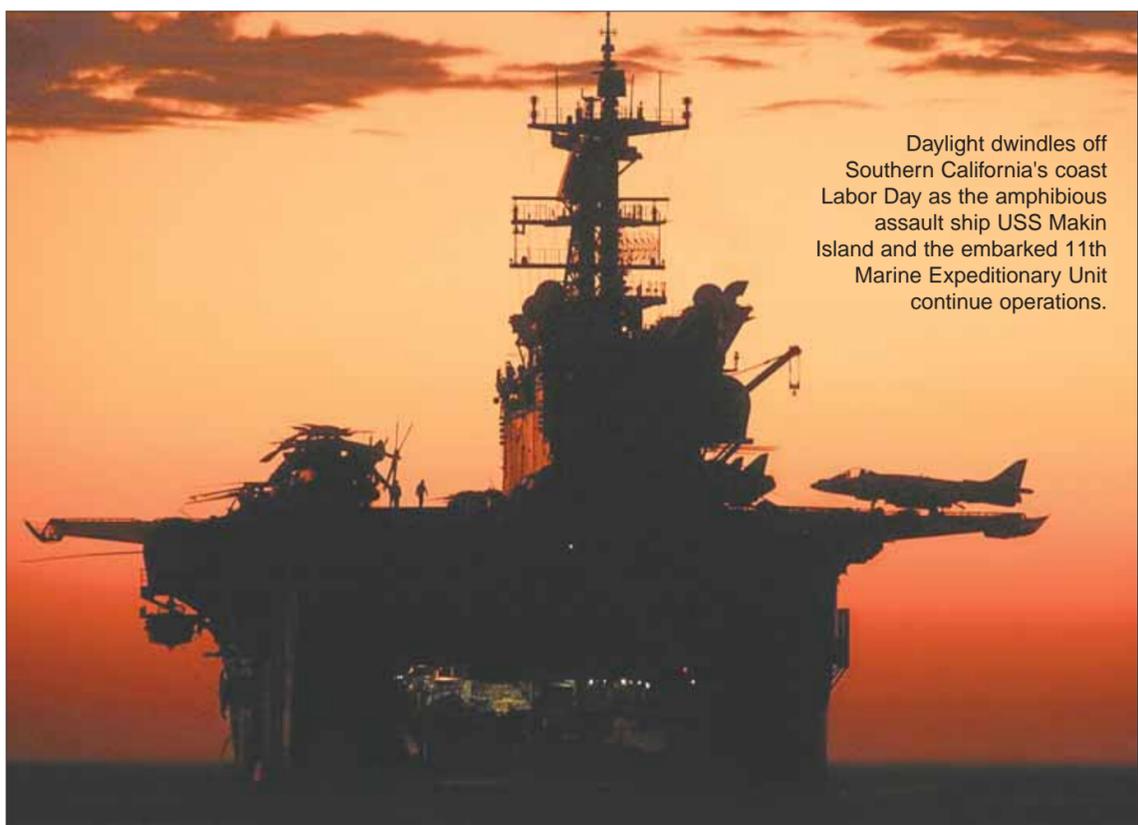
11th Marine Expeditionary Unit



CPL. TOMMY HUYNH

[Above] Marines release a communications balloon from the amphibious assault ship Makin Island off Southern California's coast Sept. 4. The balloon is designed to carry a radio relay up to 80,000 feet above Earth, extending communications to an area 600 miles in diameter, regardless of terrain. The Marines serve with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit's command element.

[Below] Marines serving with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit's Battalion Landing Team 3/1 debark CH-46 Sea Knights at the Combat Center Sept. 4. The Marines performed a live-fire, long-range helicopter raid.

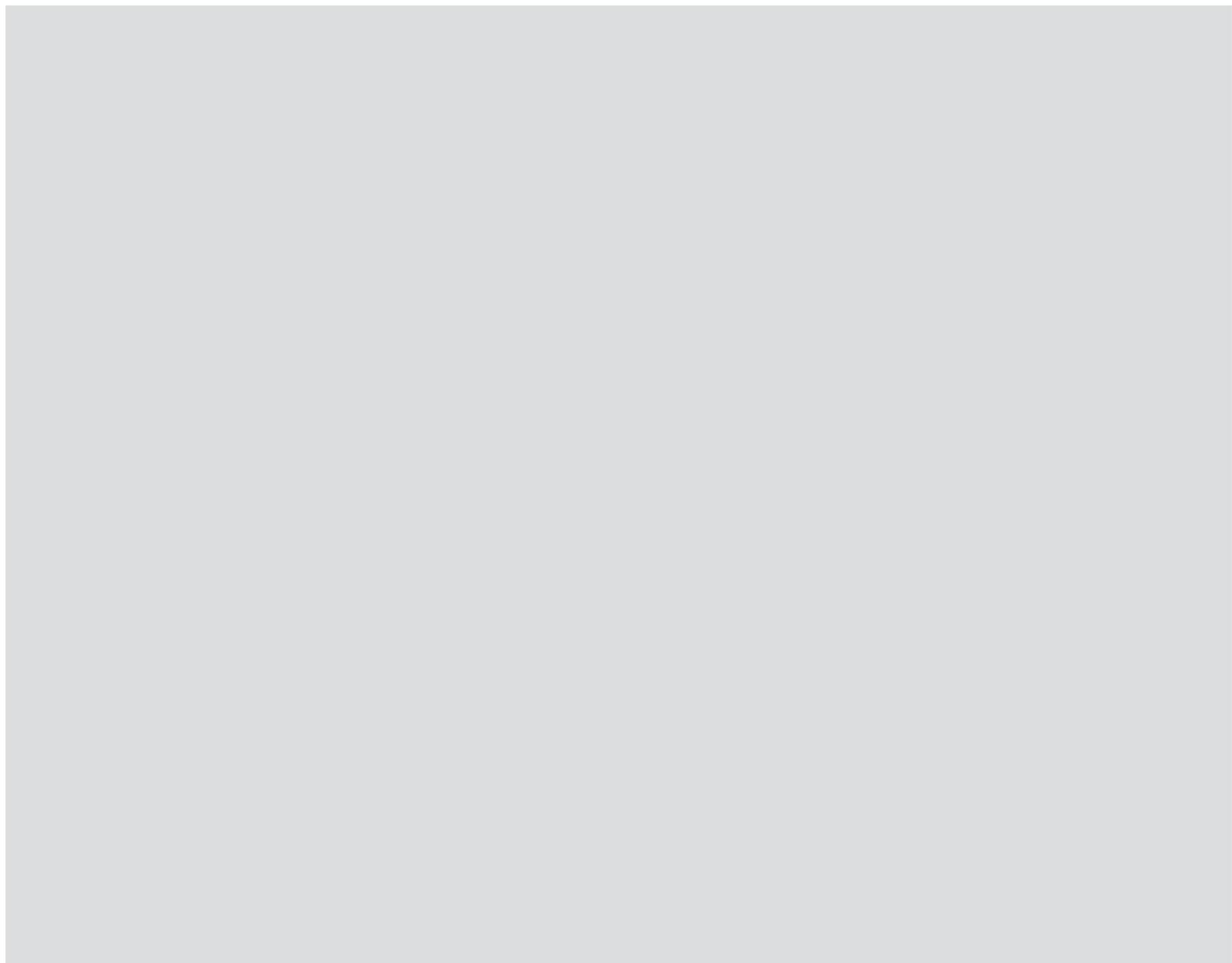
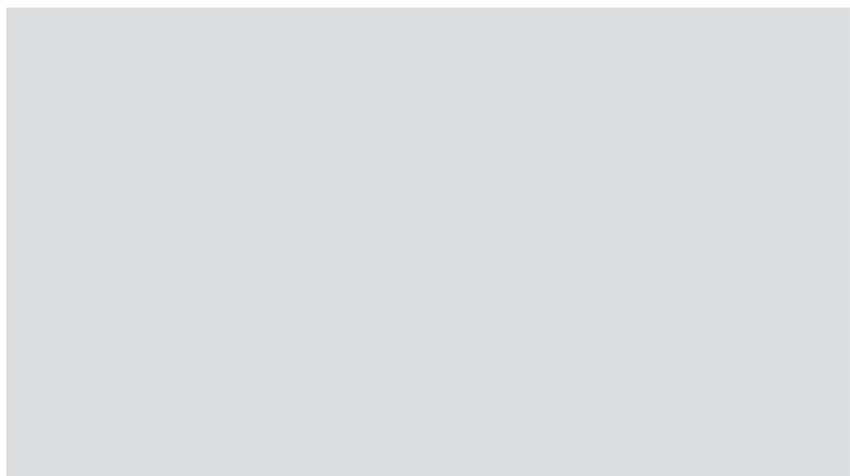
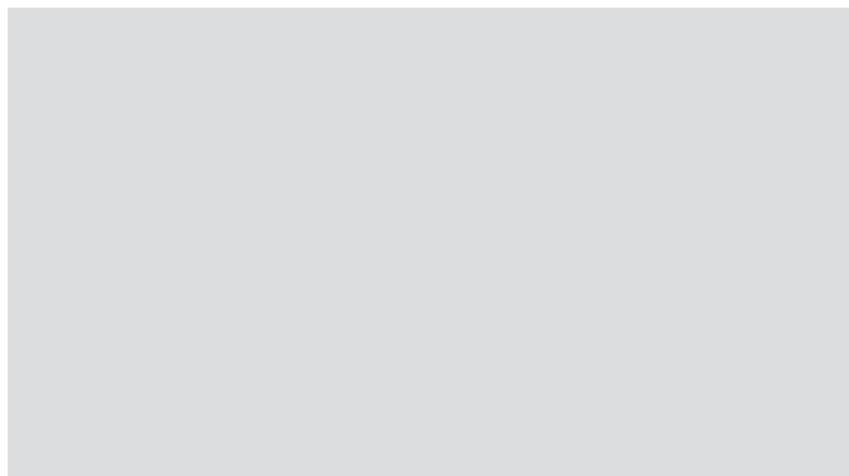


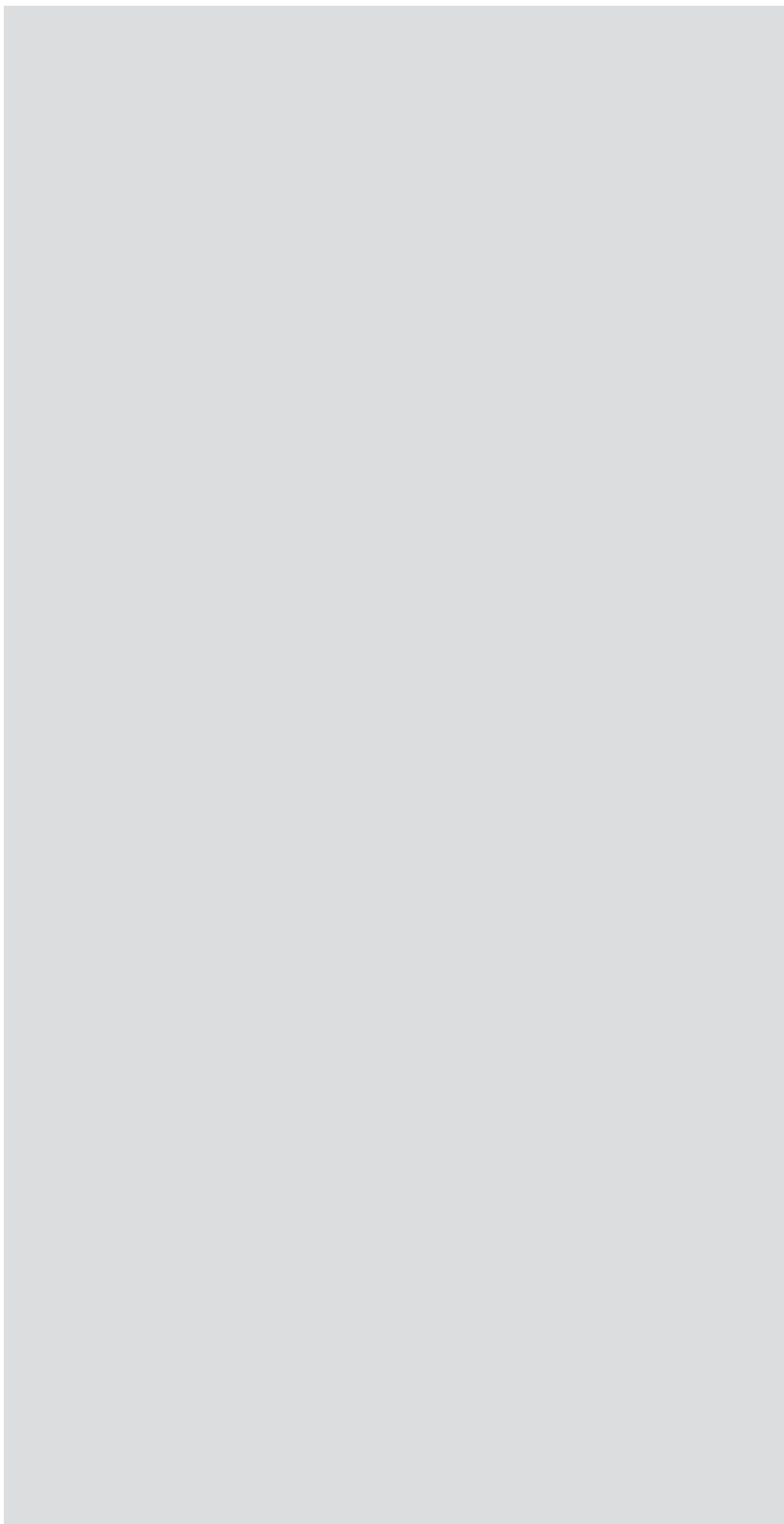
Daylight dwindles off Southern California's coast Labor Day as the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island and the embarked 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit continue operations.

GUNNERY SGT. SCOTT DUNN



CPL. GENE ALLEN AINSWORTH III







49 Palms Oasis,
 a natural getaway, page B2

Marine takes on 236 miles for the fallen

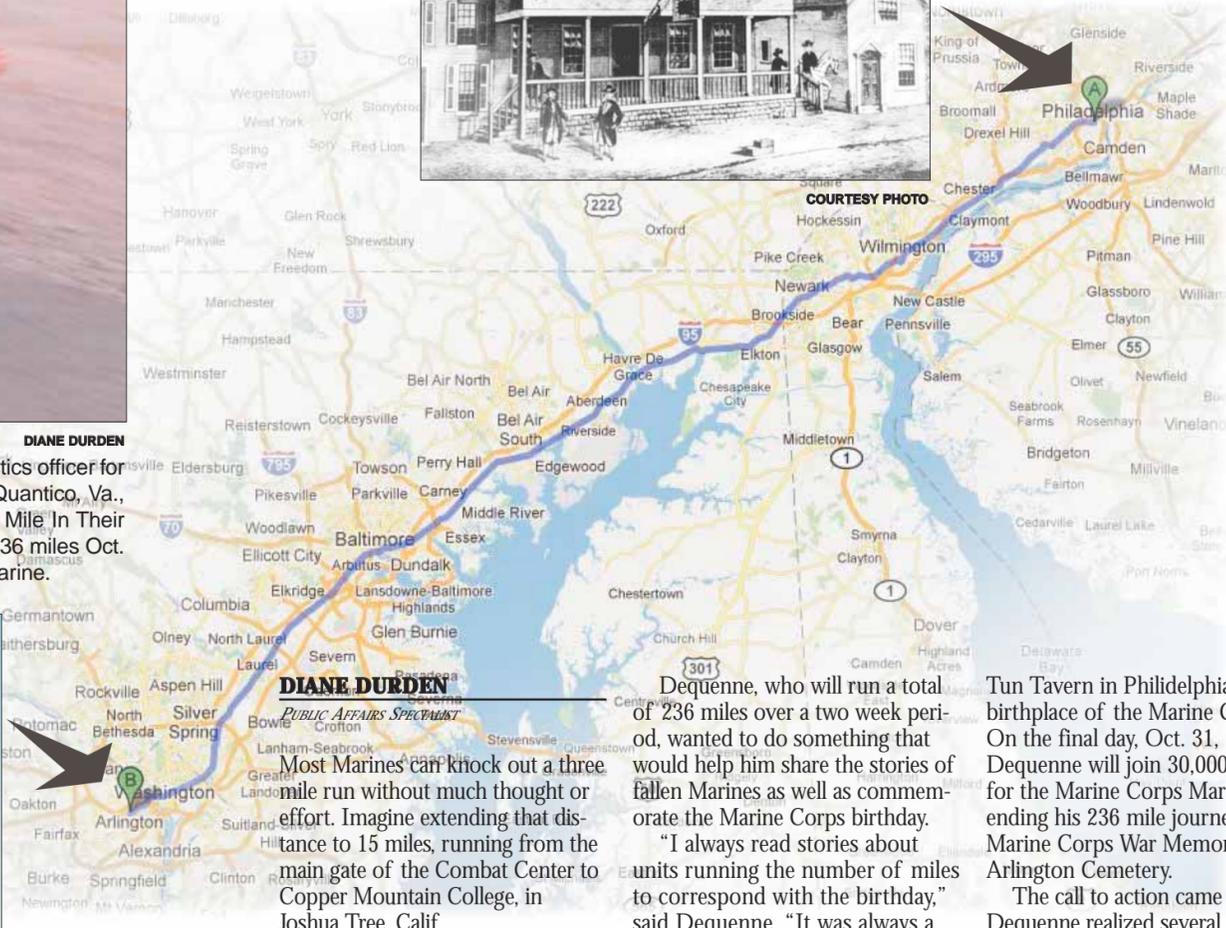


DIANE DURDEN

Capt. Jason Dequenne, the assistant logistics officer for The Basic School, Marine Corps Base, Quantico, Va., runs several miles per day training for "A Mile In Their Shoes" event. Dequenne will be running 236 miles Oct. 15-31, dedicating each mile to a fallen Marine.



The original location of Tun Tavern in Philadelphia, Penn., is the starting point for the 236 mile long event.



DIANE DURDEN

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

Most Marines can knock out a three mile run without much thought or effort. Imagine extending that distance to 15 miles, running from the main gate of the Combat Center to Copper Mountain College, in Joshua Tree, Calif.

Take that distance one step farther by running that distance every day for two weeks then follow it up with a marathon on the 15th day. Unimaginable for most, but not for Capt. Jason Dequenne, the assistant logistics officer for The Basic School, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.

Dequenne, who will run a total of 236 miles over a two week period, wanted to do something that would help him share the stories of fallen Marines as well as commemorate the Marine Corps birthday.

"I always read stories about units running the number of miles to correspond with the birthday," said Dequenne. "It was always a relay of some sort, with Marines each running a mile or two. I wondered if single runner ever did it. Through my sadomasochistic desire to punish myself through running, I thought I would like to do that sometime."

The carefully selected route will begin Oct. 15 at the original site of

Tun Tavern in Philadelphia, the birthplace of the Marine Corps. On the final day, Oct. 31, Dequenne will join 30,000 runners for the Marine Corps Marathon, ending his 236 mile journey at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington Cemetery.

The call to action came when Dequenne realized several Marines he used to work with died in action. The normal news stories of Marines dying don't tell the whole story of the Marine, he said.

"They face danger every single day and when they pass and you read 'died in combat operations,

See RUN, B4



COURTESY PHOTO

Dequenne's 236 mile long journey ends with the completion of the Marine Corps Marathon Oct. 31 in Washington, D.C.

Cooling off at the Combat Center



PHOTOS BY PFC. ALI AZIMI

Nathan Bostick, 6 [below], and his sister Eliana Bostick, 3 [top], cool off in the evening heat with their mother Ashley at the Combat Center's water park. The park is located at the corner of Fifth Street and Bourke.



Help at the hobby shop

■ Auto Skills Center provides auto maintenance instruction

DIANE DURDEN

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

It was weeks ago when Ben Dolnick, the mechanic with the Auto Skills Center, helped Lance Cpl. Sarah Dietz figure out what was wrong with her car.

She seemed surprised that I suggested she take her car there when she mentioned she was having mechanical problems. She didn't know what was wrong with the car, only that she was adding coolant more often than she should have been. She also knew the puddle of coolant under her car every morning couldn't have been a good sign.

Dietz was going to take the car to the dealer to get fixed. That could be very expensive, not just the cost to make the repairs, but if she didn't know what was wrong, it could have been easy for the mechanics at the dealer to include some unnecessary repairs.

"I thought it [the Auto Skills Center] was a place you went when you already knew how to work on your car," said Dietz.

A place to work on your vehicle, with tools and lifts available for patrons' use is just one of several services the center offers. Shop personnel will also assist would-be mechanics in determining what's wrong, what parts are needed, as well as provide instructions.

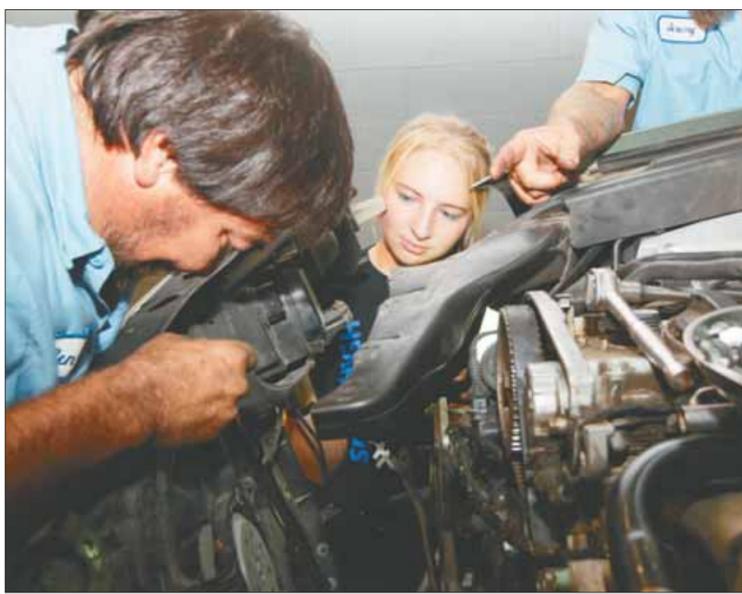
A couple of the mechanics I knew that worked there, recently helped me with a few repairs on my truck. I knew they could help her also.

After looking at Dietz's car, and listening to her describe what was going on, Dolnick knew exactly what the problem was.

"There's good news and bad news," he said.

The bad news was that the water pump needed to be replaced. And the good news, Dolnick said that it was a repair she could easily do herself.

I laughed, out loud.



DIANE DURDEN

Ben Dolnick, a mechanic with the Auto Skills Center, and Lance Cpl. Sarah Dietz, with Headquarters Battalion, discuss steps to change the water pump.

Dietz, although a smart, intelligent woman, doesn't have a mechanical bone in her body. She doesn't even know how to change the oil in her car, one of the most basic maintenance items any driver should be able to do.

"We can help her, teach her," said Dolnick. The first lesson came when he explained what was wrong with the water pump and why the pump needed to be replaced, not just repaired. He was very patient with her questions.

The big question she had, the one I could tell she wasn't verbally asking, could she really do this herself?

"You can do this," I said, reassuring her.

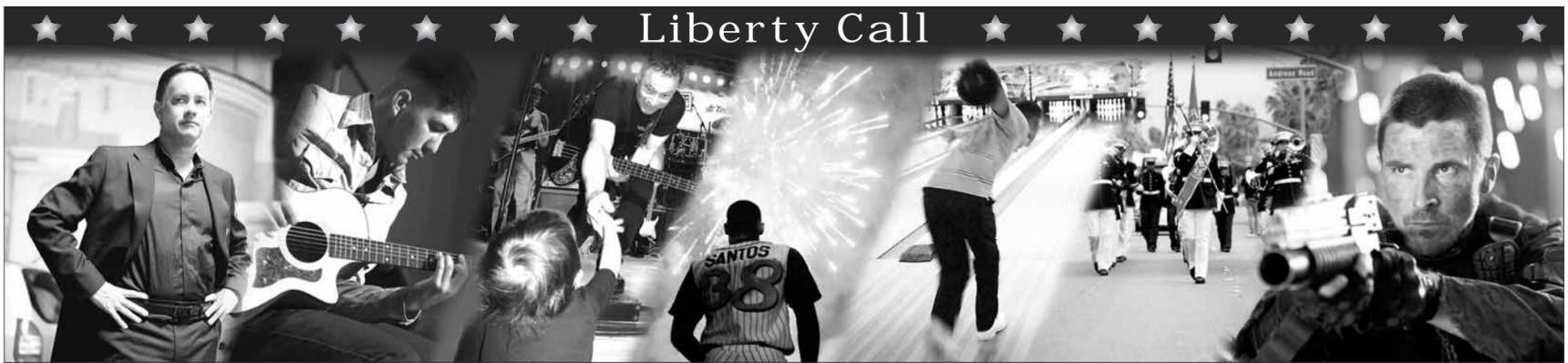
She ordered the part from Napa Auto Parts, inside the shop and scheduled some time with Dolnick for later

See AUTO, B4



DIANE DURDEN

Lance Cpl. Sarah Dietz, with Headquarters Battalion, strains to loosen a bolt while repairing her car.



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 to 11 p.m.
 Sunday Football, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.
 Monday Night Football, 4 p.m. and 7:15 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: Monday Night Football, 4 p.m. and 7:15 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., DJ 8 to 11 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.
 Tuesday: Social Hour, 5 to 7 p.m.
 Thursday: Social Hour, 5 to 7 p.m.

Combat Center Officers' Club

Monday-Friday: All-hands lunch, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
 Monday: Steak night, 5 to 7:30 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 Alkali Flats

The California country band performs
 When: 7:30 p.m., Friday, Sept. 9

The Bingo Dream Band

American folk with a country twang
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 10
 Where: 53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
 For more information, call 365-5956 or visit <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

Nunsense, A-Men!

The latest production of the Nunsense series has a hilarious twist; all the nuns are played by men.
 When: 7 p.m. on both Friday and Saturday
 Where: Theatre 29, 73637 Sullivan Road, Twentynine Palms
 For more information call 361-4151 or visit <http://www.theatre29.com>

Bhakti Festival

A celebration of Indian culture with live performances
 When: An all day event, Friday, Saturday and Sunday Sept. 9-11
 Where: The Joshua Tree Retreat Center
 59700 Twentynine Palms Highway at Yucca Mesa in Yucca Valley
 For more information call 365-8371.

Lower Desert

Don Rickles

The famous comedian performs his stand up
 When: 8 p.m., Friday, Oct. 15
 Where: Agua Caliente
 32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
 For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Kenny G

Will perform his mellow sax music
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 15
 Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
 49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon
 For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinoresort.com>.

Billy Idol

The Grammy winner performs his 80's punk rock hits
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 15
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
 84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
 For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Chicago

The rock legends perform their hits
 When: 8 p.m., Friday, Oct. 21
 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, Sept. 9

No early evening movies due to MCX opening
 Midnight – Cowboys and Aliens, Rated PG-13

Saturday, Sept. 10

No early evening movies due to MCX opening
 9 p.m. – **Free Sneak Preview of** Killer Elite, Rated R
 Midnight – Crazy, Stupid Love, Rated PG-13

Sunday, Sept. 11

2 p.m. – Winnie the Pooh, Rated G
 6 p.m. – Rise of the Planet of the Apes, PG-13
 9 p.m. – The Change Up, Rated R

Monday, Sept. 12 Labor Day schedule

7 p.m. – Smurfs, PG

Tuesday, Sept. 13

7 p.m. – Friends with Benefits, Rated R

Wednesday, Sept. 14

7 p.m. – Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part 2, Rated PG-13

Thursday, Sept. 15

7 p.m. – Winnie the Pooh, Rated G

Hope, healing wait at end of big-hearted musical road trip

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"Redemption Road"

Starring Michael Clark Duncan and Morgan Simpson
 Rated PG-13

In Hollywood-speak, a "road movie" is one in which the plot builds around a journey or some sort. The format is a common thread that unites otherwise unrelated films such as "Smokey and the Bandit," "Pee-Wee's Big Adventure," "Apocalypse Now" and even "The Wizard of Oz," which unfolds along a road paved with yellow bricks.

So when the characters in the new "Redemption Road" hit they highway, they're following a long, winding trail of time-honored movie tradition.

As in many road movies, its two sojourners are—at least at first—unlikely traveling companions. Jefferson Bailey (Morgan Simpson), a failed blues guitarist, is white, alcoholic and so unsure of himself he can't get back on stage. Augy (Michael Clark Duncan), who's black, is a clean and sober mountain of muscle, confidence and self-control who loves country line dancing, big women and spit-polishing his beloved pickup truck.

Circumstance puts them together on a cross-country trip.

There are, of course, bumps on the highway. Bailey is being pursued by a shady business associate (Luke Perry) intent to extract in blood the debt Bailey can't repay in cash. He's haunted



COURTESY PHOTO

Unlikely friends, Jefferson Bailey (Morgan Simpson), and Augy (Michael Clark Duncan), are thrown together through circumstance on a cross-country road trip. There are bumps along the highway, like a shady business associate of Bailey's who is out for blood and some drama with an ex-lover, as the pair bond and head toward a hope and healing.

by the loss of his father, an itinerant blues musician killed years ago by a drunken driver. And he's got some emotional baggage with an old girlfriend (Kiele Sanchez), who's moved on with her life after Bailey left her behind.

As the title suggests, there'll be hope and healing at the end of this road.

Director Mario Van Peebles sets story into some gorgeous Southern ruralscapes (with Tennessee subbing for both Texas and Alabama), and he handles the music at its core as almost a character itself. Several scenes take place in blues clubs, one of which is owned by the generous, wise Santa (Tom Skerritt), Augy's mentor.

There are several performances by real-life blues musicians. An old guitar factors significantly (and emotionally) into the plot. At one point, a hung-over and battered Bailey stumbles



COURTESY PHOTO

Bailey is an alcoholic failed blues guitarist who can't get up the nerve to get back on stage. Augy is a clean, sober mountain of confidence and loves country line dancing, big women and spit-polishing his pickup truck.

into a church service alive with song.

"Redemption Road" is a "small" movie, filmed on a modest budget with no big stars. It's bit hokey, sappy and slow. But it's got a big, warm soul, a stirring tale to tell, and a powerful message about forgiveness and spiritual

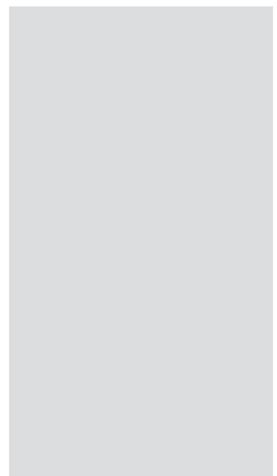
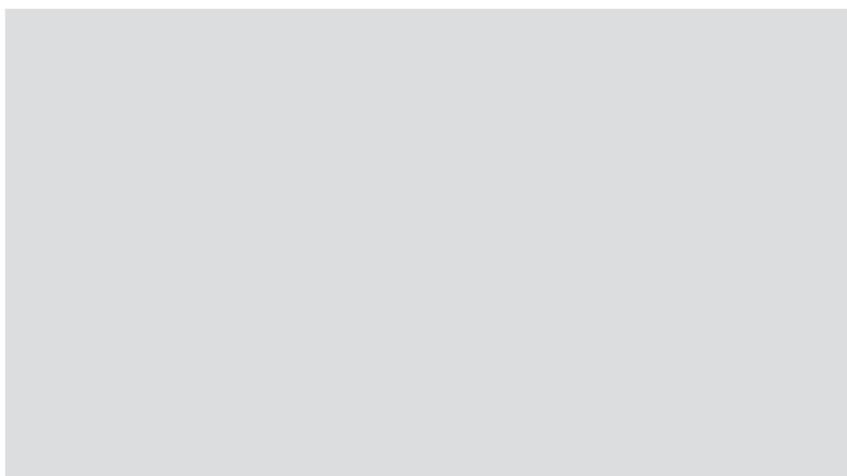
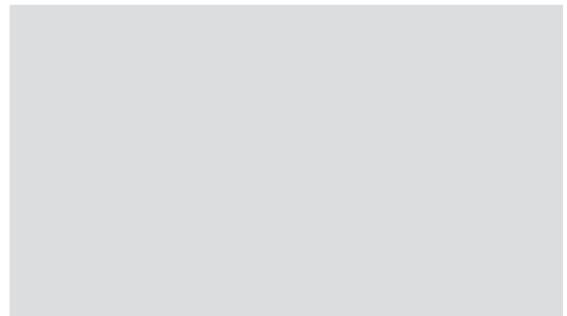
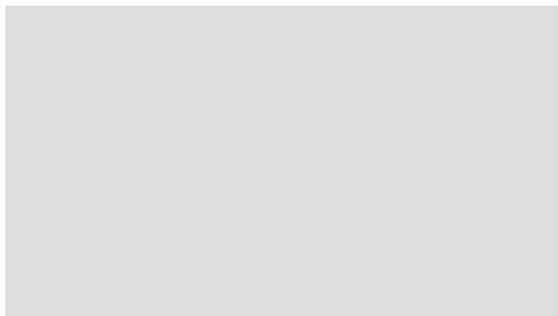
renewal, all tapped into a rich vein of authentic music that's much more than just a background element.

As the lettering on the tailgate of Augy's pickup notes, "Love will set you free." It's a cliché, but it's a theme this well-crafted little road movie takes tunelessly to heart.



COURTESY PHOTO

The pair learn a powerful message about friendship and forgiveness, all played out within some of the South's most beautiful ruralscapes, with Tennessee subbing for both Texas and Alabama.



Desert Detours: 49 Palms Canyon hiking trail



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.

**LANCE CPL.
SARAH DIETZ**

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

It's been nearly eight months since I have stepped foot in Joshua Tree National Park, so when a co-worker asked me to go hiking with her and a few friends, I jumped on it. We woke up early, got some breakfast at the Carrousel Café in Twentynine Palms, then set out to 49 Palms Canyon Oasis.

Getting there is the easiest thing ever, traveling down Highway 62 towards Yucca Valley, you turn left on Canyon Road.

The hike to the oasis is three miles round-trip through the canyon, a distance Marines are extremely familiar with due to our physical fitness test. The hike wasn't strenuous, but instead relaxing and beautiful. It was raining the morning we left, as we reached the top of one of the hills, the sun was peeking through the clouds making a rainbow. Moments like that are when I see the true beauty of the desert, instead of dry miserable heat and a bunch of dead bushes.

On the hike, I spent some quality time with a bunch of old-school Marines, all equipped with camel packs and some snacks. It was

great to spend time with them and get to know them better, maybe even talk a little smack about their tortoise speed. (As a young Marine I had to defend the new Corps a little bit).

Reaching the oasis a mile and a half in, we saw beautiful, tall palm trees with a small river running through them. The oasis is blocked off because it is environmentally sensitive, but the journey was worth it. There were families sitting on rocks having a picnic with each other and our group took a break on the rocks underneath the trees.

The oasis has been around for hundreds of years and was used by the Native Americans in the area at that time. It was used for obvious reasons, like fresh water and plants grown for food. Also, desert animals like bighorned sheep utilized the oasis for the same things.

There are a bunch of hiking trails through Joshua Tree National Park, all it takes to find them is a call to the ranger station and a map. *Editor's Note: "Desert Detours" is a 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.*



PHOTOS BY DIANE DURDEN

This small grouping of palm trees is a welcome sight at the end of the nearly mile and a half hike to the 49 Palms Canyon Oasis in Joshua Tree National Park.



The vibrant, green of the oasis is a stark contrast to the brown and tan colors of the desert. Hikers will find the oasis nestled in a small valley at the end of a mile and a half long trail.



[Left] To protect the ecological balance of the environment, hikers are reminded to remain on the trail.

[Right] Hikers follow the well-maintained trail from the parking lot at the end of Canyon Road in Twentynine Palms to the oasis at 49 Palms Canyon.



RUN, from B1

where ever," said Dequenne. "It doesn't really encapsulate, it doesn't really tell people what it is these Marines do that makes them so heroic."

By dedicating each mile along his route to a fallen Marine from Operations

Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, Dequenne said he hopes to change that.

"If I could run a few miles, get some people's attention by doing that, and get an audience and tell their story, that's why I want to do it this year."

Throughout the run, Dequenne will share the sto-

ries of the honor, courage, commitment, bravery and valor demonstrated by the Marines each mile has been dedicated to.

If you know a fallen Marine and would like to dedicate a mile in their memory, contact Dequenne by emailing your request to dequenneusmc@yahoo.com.

AUTO, from B1

in the week.

When we returned Saturday morning, Dolnick had step-by-step instructions, with diagrams, printed for her. Dietz quickly set up her work station, got her tools and read through the instructions and proceeded to remove the parts.

It took us several hours to get the car disassem-

bled enough to get to the water pump. He remained patient as the eager student continued to ask questions.

Finally, it was time for the shiny, new water pump to slide into place.

"Ta da!"

We all cheered. It was easy to see the sense of accomplishment Dietz felt by the ear-to-ear smile she wore.

Once the water pump was installed, she still had to put the rest of the car back together. She paid close attention during the disassembly, which made reassembling the car much quicker.

If you need assistance with a mechanical problem or just want to learn some basic automobile maintenance, contact the Auto Skills Center at 830-7527.

Athlete of the Week

Name: Ruben Molina
Unit: Advisor Training Group
Hometown: Leander, Texas
Recognition: Placing first in the Ultimate Warrior Competition for the 30-year-old and younger bracket at the West Gym and Fitness Center Aug. 25.
What made you want to participate in the competition?: "I am a competitive person, and I love doing this kind of stuff."
Do you have any advice to any aspiring athletes?: "Don't let life win. You can do anything you want to do."
Athletic hobbies: Running and lifting.

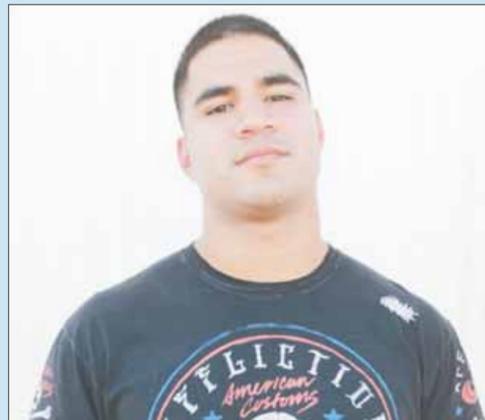


PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ