

'Phantoms' return to Combat Center

■ VMU comes home after seven month deployment

LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Approximately 120 Marines and sailors of Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3 returned from their seven-month tour to Afghanistan's Helmand province Nov. 12 at VMU-3's compound aboard the Combat Center. They were acting in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Families began arriving as early as 2 a.m. and waited nearly five hours in the freezing morning weather for the buses, holding their Marines. As they tried to keep warm with hot chocolate and thick jackets, the excitement of their loved ones returning safely amped a new surge of energy in them.

The sun barely peaked over the horizon when the Marines stepped off the buses. The day was welcomed with cheers and excitement as the crowd waved signs in the air and ran into the arms of their returning heroes.

"He just had this big smile on his face. It's amazing to have him home"

— Kailea Oden

But the Marines had a surprise for them as well. As they approached their excited supporters, they held red roses to give to their loved ones. But in most cases before the Marine

had a chance to hand them the rose there were already hands wrapped tightly around them.

For two VMU-3 Marines it was more than just re-uniting with their family, it was also a first meeting with their children.

Capt. John Mahler, an intelligence officer, and Cpl. Benjamin R. Oden, a data network specialist, both with VMU-3, were able to hold their newborn children that morning, for the first time.

"He just had this big smile on his face," said Kailea Oden, wife of Benjamin, as she described Benjamin's reaction of the corporal's first meeting with his daughter, Bella. "It's amazing to have him home."

During the deployment, VMU-3 provided vital intelligence, search and reconnaissance support to ground units in Afghanistan. Their assistance protected Marine operations and convoys as well as tracking Taliban insurgents in the area.

See **HOMECOMING, A6**

Marines are looking for a few good toys

DIANE DURDEN

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

For thousands of children throughout the Morongo Basin and Coachella Valley, Christmas has the potential to be a gray, dreary and hopeless holiday. With the help of Combat Center Marines and the Toys for Tots program, that will not be the case.

The Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program collects and distributes toys to less fortunate children throughout the United States.

This year's coordinator, Gunnery Sgt. Nilavanh Sosayachanh, tank maintenance chief, 4th Tank Battalion, Fourth Marine Division, has been gearing up for the past couple of months preparing for this year's campaign.

Toy collection boxes were distributed to local businesses long before the first notes of Christmas music were played in hopes of getting a jump start in collecting enough toys for this year's distribution.

Last year, the Combat Center's campaign distributed 30,000 toys to more than 13,000 children in the local area. Due to the current economic crunch, Sosayachanh is expecting the need for toys to increase. He won't be able to provide enough toys without the help and support of the local community.

"Our biggest obstacle will be getting enough donations," said Sosayachanh, who has currently distributed about 150 toy collection boxes in the area.

Donating new, unwrapped toys is not the only way to help. Cash donations are used to purchase toys to supplement toy donations for distribution. Last year, \$18,000 was used to purchase toys for gifting.

Although Toys for Tots is a nation-wide program, each campaign is locally run. All donations, toys and cash, are retained and distributed within the local community.

Collecting toys is only part of the program. Distributing toys to children in need is the other part.

Families needing toys can request to be a recipient by submitting a toy request form, available on the Toys for Tots website. The deadline to register is Dec. 11.

The goal of the Toys for Tots program is to deliver a message of hope to needy children by providing the gift of a shiny new toy.

"It's a great program," said Sosayachanh. "It gives you a chance to help the community and others."

Your time is just as valuable as a toy or monetary donation. You can work events or man a collection box, sort incoming toys, pick up collected toys from local businesses and more.

To find out more about how you can help, visit the Combat Center's Toys for Tots website at <http://www.29-palms-ca.toysfortots.org>.

A Veterans Celebration



KELLY O'SULLIVAN

Brig. Gen. George W. Smith Jr., the commanding general of the Combat Center, salutes as his wife Kathleen [far left] holds her hand over her heart as the National Anthem is played, at the start of the Veterans Day ceremony at Veterans Park in Twentynine Palms, Calif., Nov. 11.



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

[Above] The Combat Center Band marches down the streets of Palm Springs during the annual Veterans Day Parade, Nov. 11.



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

[Right] Local Palm Springs residents Wendy Pasquini, holds her 4-year-old daughter Layla, and her husband Stephen, holds their 20-month-old son Lucca, watch the fireworks just after the annual Palm Springs Veterans Day Parade Nov. 11.

California Highway Patrol trains at Combat Center

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Officers with the California Highway Patrol mobile field force practiced annual crowd dispersal at Range 200 Nov. 9 with the help of Combat Center personnel.

The CHP chose the Combat Center for their annual training because of the unique facilities available.

"This is the first time we have come aboard a Marine Corps facility," said Officer Levi Miller, a mobile field force officer with the San Bernardino County. "We chose this place because a lot of other bases just have an open field for us to go, but it just isn't realistic.

"This facility you have in the Marine

Corps really fits what we need," Miller added. "It will give the team a sense of what it will be like to hold down an intersection or move a crowd through buildings where people could hide and throw projectiles from."

To help add more realism to the training, the CHP had volunteer officers and Marines with the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School and Provost Marshals Office Special Reaction Team act as aggressors in the crowd.

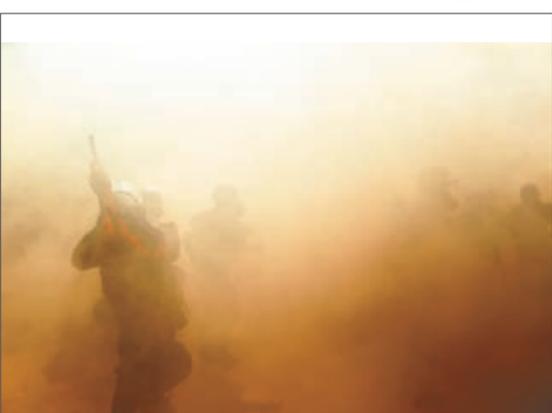
"They threw Nerf balls and tennis balls at us to give our officers a sense of reality," Miller said. "Hopefully that will remind them that their helmet shields need to be down and that in a real life scenario, a bottle or a rock could be thrown and cause serious damage."

The officers donned all their gear for the training and reviewed their formations for the multiple scenarios scheduled for the day.

"We have three scenarios that we did where our role players simulated a riotous crowd," Miller said. "We used our formations and techniques to separate the crowd into smaller groups. If we can get a crowd separated or pick out a leader or someone who is inciting the crowd, we will separate them from the crowd. Whatever we can do to disperse the crowd."

As the scenarios progressed the aggressors became more aggressive and the officers began practicing

See **CHP, A6**



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Officers with the California Highway Patrol mobile field force practice using smoke canisters, simulating using CS gas, during a training event at Range 200 Nov. 9.

This Week in Combat Center



History

Reprinted from the Observation Post dated November 21, 1961, Vol. 5, No. 47

Hawk Fired By MAAM Misselemen; 1st MAAMs Redesignated 3rd LAAM

AUTOR UNKNOWN

"First happenings" are nothing new at Twentynine Palms, as evidenced by the outstanding performance by Marines and the units here. This week a milestone was recorded, a reorganization order was issued, and again, the Marines from this installation received a highly commended "well done" from the Command.

Last Monday, "B" Battery of 1st Medium Antiaircraft Missile Battalion, fired the surface-to-air Hawk guided missile. This firing mission, that was classified as a quarterly training exercise for the 1st Light Antiaircraft Missile Battalion, was unusual in the fact that the MAAM's Marines are normally associated with the medium surface-to-air Terrier missile.

The shoot terminated six weeks of retraining, during which "B" Battery successfully absorbed the required knowledge to perform the highly technical operational phases of firing the weapon. The proud instructors of the fledgling Hawk missilemen were members of "D" Battery, 1st Light Antiaircraft Missile Battalion.

Just two short months ago, the MAAM Battery completed a firing exercise, utilizing their own organic weapon, the Terrier. The training session marked the first retraining package here at Twentynin Palms, whereas the training had formerly been conducted at Ft. Bliss, Tex. It was noted that the technicians involved would still be schooled at the Army Air Defense School but the bulk of the training, that being operational, will be administered here.

Both Capt. R. M. Proudfoot, of "B" Battery, 1st MAAMs and Capt. M. S. Jolley, of "D" Battery, 1st LAAMs, considered the retraining to be very effective.

REORGANIZATION:

It has been announced by the Command, that effective Dec. 1, a reorganization of antiaircraft missile units would be in effect within Force Troops.

The redesignation of the 1st Medium Antiaircraft Missile Battalion to the 3rd Light Antiaircraft Missile Battalion, was the main change involved with the "D" Batteries of both existing LAAM Battalions being deactivated.

Prevent colds with a natural mineral

■ Zinc wards off colds, keeps immune system strong

SHARI LOPATIN

TRIWEST HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

Feel yourself developing the sniffles? Better take some zinc.

Zinc is an element in the earth's crust, one of the most common, in fact. And while too much zinc is dangerous, the human body needs zinc for certain functions. One of the most important is to keep your immune system strong, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

By boosting your intake of zinc, you could help ward off colds.

Just make sure you're getting your recommended intake of zinc. Remember, too much could prove harmful to your body.

Which foods contain zinc?

Try eating some of these foods listed from the National Institutes of Health, which are naturally high in zinc: oysters or crab, canned baked beans, raisin bran cereal, cashews, lowfat yogurt and fruit, chicken leg, red meats, like beef or pork.

For more information on healthy eating, visit <http://www.triWest.com/eathealthy>.

Age	Male	Female	If you're pregnant	If you are breast-feeding
0-6 months	2 mg	2 mg		
7-12 months	3 mg	3 mg		
1-3 years	3 mg	3 mg		
4-8 years	5 mg	5 mg		
9-13 years	8 mg	8 mg		
14-18 years	11 mg	9 mg	12 mg	13 mg
19+ years	11 mg	8 mg	11 mg	12 mg

Hot Topics

FRAUD, WASTE, MISMANAGEMENT HOTLINE

The Command Inspector General's Fraud, Waste, Mismanagement Hotline is available to all military personnel, civilian employees and family members at 830-7749 or DSN 230-7749. Facsimiles can be called in at 830-6155 or DSN 230-6155. You can also file a complaint at SMBPLMS CenterInspector@usmc.mil

WINTER FESTIVAL

The Marine Corps Community Services will be hosting a Winter Festival Dec. 3 at Felix Field. Games, Santa, toys and beverages are available to the families in attendance. For more information, visit <http://www.mccs29palms.com>.

TURKEY BOWLING

There will be a turkey bowling tournament at the MCCS Community Center Nov. 19, starting at 11 a.m. Cost is \$3 and includes three games and use of shoes. Prizes include a turkey. Register by today. For more information, call 830-3910. The event is open to all active duty, retirees, DOD employees and their families.

WOMEN'S GOLF LESSONS

The Desert Winds Golf Course will be hosting golf lessons for Combat Center women. The six weeks of instruction will be taught by a PGA professional. The cost is \$100, which includes the use of clubs and green fees. For more information, call 830-3900.



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.

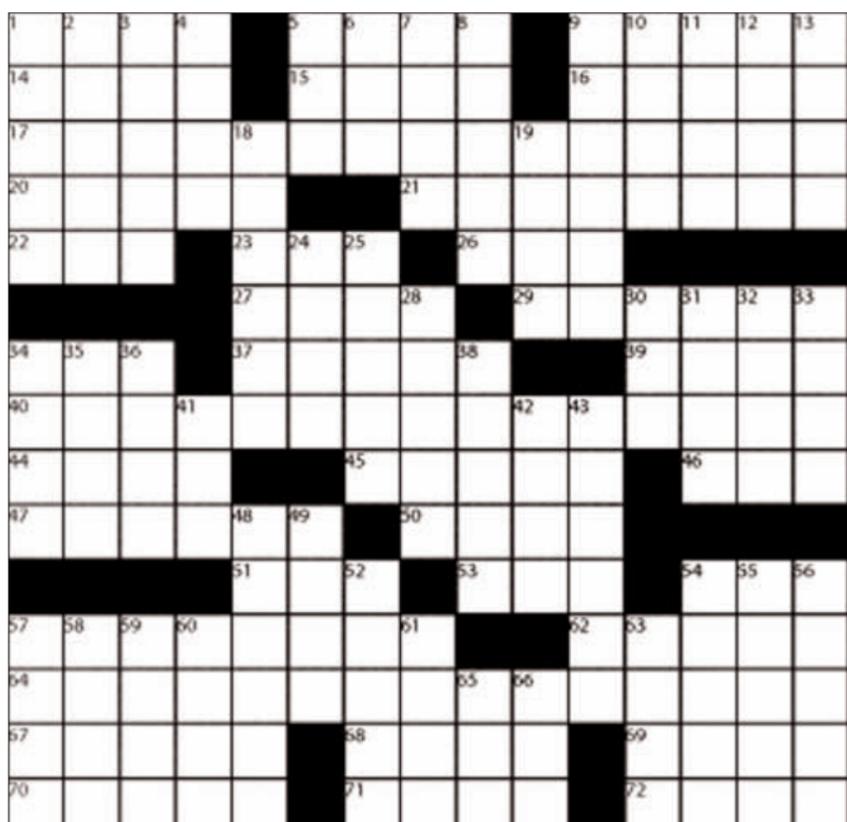
SUDOKU #2355-M

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

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2011 HOMETOWN CONTENT

FLIP-FLOPS

[Puzzle solutions on A7]



ACROSS

1. Touched down
5. Make oneself hoarse, perhaps
9. Chichester chap
14. Comical Carvey
15. Truant from the troops
16. Ancient Greek colony
17. Blooper removals?
20. Get gussied up
21. Glitterati
22. La Brea gunk
23. Understood
26. Pendulum's path
27. Israel's Olmert
29. Deceive
34. Bad start?
37. They're spent by
25. Down
39. Words before pot or seed
40. Searchers for opinions?
44. London Magazine essayist
45. Try for an ace, perhaps
46. Unidentified Richard
47. Spaghetti western director Leone
50. Ragout or burgoo
51. Be light at the poker table
53. Dadaism pioneer Jean
54. Protrude
57. Troopers' quarries
62. O. Henry device
64. Summarize some baseball plays?
67. John who played Gomez
68. "It's Impossible" singer
69. Adman's award
70. New moon, e.g.
71. "Terrible" time
72. Sharp as a tack

DOWN

1. Expand the family, in a way
2. Designer Ashley
3. ICBM part
4. British gallery founder Sir Henry
5. Chew the rag
6. Merino mama
7. A bundle
8. Alpaca kin
9. Satirist Ambrose
10. Rioter's take
11. Cross to bear
12. Toy on a string
13. Division in both major leagues
18. "Measure for Measure" villain
19. Auto pioneer Benz
24. Part of B&O
25. Folks on either side of the Bosphorus
28. Valleys
30. In the past
31. Ill-humored
32. Gridiron great Graham
33. Pinocchio's protuberance
34. Executes
35. Time for eggnog
36. The slammer
38. Rather, informally
41. Trail the pack
42. Eggs order
43. Carnival doll
48. Its deficiency causes goiter
49. "The Virginian" author Wister
52. Not on all fours
54. Ten million ergs
55. Set free
56. Youngest heavyweight champion
57. It comes in cakes
58. Propel, as a pram
59. Bluesy James
60. Bush 41 and 43, as collegians
61. Unlikely to steal bases
63. Alcatraz, with "the"
65. Cyber-shorthand for "editorially speaking"
66. Turndowns

OBSERVATION POST

Commanding General - Brig. Gen. George W. Smith Jr.
Public Affairs Officer - Capt. Nick Mannweiler
Deputy Public Affairs Officer - 2nd Lt. Sin Y. Carrano
Public Affairs Chief - Gunnery Sgt. Leo A. Salinas
Press Chief/Editor - Sgt. Heather Golden
Layout, Design - Leslie Shaw

Correspondents
 Cpl. William J. Jackson
 Cpl. Andrew D. Thorburn
 Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi
 Lance Cpl. Sarah Dietz
 Lance Cpl. D. J. Wu
 Diane Durden

The Observation Post is published by Hi-Desert Publishing, a private firm in no way connected with the Department of Defense or the United States Marine Corps, under exclusive written contract with the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. This commercial enterprise newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the military services. Contents of the Observation Post are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the United States government, the DoD, or the United States Marine Corps. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts and supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the DoD or Hi-Desert Publishing of the services advertised.

Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation, or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. Editorial content is prepared by the Public Affairs Office, MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif. 92278. All photos, unless otherwise indicated are Official USMC Photos. Questions can be directed to the Public Affairs Office, located in building 1417, during normal working hours at 830-6213 or FAX 830-5474. The Observation Post is made with 60 percent recycled paper.

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

THE EAGLE SCOUT

Joseph Kappus

Combat Center Eagle Scout, Orlando, Fla.,
18 years old

INTERVIEWED AND
PHOTOGRAPHED BY

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

NOV. 5, 2011

A LEADERSHIP ROLE

> **When I passed my Eagle board**, it was definitely relieving because I remember sitting there tense and they finally told me to relax.

> **I joined Boy Scouts because** a representative came out and talked to us and showed us the camp setup and the Wilderness Survival merit badge when I was in fifth grade.

> **From the start**, it was pretty cool because they had the elections or whatever and I said my little spiel about why I think I would be a good leader and then they elected me as patrol leader for two terms.

> **It was just kind of a knack**. I just always liked being in the leadership role and having a say in what's going on type of deal.

> **The Wilderness Survival** was the reason I got into the Boy Scouts. Just throwing you out into the woods and seeing what you can do.

SUPPORT GROUP

> **My dad helped with personal drive**. He has just given me the personal drive to deal with things.

> **I am grateful for what my dad and mom have done**. They both were always there for me, drove me to where I was supposed to be.

> **When I was in Cub Scouts**, my dad would come out to a few camp-outs with me and would help set up gear.

> **A lot of leadership skills I learned from my dad**. Just seeing how he has done things and just kind of incorporated them with my own personal twists to them.

TALES FROM THE CAMPFIRE

> **I was interested in that kind of stuff** so I went and saw the troop and went on a campout with them and joined up with them.

> **I got to work with fire and knives** to earn my Fireman and Totin chip cards. Just the basic skills all scouts have.

> **We had nothing but eggs and bread** for the whole campout because whoever bought the food didn't think strait.

> **One of the other troops had extra Vienna sausage**, so for breakfast we had egg sandwiches and cut up Vienna sausage and just mix them all together.

> **I had perfect weather**. We set it up and we were just sitting there thinking 'well this kind of sucks.' We were all hoping it was going to rain or something was going to happen but no. nothing at all.

> **We were trying to sneak up on the scout master**, but that didn't happen. Every time we tried to get close, we would see a flashlight turn on and we would run away really fast then slowly try to sneak back up. Then we finally learned that his flashlight was on a timer that would turn on every once in a while to keep the animals away.

> **We were in a cow pasture type of deal. It was pouring down rain all night**, and the next morning we all got out of our tents and one of the kids walks out of his tent and there is cow pie everywhere. Pretty much the first thing he said was "I'm done."

> **It seems no matter where you go, someone has a deck of cards**. It could be a miserable campout and someone pulls out a deck of cards, and everyone gets happy for that short period of time.

> **If you get the opportunity** to do scouting, definitely do it.

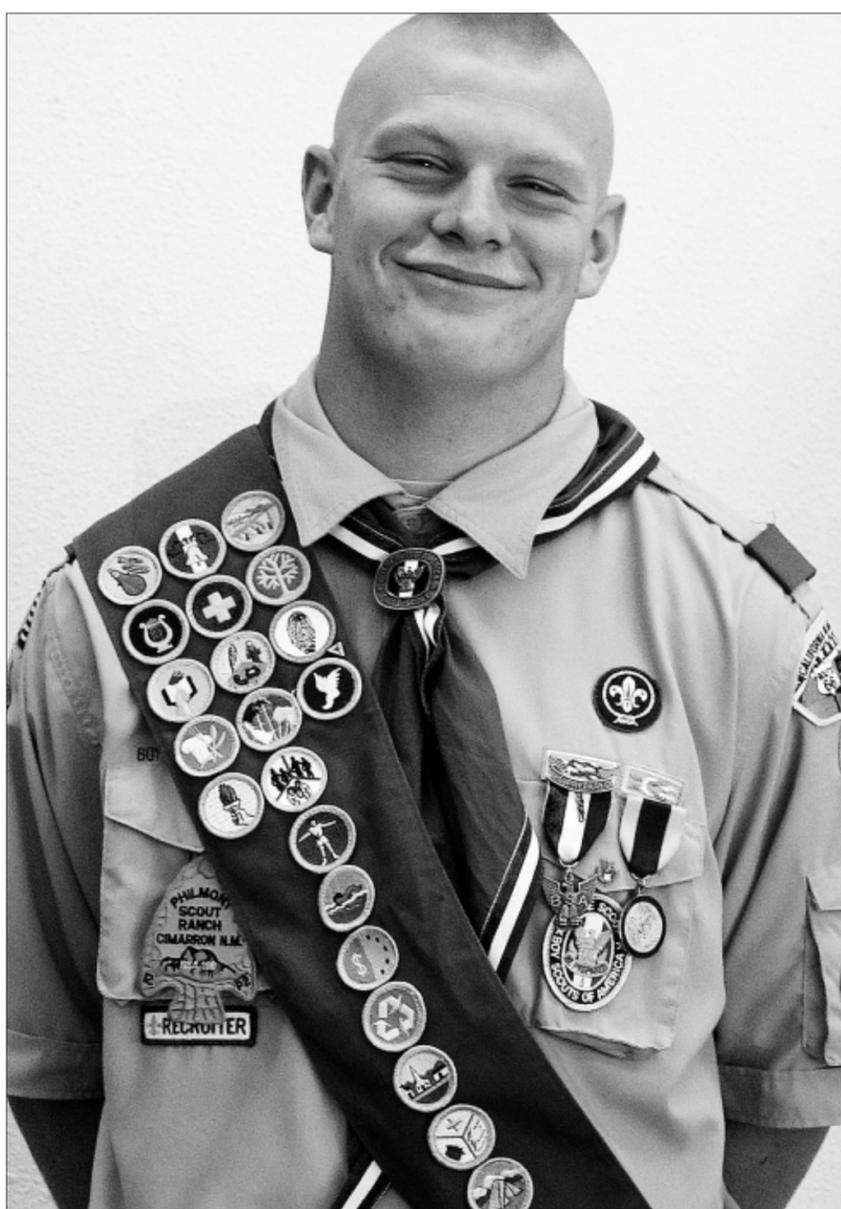
A STEP TOWARDS MILITARY LIFE

> **The big thing about being a military kid** would be learning leadership through my family.

> **Figuring I love shooting and seeing a lot of what recon does on TV**, and thinking "Oh, that would be really cool thing to do." Then talking with my dad, he was like, if you are going to do something, you might go as high as you can with it.

> **I like the life style**, knowing you are not going to be in the same place forever. Nothing is ever all that predictable.

> **Honestly, being a military kid helped me get more out there**. It sucked moving and not being able to see my friends, but most of my movement was at a young age and seeing them is the out of sight, out of mind type of deal.



Visit the official MCAGCC facebook page at
<http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>



The Combat Center has its own
YouTube channel. Find it at
<http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>



The Combat Center has its own Flickr photo and
video streams. Find them at
<http://www.flickr.com/thecombatcenter>

Relax with the paper

Wednesdays and Saturdays
with the Hi-Desert Star

Thursdays with
The Desert Trail

Fridays with
The Observation Post

Hi-Desert Publishing Co.

Your community newspapers working to serve you better



'America's Battalion' arrives in Afghanistan

CPL. REECE LODDER

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

CAMP DWYER, Helmand province, Afghanistan — Over seven months of training, the Marines and sailors of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, have become hardened for war.

They've prepared for the enemy from their home base in Hawaii and endured endless hours baking in the sun of the California desert.

The approximately 1,000 men of "America's Battalion" bid bittersweet goodbyes to family and friends from Oct. 27 through Nov. 1, carrying these memories on their deployment to southern Helmand.

In the coming weeks 3/3 will take control of operations in Garmsir District, relieving fellow Hawaii-based 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. The "Lava Dogs" of 1/3 are nearing the end of their seven-month deployment, which began in April.

Staff Sgt. Joe Salinas, an operations watch chief with 3/3, said the Marines and sailors will have a challenging task in Garmsir. Here, they'll partner with the Afghan National Security Forces to maintain the progress made by 1/3 to secure the district and legitimize its government in the eyes of the people.

"Our deployment to Garmsir is as important as the first because we could be the last Marines here," said Salinas, a 40-year-old native of San Antonio. "We have a lot to accomplish to make sure the Afghans are ready to take over when we leave.

Partnering with the Afghan National Army and Police, "America's Battalion" will assist the local Afghan leadership in providing



CPL. REECE LODDER

Lance Cpl. Barney Oldfield, rifleman with Jump Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, uses a bottle cap to mark the location of a metal object during metal detector training on Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, Nov. 3.

security for reconstruction projects aimed at developing critical infrastructure in the district. Lt. Col. Matthew J. Palma, 3/3 commanding officer, sees these development projects as essential to the Afghan government taking root in southern Helmand.

"We've invested 10 years in this

war," Palma, native of Bristol, R.I., said. "We're on the verge of success, and turning back now would only throw away the work we've done and the sacrifices of the Marines that have gone before us. The Afghans are emerging from 30 years of sustained conflict. They see the light at the end of the tunnel, and they want change too."

The deployment is new territory for many of the Marines and sailors of 3/3, including Navy Seaman Dave Mundy, a corpsman with Kilo Company. While a professional milestone, it will also be Mundy's first deployment apart from his wife of seven months.

He said the separation will be difficult, especially following his wife's recent move to Hawaii.

"I brought my wife away from her family for the first time," said Mundy, a native of Chicago. "Now we're going to miss spending all the good holidays together."

In Afghanistan, the corpsman will shoulder a lot of responsibility. At 27, he has more life experience than nearly all his peers, and his maturity will be an asset in the performance of his duties. He's charged with caring for 18 Marines, infantrymen faced with the threats of enemy fighters and improvised explosive devices.

Though confident in his abilities as a corpsman, Mundy said he hopes he

never has to use his training in combat.

"Even if I don't have to use my training, I'm doing a job that matters ... and my wife knows I am too," Mundy said. "Being away from her is going to be really hard, but it makes me feel better knowing I'll be there when my guys need me."

The Marines and sailors of 3/3 will labor in Afghanistan for seven months, but the impact of their efforts will forever be a part of Afghan and Marine Corps history, Palma said.

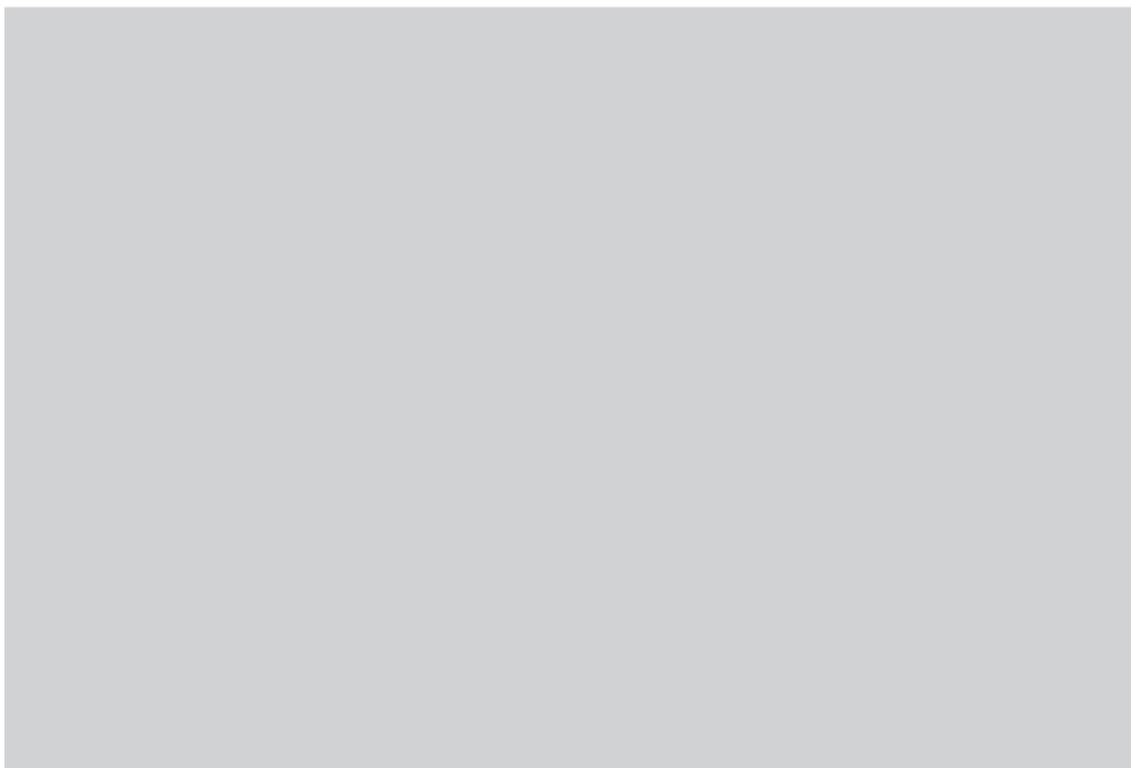
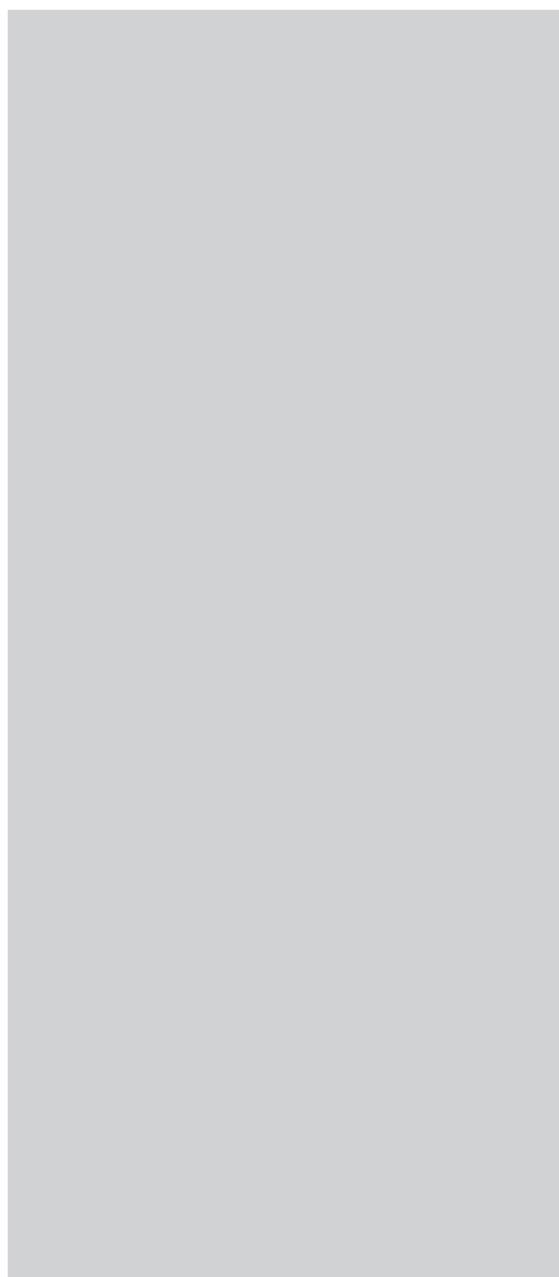
"This generation of Marines are contributing to America's history books," Palma said. "20 years from now, our kids will read about our endeavors, much like we did of our fathers in Vietnam, and our grandfathers in World War II."

Editor's note: 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, is currently assigned to Regimental Combat Team 5, 2nd Marine Division (Forward), which heads Task Force Leatherneck. The task force serves as the ground combat element of Regional Command (Southwest) and works in partnership with the Afghanistan National Security Forces and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to conduct counterinsurgency operations. The unit is dedicated to securing the Afghan people, defeating insurgent forces, and enabling the ANSF assumption of security responsibilities within its operations in order to support the expansion of stability, development and legitimate governance.



CPL. REECE LODDER

Lance Cpl. Ryan Kelly, rifleman with Jump Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, waits to have his weapon cleared out after calibrating it during a battle sight zero exercise on Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, Nov. 3. After departing home in Hawaii from Oct. 27 through Nov. 1, the Marines and sailors of "America's Battalion" arrived in Afghanistan's Helmand province to begin their seven-month deployment in support of Regimental Combat Team 5. They are filtering into the province's Garmsir District to relieve fellow Hawaii-based 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, who arrived here in April. Kelly, 21, is from Sharon, Mass.



WeekINPhotos

Veterans Day Around the Corps



PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS SPENCER MICKLER

[Above] Marines and sailors of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit participate in a Veterans Day fun run on the flight deck of the forward-deployed amphibious assault ship USS Essex Nov. 10. The 31st MEU is the only continually forward-deployed MEU and remains the United States' force in readiness in the Asia-Pacific region.

[Below] Hundreds of British service members and coalition forces gathered at Camp Bastion, Helmand province, Nov. 11 for a Remembrance Day ceremony to commemorate all those who gave their lives during conflicts from WWI until present times. Remembrance Day services are held throughout the U.K. Nov. 11, signifying the day the armistice was signed to end WWI. Remembrance Day is the British version of the U.S. Veterans Day.



SGT. RANDALL A. CLINTON

Marines march past a child saluting them in the annual New York Veterans Day parade Nov. 11. This year marks the 92nd Anniversary of The New York City Veterans Day Parade. It is the oldest and largest of its kind in the nation. Since 1919, the parade has provided an opportunity for Americans to honor those who have served in the nation's largest city.



CPL. MEREDITH BROWN



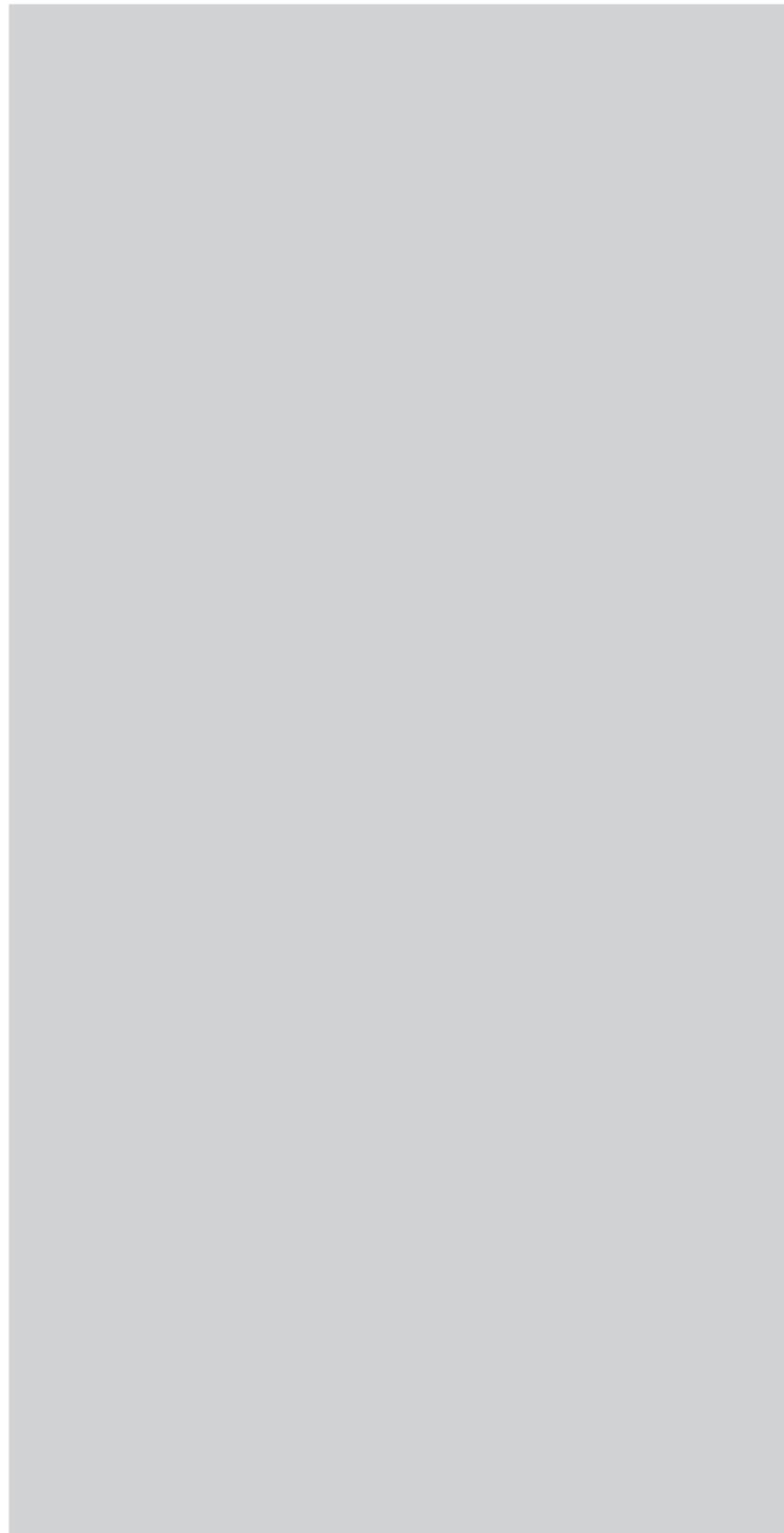
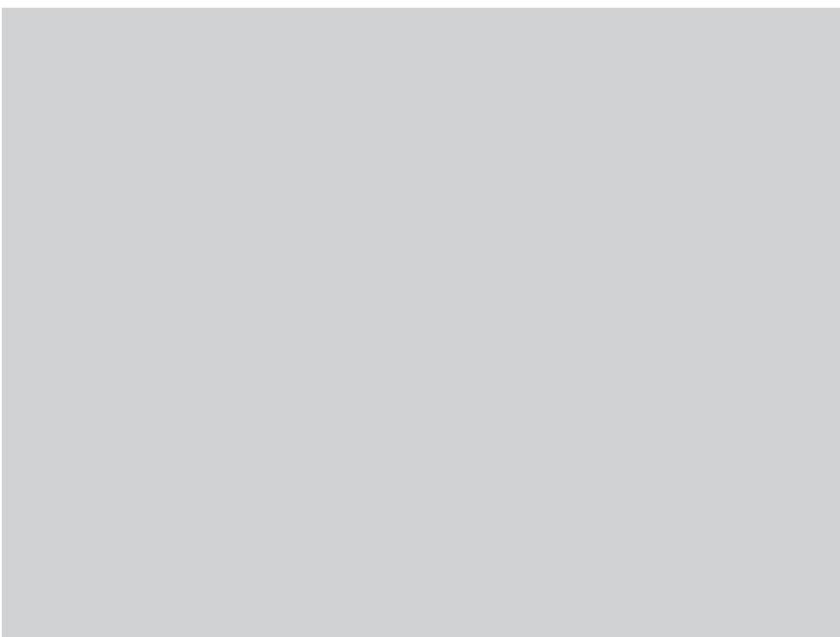
SGT. RANDALL CLINTON

A color guard from 6th Communications Battalion, Marine Forces Reserve, led a marching detail of 200 Marines in the annual New York Veteran's Day parade, Nov. 11. This year marks the 92nd anniversary of the New York City Veterans Day parade. The parade is hosted by the United War Veterans Council, Inc., on behalf of New York City.



LANCE CPL. CODY A. FODALE

Marines participate in a wreath laying ceremony in honor of Sgt. Maj. Herbert J. Sweet, the 4th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, at his grave site in Arlington National Cemetery Nov. 10.





CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Officers with the California Highway Patrol mobile field force practice using smoke canisters, instead of CS gas, during a training event at Range 200 Nov. 9.

CHP, from A1

using smoke canisters, instead of CS gas, and 37mm rubber pellets.

"(The 37mm rubber pellets) are pretty powerful," said CHP Sgt. Bill Green, field sergeant with the Morongo Basin Office. "One took me in the hip and it took me down."

During the exercise, some of the officers worked closely with the Marine volunteers and were impressed by their performance.

"The Marines were highly motivated and worked well with our own volunteers to provide a sensible amount of resistance during the scenarios," said Officer Mario Lopez, mobile field force officer with the San Bernardino County CHP.

After every scenario, the officers held a debrief on their performances.

"We went through the scenario and we evaluate what happened," Green said. "(We went over) what went right, what went wrong, some things we can do to improve both communication and tactics, and then we might do the scenario again. It is just a matter of improving what we do."

"When you make mistakes here, it's just here. When you make them in the field, it costs the state money and bad publicity, so we are trying to nip that in the bud."

Once the CHP finished their training, they thanked the Marines for all their assistance and performed a final debrief of the day's training before packing their gear and heading home.

VMU, from A1

"I'm convinced that lives were saved [by this asset]," wrote 1st Lt. Marcos Garcia, the convoy commander the 2nd Marine Logistics Group.

Garcia and his convoy came under an attack by more than 35 insurgents. VMU-3 came to their aid providing support with their RQ-7 Shadows, provid-

ing precise information to the joint terminal air controllers.

VMU-3 also set a new record for Marine unmanned aerial vehicle squadrons, operating the RQ-7 shadow for over 30,000 hours and innovated new techniques, such as using new onboard lasers to designate targets for precision guided bombs.

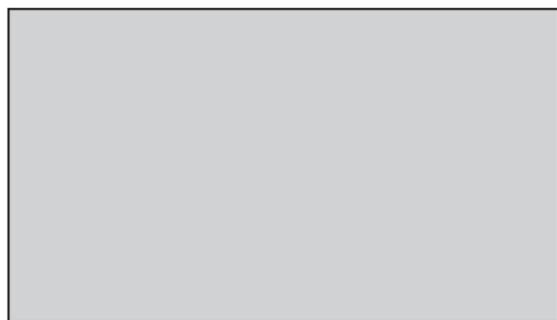


PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

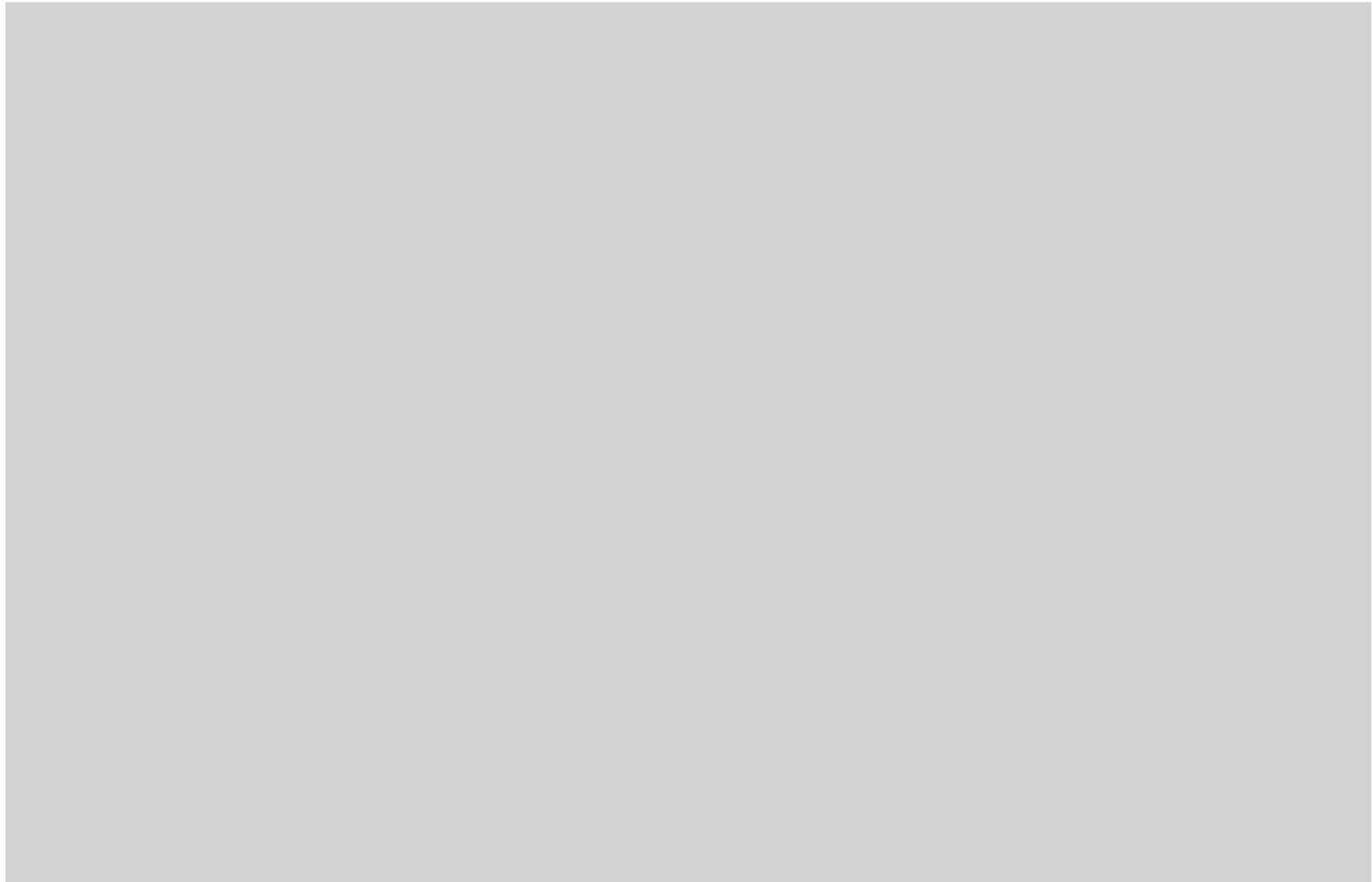
Cpl. Joseph Barnard is welcomed home by his wife, Judith, during the Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3's homecoming event at the squadron's compound Nov. 12.



Charlotte Pothier wraps her arms around her father, Staff Sgt. William Pothier, as she welcomes him home at the Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3's homecoming event at the squadron's compound Nov. 12. Families and loved ones began arriving as early as 2 a.m. to greet their Marines home. VMU-3 returned home to the Combat Center nearly five hours later from their 7-month deployment to Afghanistan. The unit provided intelligence for convoys and tracked insurgency with unmanned aerial vehicles. Charlotte, age 6, who said she prefers to be called Charlie, was featured in the "What I've Learned" series in the October edition of the Observation Post. Check it out online at <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms>.



367-3577 For Advertising



Reporting Emergencies: Easier, faster, more efficient

ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF DARLENE HULL

COMBAT CENTER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Cellular phone reporting can be complex. Broadband and Internet phones do not process 9-1-1 calls in the same way as traditional wired phones. Recently, the Fire Department discovered multiple 9-1-1 calls were repeatedly dropped by one of the top broadband phone services during attempts to transfer the calls back to the local emergency dispatch center.

Phone services have come a long way over recent years. Most areas of the country now have reliable 9-1-1 emergency reporting available to traditional wired phone customers. But, with technology evolving at such a rapid rate, it is more important than ever to understand how to effectively report an emergency from some of the newer communication services out there.

It is important, and possible, for you to ensure your 9-1-1 call will go to the right dispatch center, no matter what service you are calling from.

There are at least three distinctly different phone services available to the average customer. There is the traditional wired phone that has been around for generations, the cellular phone, and now broadband or Internet phones that are available through your computer.

The preferred method of reporting an emergency is by calling 9-1-1 from a hard wired phone. But, as a customer of any phone service provider, it is important to understand there are variations in how 9-1-1 calls are handled and to find out the best way to report an emergency before the need arises.

The Fire Department discovered multiple 9-1-1 calls were repeatedly dropped by one of the top broadband phone services during attempts to transfer the calls back to the local emergency dispatch center.

Calling 9-1-1 from a traditional wired phone service is pretty straight forward and reliable. You make the call, the dispatcher gets a read out that includes the

address and phone number you are calling from, you report the emergency, answer some questions, and help is on the way. If you want to make sure you can report an emergency during a power outage you need to have a phone that plugs directly into a wall outlet and does not rely on an electrical outlet to operate. Many homes with wired phone service rely solely on cordless phones or phones with integrated answering machines. Both require electricity to operate and fail during power outages.

With a cell phone it is still fairly simple to report an emergency locally. But, if you call 9-1-1 locally, your call will be sent out of the area to either Victorville or Indio and must be routed back to the emergency dispatch center closest to you. Your ability to clearly communicate your location becomes vital, as does the dispatcher's ability to determine where to route the call. The fastest and most direct way to report emergencies in progress at the Combat Center is by calling one of the 24-hour, dedicated emergency lines at 830-3333 or 830-3334. Please take the time to program one or both numbers into your phone's contact list

before an emergency arises.

And finally, there is the new generation of service, the broadband or Internet phones, dependant on not only electricity, but also the communication line (or service provider).

The reliability of reporting emergencies through broadband or Internet phones can be affected not only by power outages and the reliability of the communication line, but is also dependant on your commitment to register your equipment and keep your personal information updated with the provider.

9-1-1 calls from these types of services don't go directly to your nearest emergency dispatch center, or even to one close. They go to the service provider, where the personal information you provide is then cross-referenced to determine the closest emergency dispatch center. Only then is your call transferred. Or, to hasten response times, advise your service provider that the public safety answering point (PSAP) at the Combat Center is #1027.

As with cell phones, you can also report an emergency at the Combat Center using broadband or Internet services by calling the 24-hour dedicated emergency lines.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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

A	L	I	T	Y	E	L	L	B	L	O	K	E		
D	A	N	A	A	W	O	L	I	O	N	I	A		
O	U	T	T	A	K	E	T	A	K	E	O	U	T	S
F	R	E	E	N	T	M	A	R	T	S	E	T		
T	A	R	G	O	T	A	R	C						
E	H	U	O	A	D	O	N							
D	Y	S	L	I	R	A	S	G	O	T	O			
O	U	T	L	O	O	K	L	O	O	F	O	U	T	S
E	L	I	A	S	E	R	V	E	R	O	F			
S	E	R	G	I	O	S	T	E	W					
O	W	E	A	R	P	F	U	T						
S	P	E	E	D	E	R	S	I	R	O	N	Y		
O	U	T	L	I	N	E	L	I	N	E	O	U	T	S
A	S	T	I	N	C	O	M	O	C	L	I	O		
P	H	A	S	E	T	W	O	S	K	E	E	N		

Combat Center Trader Ads

AUTOMOTIVE

2001 CAN-AM DS 650 ATV.

Immaculate condition. \$2300 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.

NORDIC TRACK A2550. Folds up for easy storage, has IPOD docking station, Like new. Asking \$1,000, OBO. 368-5778.

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

LAZ BOY RECLINER. Like new, no pets/smoking. Dark burgundy fabric. \$75. 385-208-8125.

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. Individual heroes, team sets or make an offer on the whole collection. Call Stephen at 567-7921.

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.

Side by side: International brothers

■ Combat Center Marines train with foreign allies

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Since Marines under the command of 1st Lt. Presley N. O'Bannon fought with foreign militaries on the shores of Tripoli during the Battle of Derne, Marines have fought alongside and trained with foreign militaries.

During the "Great War," or WWI, the Marines fought alongside our French and British allies and made their presence known even when they were misidentified.

The Stars and Stripes, the official newspaper of the American Expeditionary Force, under date of Aug. 16, 1918, published one of the more memorable moments from a French officer.

"A wounded officer from among the gallant French lancers had just been carried into a Yankee field hospital to have his dressing changed. He was full of compliments and curiosity about the dashing contingent that fought at his regiment's left."

The Marines continued to fight alongside our allies in major wars in Vietnam, Korea, Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan.

But fighting with our allies can be difficult when the two forces of ground troops might not even speak the same language. That is where cross training comes into play.

"When you go to other countries, you are going to be working with other guys anyways and having a general idea

of what they are going to be like, will make it easier to work with them," said Cpl. Mitchell Harwood, with 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment. "They train you up on some of their training procedures and our training procedures. Everyone mixes together and it makes one great team."

"I love to do a little crosstraining," said British Royal Marine Sgt. Cameron Smith, mountain leader with the reconnaissance troop in the 40 Commandos, British Royal Marines. "You get other ideas off of people of how to do things. It's obvious everyone thinks they are doing things right. But you might see an American unit do something and think, Hang on. That is better than what we do, and integrate that or vice versa."

"It is eye opening. You guys do things a fare bit differently than us but at the same breath there are things that are pretty similar to how we operate," said Australian Army Sgt. James Wilson, a gunner with 8/12. "But so far it has been a good experience to learn and observe how the Marine Corps operates."

When a group is thrown together and work together in tough situations, bonds are formed that will last for years to come.

"It's been a great experience. They are a great bunch of guys, hard workers and we had a great time with them," Harwood said. "We have all made friends out here, and we will definitely be keeping in contact with them after this is over."

Several commanders looked back to their own experiences training with other nations. Their relationships showed younger service members how strong the friendships they make here can grow.

"I am still in contact with friends I made in the U.S. Marines 17 years ago and am finding out how small the mil-

itary really is," said British Royal Marine Maj. Chris Hall, Co. C, 40 Commando commanding officer.

Hall also said how the strong ties between the United States Marine Corps and close allies will only remain strong as long as they continue to perform joint exercises and foster these kind of bonds wherever they go.



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

[Above] Marines with Battery I, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, work with Australian soldiers with 1st Brigade, 8/12, to align Gun Five on the firing line during cross training in support of Enhanced Mojave Viper Oct. 26, at Quackenbush range.

[Below] Marines with 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and the 40 Commando, British Royal Marines combine their skills as they breach an empty building during a cross training exercise at Range 215, Sept. 30.



LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI



Welcome to the **DAWG HOUSE**



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

HQBN Bulldawg receiver, Mark Wood, rushes past the MCCES Mustangs defense for a first down during the Commanding General's Intramural Football League championship game Tuesday. The Bulldogs fought hard for their undefeated season and brought that determination with them to the championship game.

Bulldawgs trump 'Stangs in championship game, 34-6

Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi
 Combat Correspondent

The parking lot was packed for the Commanding General's Intramural Football League championship game at Felix Field Nov. 15, where the undefeated HQBN Bulldawgs crushed the MCCES Mustangs in a 34-6 victory.

The game started out slow, each team careful not to let the other get the advantage.

The Bulldawgs led with a strong offense, looking for a hole in the Mustangs' defensive line. When the time came, they seized it.

In the middle of the first quarter, the Mustangs' offense lost control of the football, a mistake the Bulldawgs did not hesitate to take advantage. They caught the ball after a fumble by the Mustangs, only a few yards away from the end zone and sprinted it the rest of the way for the first touchdown of the game.

The Mustangs were determined to make up for this mistake.

As the game spilled over into the second quarter, the Bulldawgs were had more trouble getting through the

Mustangs' defense. The Mustangs drove the ball to their opponents' end zone, charging through the Bulldogs' defensive line, and tying the score.

Unfortunately for the Mustangs, their touchdown only fueled the Bulldawgs to play harder.

"You think that lead is enough, it's not. Play all out."

— John Maddox, Bulldogs coach

With nine seconds left in the second quarter, the Bulldawgs scored another touchdown. But they did not stop there. Bulldawgs quarterback, Kameron Yellin, completed a two-point conversion, bringing his team to an eight-point lead.

But the championship was on the line and Bulldawgs' coach, John Maddox, would not let himself or his team make the mistake of getting cocky.

"You think that lead is enough, it's not," said Maddox to the Bulldawgs players formed around him during half-time. "Play all out."

The Bulldawgs' focus on the prize led them to another touchdown in the 3rd quarter by the team's

wide receiver Arnell Rivers. After working the ball up the field, Yellin made a clean throw to Rivers, who was waiting unguarded at the end zone.

"I knew I had them beat," said Rivers. "It felt good."

After three touchdowns and a conversion it seemed obvious which team would go home victorious.

However, neither team let up. They continued to play as if the next play would decide the championship.

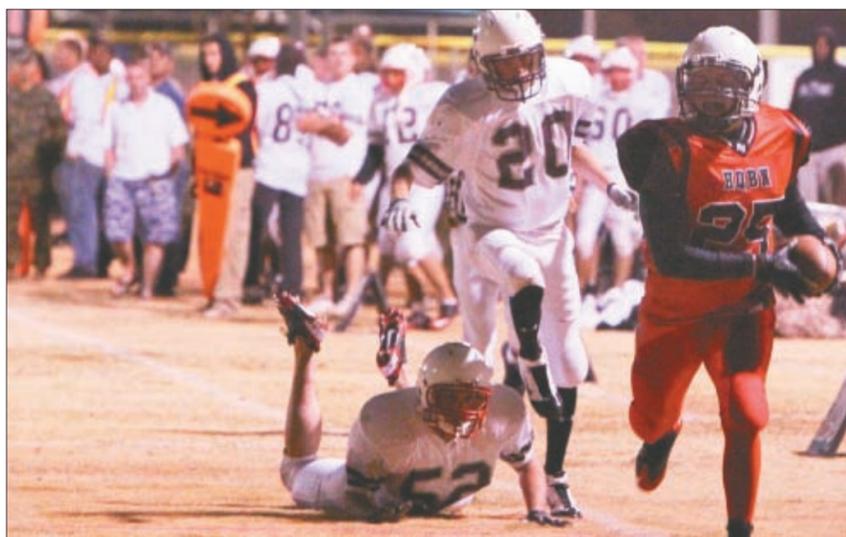
The Bulldawgs went on to score another two touchdowns in the fourth quarter. The Mustangs didn't put any more points on the board.

After the game, both teams lined up at the 50-yard line, where the coveted championship trophy sat on top of a table, ready to be presented to the Bulldogs' coach.

After a brief speech about the storybook, undefeated season the Bulldawgs held, Maddox accepted the trophy on behalf of his team and his entire battalion as his players cheered and the crowd applauded.

Maddox ended the night with parting words that revealed just what kind of determination it takes to win a championship.

"Practice on Monday, 17:30."



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

A player with HQBN sneaks past Mustang defense to score a touchdown Tuesday at Felix Field.



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Bulldawg running back Guillermo Manzo, Bulldogs, catches the ball for the first down Tuesday.



Liberty Call

Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Friday: Social Hour with food, 5 - 7 p.m. followed by DJ Gjettblaque, 8 to 11 p.m., Ladies Night
Saturday: Variety Night, DJ Gjettblaque 8 - 11 p.m.
Sunday: Football coverage, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Monday: Monday Night Football coverage, 5:30 p.m.
Thursday: Social Hour, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Friday: Social Hour with food, 5 - 7 p.m.
Monday: Monday Night Football coverage, 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday: Free gourmet bar food, 5 to 7 p.m.
Thursday: Social Hour, 7 - 9 p.m.

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Friday: Social Hour, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Monday-Friday: Lunch from 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Monday: Steak night and full menu, 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Tuesday: Social Hour, 5 - 7 p.m.
Thursday: Social Hour, 5 - 7 p.m.

Combat Center Officers' Club

Monday: Steak night, 5 - 7:30 p.m.
Monday-Friday: All-hands lunch, from 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Thursday: Happy Hour, 5 - 7 p.m.

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

Local Events

Bless Me Father

When: Every Friday & Saturday until Dec. 17 at 7pm
Dec. 1 Thurs., Sunday Matinee' Dec. 11
Where: Theatre 29
736377 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms
For tickets and information call 316-4151
or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

Three Chord Justice!

Country Music
When: 7:30 p.m., Nov. 18
Where: Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace
53668 Pioneertown Rd., Pioneertown
For more information visit: <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>
or call 365-5956

Free Line Dance Lessons

Learn to dance to traditional country music
When: 5 - 9 p.m., Nov. 20, and every Sunday
Where: Willie Boy's Saloon and Dance Hall
50048 29 Palms Hwy, Morongo Valley, Calif.
For more information, call 363-3343.

Lower Desert

Circo Luci

Acrobatic Performance
When: 9 p.m., Nov. 18
8 p.m. Nov. 19
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit
<http://www.hotwatercasino.com>

Cabazon 30th Indio Powwow

Cultural Celebration
When: Nov. 25-27
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit
<http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Zapp/The Ohio Players

Performing soul and funk music
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 19
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit
<http://www.morongocasinoresort.com>.

The comedy of Bill Engvall

The blue-collar comedian performs his stand up
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 26
Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella
For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit
<http://www.spotlight29.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Sunset Cinema will be closed Nov. 2 through Dec. 8.

Shakespeare gets smeared in fanciful Renaissance-era romp



COURTESY PHOTO

Shakespeare, the bogus bard himself, played by Rafe Spall, is depicted as a randy, functionally illiterate acting buffoon who was perfectly happy being a pawn and a prop. The earl is played by Rhys Ifans, who, in the movie, is the supposed true author of the popular classic plays, to use the London stage to shake up the Royal Court.

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"Anonymous"

Starring Rhys Ifans, Vanessa Redgrave and Joely Richardson
Directed by Roland Emmerich
PG-13, 130 min.

Was one of the most significant literary figures of all time a sham?

That's the question poised by the new movie from director Roland Emmerich, known for his sledgehammer style in the disaster dramas "Independence Day", "The Day After Tomorrow" and "2012." In "Anonymous," the German-born filmmaker comes down hard on the bard.

The movie suggests, practically contends, William Shakespeare didn't actually write any of the plays, poetry and sonnets attributed to him. That renegade

Renaissance theory has made a few ripples over the past century, but it's mostly been dismissed if not ballyhooed by serious scholars.

But apparently not by Emmerich, who has tossed a sumptuous-looking stink bomb of political unrest and forbidden passion into a Shakespeare-smearing, 17th century river of mud, blood and dark, black ink.

It's a ripping tale, to be sure, even if it's probably all bunk. But hey, nobody tried to pin historical inaccuracy on Emmerich when he resurrected Godzilla, depicted space aliens blowing up the White House, or orchestrated the end of the Earth in his previous popcorn epics. So let's cut him a little creative slack in the English lit department.

Welch actor Rhys Ifans serves up serious Oscar bait as the Earl of Oxford,

a British nobleman and tortured-soul playwright who, "Anonymous" conjectures, was the true source of Shakespeare's works. And the way Ifans plays it, you almost believe it. The bogus bard himself (Rafe Spall) is depicted as a randy, functionally illiterate acting buffoon who was perfectly happy being a pawn and a prop and completely ignorant of the earl's scheme to use the London stage to shake up the Royal Court.

The venerable Vanessa Redgrave and her real-life daughter, actress Joely Richardson, share the role of Queen Elizabeth I as the movie shifts back and forth in time. In the movie's juicy, jaundiced view, the so-called "Virgin Queen" didn't exactly live up to her chaste matriarchal nickname.

Like some of Shakespeare's plays, "Anonymous" can be a

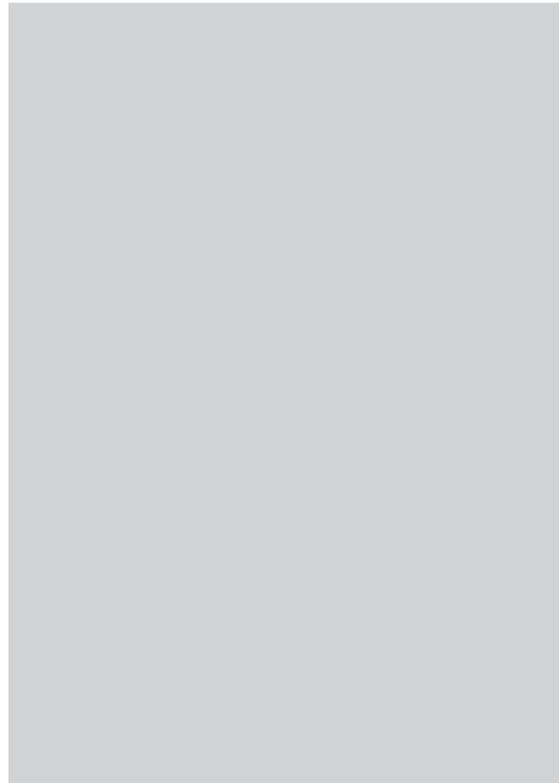
rather confusing unspooling of characters, dialogue and plot. It's easy to get lost in the facial-hair thicket of actors, earls, lords, Roberts, Thomases and Cecils, and the movie's jarring leaps across the years often make things even more challenging to follow.

But it's cool seeing some of Shakespeare's "greatest hits" being born on the movie's recreated London stage, and anyone who's ever thrilled to his words will enjoy the attention to period detail in the film's look and feel of the time, place and socio-political conditions that produced "Romeo & Juliet," "Macbeth" and "Julius Caesar."

"To be or not to be?" mused Hamlet in one of Shakespeare's mightiest works. "Anonymous" asks its audience to ponder another question. It may not be worth seriously considering in the long run, but it makes for a fanciful two-hour romp.

Visit the official MCAGCC facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/the-combatcenter>

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



Relax with the paper

Wednesdays and Saturdays with the Hi-Desert Star

Thursdays with The Desert Trail

Fridays with The Observation Post



Hi-Desert Publishing Co.

Your community newspapers working to serve you better

TANKERS MAKE TRACKS



2ND LT. SIN CARRANO

1st Tank Battalion took a four-mile motivation run Nov. 2, for one last Oorah before the battalion will be split up on various deployments throughout the next year. Tanks chose the tank trail along Del Valle as their course.

Co-ed Softball League Stats

TEAM	WIN	LOSS
OutKast	6	1
Drama Killers	6	1
Chicks & Sticks	5	2
Pitch Slapped !!!	4	3
MCTOG Spartans	2	5
K's Buy	2	5
MWSS 374	2	5
Ballz & Dollz	1	6



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Jordan Egan, a left fielder for the Drama Killers, stretches out to the base and is safe at home during a co-ed softball game against Sticks & Chicks Tuesday at Felix Field. The Drama Killers are tied with OutKast for the first place team in the league with six wins and one loss.

Their Last Veterans Day

Combat Center Band scheduled to leave Installation for good



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

The Combat Center Band play patriotic hymns as the conductor salutes the commanding general and his party during the annual Palm Springs Veterans Day Parade Nov. 11. This is the bands' final Veterans Day Parade and concert, they are scheduled to leave the Combat Center early next year.

LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

PALM SPRINGS, Calif.— Feet moving in unison, perfect straight lines, pressed dress blue uniforms, and precision with each note played, the Combat Center Band marched proudly down the streets of Palm Springs during their annual Veterans Day Parade Nov. 11, to honor the veterans who had gone before and those currently serving.

Each year, the band marches down the street playing patriotic songs. After the parade, the band conducts a concert, where hundreds gather to watch the Marines play. It's the norm, it's expected and it's looked forward to by the families of the city.

This Veterans Day event is unique among others to the Marines because the band is scheduled to leave the Combat Center early next year, making this Veterans Day their final one.

"It's going to be a big loss to the community and the base," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Heen, tuba player in the band. "We are representatives for [stateside and] deployed units, we are constantly in the public eye."

The Veterans Day event is a fairly large gig for the band each year, not only because of the size of the crowd cheering

them on, but also the history that surrounds the area by having so many veterans gathered together.

The band seeks to honor past heroes through music.

"History has always been such a big part of the Corps," Heen said. "In my opinion it seems to be more significant to the Marine Corps than other branches. We love playing for the veterans."

As the band played the hymns significant to each branch of the U.S. military, veterans seemed to dominate the streets as they jumped up and down with loud cheers to support the branch of service they had served or are currently serving in.

"The people love to see the Marines out here," said Joe Pinedo, Marine Corps Vietnam veteran of the 1st Marine Air Wing. "It's good for the community to see them. I hate to see them leave, it's disappointing."

For regulars of the parade, the news of the band's departure was hard to take and somewhat surprising.

"They are wonderful," said Carolyn Murdoch, Palm Springs resident. "They are always wonderful, very dedicated. It's really sad to see them go."

The band conducted themselves with professionalism, knowing they were representing the Corps by their public appearance.

"When veterans see us they always say, 'Thank you.' I don't

understand why," Heen said. "We are here to thank them."

Knowing this was their last Veterans Day event, the band wowed the crowd with even more gusto, playing music which seemed to tell all in attendance, "We are going out with a bang."

"This is inspiring, they are so excellent," said Cecil Murdoch, Carolyn's husband.



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

The crowd waves excitedly as the the Combat Center Band passes during the annual Palm Springs Veterans Day Parade Nov. 11. The parade was held on Palm Canyon Drive.



Visit
the official
MCAGCC facebook page at

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



The Combat Center
has its own
YouTube channel. Find it
at

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



The Combat Center
has its own Flickr photo and
video streams.
Find them at

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