

OBSERVATION POST



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eMarine helps commanders connect with troops

CPL. SARAH DIETZ

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marine and Family Readiness Organization and Manpower and Reserve Affairs are using a new tool to get information to families of deployed Marines faster.

Instead of looking at multiple websites to find news, photos and information, the eMarine site provides a secure place where all the information is gathered in one place and is immediately accessible to families.

"It helps us with having one system to find information where we used to use five," said Andrea Tatayon, family readiness officer, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment.

Each Marine deploying can sponsor up to

five family members to access the site. The families will be able to view unit pages, newsletters from FROs and commanders, calendar events, announcements, photos and surveys.

Families will also be able to interact with each other on the site, Tatayon said.

The program is fairly new. The Marines of 3/7 implemented the program to their own battalion in September, just before the battalion left for a seven-month deployment in Afghanistan.

"It can help me easily educate and reach out to

families, whether there is a language barrier or distance," Tatayon said. "It's a tool we haven't had before (and) an ability to communicate."

A unique feature on the site is that eMarine is specific to each individual using it. For example, if a parent is looking at eMarine, they will have different groups and features to take part in as opposed to the options a spouse would have.

Parents said "they like a place to go check for things specific for them," Tatayon said.

eMarine is preferred among Facebook and

other social network sites because of security. It creates a trusted environment where users receive important information about their Marine 24 hours a day, according to a Marine Corps press release.

Marine Online Mass Communication Tool will not be replaced by eMarine, but will remain open as an alternative email solution for family readiness, as stated in the press release.

This site is the easiest communication tool to implement at the lowest cost, with the highest adoption rate while maintaining security.

For more information on the new program and how a Marine can sponsor a family member, contact your unit's Family Readiness Office and check out the site by visiting <http://www.emarine.org>.

"It helps us with having one system to find information where we used to use five."

— Andrea Tatayon

CFC celebrates 50 years of charity

SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

EDITOR / PRESS CHIEF

The Combined Federal Campaign reached a milestone when it turned 50 this year.

The CFC is the only authorized charity solicitation authorized in federal workplaces and is ranked as one of the largest and most successful workplace charity campaigns, according to information available on the CFC's official website. The donations support more than 200,000 charities worldwide.

"The CFC has been a source of food, of warmth, of light, of medicine, of schoolbooks - a source of life," said U.S. Office of Personnel Management Director John Berry, who heads the campaign committee. "For countless Americans and people in need around the world, it has been like bedrock - supporting them, even if they don't know it's there."

The campaign raises million of dollars every year and is comprised of military, federal civilian and postal employees.

Since 1961, federal employees have raised nearly \$7 billion for thousands of non-profit organizations. The 2010 CFC campaign raised \$281.5 million.

The Coachella and Twentynine Palms Area CFC raised \$287,000 during last year's campaign season.

This year's goal for the Combat Center is 100 percent notification.

"The success of the Combined Federal Campaign demonstrates the commitment of federal employees to public service," said Maris Miranda, chairman, Coachella and Twentynine Palms Area CFC. "Most only do federal employees devote their livelihoods to their country, but their generosity has made the CFC one of the most powerful philanthropic forces in the world."

The deadline to get pledge forms in to the base CFC representative is today.

Find more information on the CFC's official website at <http://www.opm.gov/cfc>.

8 questions from donors

1. How can I tell if an organization is legitimate?

The U. S. Office of Personnel Management screens all CFC participating charities against the IRS Master File of Exempt organizations to ensure that they are duly registered as 501(c)(3) charities to which donor contributions are tax deductible. In addition, all CFC charities are reviewed annually for evidence that they are providing services on a local, state, national or international level. The CFC review does not evaluate whether an organization uses its donations efficiently. Each individual donor is responsible for evaluating this type of information. However, the Director of OPM has the authority to reject any organization that either has not taken corrective action in response to a sanction, or whose financial controls do not meet the required audit standards.

2. Can I get information about a charity's operations and expenditures directly from the charity?

Yes. Federal law requires the charity to send you a copy of its IRS Form 990 for a reasonable charge, upon request. In addition, you can request a copy of the organization's Annual Report. Annual reports typically include: the organization's mission statement; a summary of the past year's program service accomplishments; a roster of the officers and members of the board of directors; total income in the past fiscal year; expenses in the same program; fundraising and administrative categories in

See **DONORS, A8**

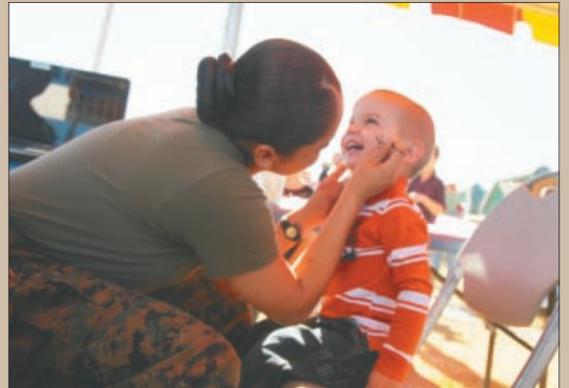
School house rock



PHOTOS BY CPL. SARAH DIETZ

[Above] Marines with Company A, MCCES, compete in a tug-of-war competition against Co. B during the battalion's Olympiad and Family Day events at Felix Field Nov. 22.

[Right] Sgt. Nataly Pere, supply clerk, MCCES, paints a spider on Aidan Galindo, 3-year-old son of Staff Sgt. Patrick Galindo, student, Co. A, MCCES.



[Bottom] Marines with MCCES, pass off a baton during the all-hands relay race around the track at Felix Field.



Corps' top enlisted Marine promotes new professional reading list

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Micheal Barrett is a strong believer in Marines increasing their knowledge through reading books.

Marines have looked to the Commandant's Professional Reading Program List for books that can help them grow as warfighters and leaders.

Barrett said he wanted to find a meaningful way to give back to the Marines he serves.

"Yeah, I've got my coin, and there's a time and place for giving coins," he said during an interview Aug. 11. "But, do you know what I'd rather give a Marine? Something they can actually use. I'm one of those guys who likes practical gifts."

With the help of the Marine Corps Association, Barrett cre-

ated a new reading list, called the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Library, which includes 54 titles to help Marines excel.

"Yeah, I've got my coin, and there's a time and place for giving coins. But, do you know what I'd rather give a Marine? Something they can use. I'm one of those guys who likes practical gifts."

— Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Micheal Barrett

More than a dozen of the books on his list include titles also included in the Commandant's list, such as "First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps" by the late Lt. Gen.

Victor Krulak, and "Gates of Fire: An Epic Novel of the Battle of Thermopylae" by Steven Pressfield.

The difference is Barrett's list branches into dealing with the stresses of returning from deployment, issues affecting wounded warriors and Marine leadership in business.

These titles include "Courage After Fire: Coping Strategies for Troops Returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and their Families," by Keith Armstrong, Dr. Suzanne Best, Dr. Paula Domenici and Bob Dole. The book features strategies and techniques to help ease the Marines' transition back into a more normal lifestyle.

Barrett said he is also an avid reader and will continue to share the books he enjoys and finds beneficial, he told the Marine Times in an interview Aug. 11.

For a complete list visit the official Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps page on www.marines.mil.

This Week in Combat Center History



Reprinted from the Observation Post dated December 1, 1959, Vol. 3, No. 48

44 palm trees sprout at MCB; Is the name still the same?

AUTOR UNKNOWN

Marine Corps Base, 29?? or 44?? Palms, California. More than 135 tons of palm trees have arrived aboard the Base in the past few weeks, and no longer will a desert newcomer have to ask, "Hey, where are 29 Palms' 29 palm trees?" In fact, he can begin counting as he reaches the main gate (1) where six of them now stand eternal guard duty.

The three-ton trees were purchased from a contractor who specialized in clearing date palm (2) groves. They were brought here, two per load, on Marine Corps semi-truck and stake trailers. Utilizing four trucks, a Base Motor Pool driving crew was able to transport 24 trees in a single day over the 158 mile round trip route.

But only half the work was done when the trees arrived at their new home; the planting operation was no simple chore. After holes large enough to accomodate the roots and trunks were dug, cranes lifted the trees from the bed of the truck. With guide-line aid from other Base Maintenance men, they were guided into the pits.

The holes were then filled half-way with water before dirt was shoveled in up to ground level. With this done, the guidlines became improvised guy wires for two or three days as the earth around the trees hardend enough to support it. The planting of each tree took approximately two hours (3).

This, of course, brings up a somewhat controversial question: Will the Base change its name from 29 Palms to 44 Palms - or plug along on old standards? According to very reliable sources, the name's the same (4).

FOOTNOTES

1. The main gate was located at the intersection of Cottontail and Del Valle roads.

2. The scientific name Phoenix dactylifera also known as Medjool palm is a tall, beautiful, majestic tree known for its edible sweet fruits, the date.

3. The best time to transplant a palm tree is during the spring and early summer when soil temperatures are on the rise.

4. In Aug. 2006, to commemorate the 54th anniversary of the Combat Center, 29 palm trees were transplanted along Adobe Road, lining the entrance to the installation.

Reduced home delivery co-pays

PRESS RELEASE
TRICARE

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – Copayments for some medications provided through TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery are being reduced to zero. Home Delivery beneficiaries may fill generic prescriptions at no cost to themselves. Generic formulary drugs purchased through Home Delivery previously cost \$3 for a 90-day supply, but as of Oct. 1 the copayment dropped to zero.

"These new co-pays make using TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery more affordable than ever," said Rear Adm. Christine Hunter, TRICARE Management Activity deputy director. "Home

Delivery offers a great value for patients taking maintenance medications for chronic conditions."

The following changes to the TRICARE pharmacy copayments went into effect:

- Generic formulary drugs purchased at retail pharmacies went from \$3 to \$5.

- Brand name formulary drugs from retail pharmacies went from \$9 to \$12.

- Non-formulary medications went from \$22 to \$25 in both retail and Home Delivery.

Brand name formulary drugs purchased through Home Delivery have the same \$9 copayment. Copayments for prescriptions filled through Home Delivery cover a 90-day supply, but only a 30-day supply when purchased at

a retail pharmacy.

"This is the first change to TRICARE pharmacy co-pays since 2002," Hunter said. "Our goal is to keep costs as low as possible for our beneficiaries and DOD."

Military, their families and retirees are increasingly using Home Delivery to get their maintenance medications conveniently delivered through U.S. mail – saving TRICARE about \$30 million in 2010. Use of Home Delivery has grown in 2011 by nearly 10 percent over 2010. More than 1 million prescriptions per month are filled through the service.

For more information about the new copayment rates and Home Delivery, visit <http://www.tricare.mil>.

Hot Topics

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>.

2012 NEW YEAR BOWLING BASH

Join us at Sandy Hill Lanes for New Years Bash 2012, Dec. 31. Youth and teens are invited to come at 5-7 p.m. and adults 18 and older are welcome to come at 8:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. For the youth event the cost is \$6 per person or \$30 per lane. Adult prices are \$20 per person or \$90 per lane. For more information call 830-6422.

HOLIDAY GOLF SCRAMBLE

The Commanding General's Holiday Golf Tournament is going on Dec. 13 at the Desert Winds Golf Course at 10 a.m. The four person scramble is \$40 entry fee plus \$10 or a new unwrapped toy for donation per player to participate. For more information call the course at 830-6132.

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS HAYRIDE

Take a hayride around the Desert Winds Golf Course under the stars and lights of the desert and see all the decorations Dec. 16, from 5-9 p.m. Enjoy complimentary hot chocolate and cookies. Extreme Pita will be open during the event for dinner.

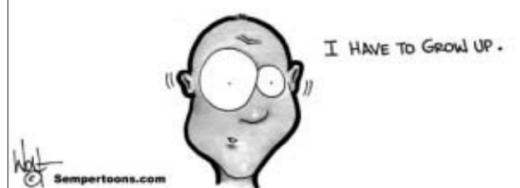
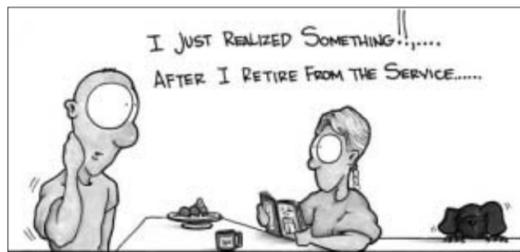


Eagle Eyes

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 #2369-M

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

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2011 HOMETOWN CONTENT

ALL GUMMED UP

[Puzzle solutions on A8]

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63				64				65				
66				67				68				
69				70				71				

ACROSS

1. Hollywood agent Swifty
6. Freeway access
10. Converse on the Web
14. Whirlpool Corporation brand
15. New York stage award
16. Heavenly headwear
17. Desktop publishers' selections
18. Figures at a gangland summit
19. Tree of life locale
20. Unconventional sort
22. Secrete a mike on
23. Fontanne's stage partner
24. Blue-pencil wielder
26. Pollen-bearing organ
30. Suffix in nuclear physics
31. "Damn Yankees" vamp
32. Hammer end
35. Golden ___ (seniors)
39. Food thickener

DOWN

1. Gag response, in entertainment mags
2. Love personified
3. "Riders of the Purple Sage" novelist Grey
4. Start a pot
5. Go to the mat, in dialect
6. "The Thinker" sculptor
7. Scrub, to NASA
8. Mary Quant design
9. Act the noodge
10. Stern reprimand
11. "I've ___ up to here!"
12. Last Oldsmobile made
13. Cartridge filler
21. Jab, cross, or hook
25. ___ stretch (serve time)
26. Duel invitation, maybe
27. Forum frock
28. Word for Yorick
29. Dojo activity

OBSERVATION POST

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WHAT I'VE LEARNED

THE GRUNT

LANCE CPL. NARIS NADEEM
INFANTRYMAN, 21, TULSA, OKLA.

INTERVIEWED AND
PHOTOGRAPHED BY

SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

NOV. 29, 2011

- > **When I was growing up**, I was more intellectual. I didn't play sports. I played baseball, but that wasn't my fault.
- > **A lot of Marines** played football or wrestling, but not me.
- > **I like science**, chemistry. It isn't that I like math, but it was necessary. History was fun.
- > **I'm kind of a nerd**, I guess.
- > **When I was 8**, we were at Yellowstone,

and I got this scar from a bear. Then a ranger jumped out of nowhere. Not like an Army Ranger, but a real ranger. You know, a park ranger. And stopped it. It was crazy. But I'm OK.

> **My family is mostly Indian**. Not the Mohawk kind, but the kind with the red dot on forehead.

> **My dad lived** in India. Elephants. Foreign gods. He gets a job in Pakistan, my parents had me there and then came here. Thankfully I retained the language because they still speak it at home.

> **I visited two times** for a total of two months. It was OK. Made me realize what we have here. What we take for granted. Go to Wal-Mart and you may see, like, 100 heads of cabbage. You won't see that there.

> **I speak Urdu**, which is close to Pashto.

> **In Afghanistan**, even if we didn't have a translator, I could talk to them. I could ask them "What's this?" or "Where are you going?." Nothing crazy. I couldn't give a calculus class.

> **My dad is** probably the biggest influence in my life. He did well in life.

Financially, socially, and he knew everything. I couldn't fool him.

> **I didn't have to** work as a kid. I did anyway, but I didn't have to. The Marine Corps is the first time I've ever had to be fully independent.

> **I have two little** brothers. I do like my brothers. They're 16 and 14. I can't imagine my life without them in it.

> **I have two stepsisters** now. I've met them, and it's just weird, because it's like, "Hello. We're related now. By law."

> **I left home** when I was 19. I had started to work. I went to a community college. I got fed up with it. I needed a change.

> **The Marines looked good** in their uniforms. They actually had equipment to work out on in their office. It was clean. They just had their stuff together.

> **I couldn't think** of anything else. I couldn't imagine being a Marine and not going to Afghanistan and being one of the guys who shoots back.

> **I don't know** what it is. I say a few funny things here and there, and I'm branded.

> **I just have to get** on a roll. It's not like a faucet. I can't turn it on and off.

> **I gave a** finance class. All I was doing was talking. I told a Chuck Norris joke.

Explained what debt is. Told a few more Chuck Norris jokes. Talked about debt.

Passed out some candy and passed it on to the next guy.

> **Chuck Norris** jokes help in all situations.

> **It's just a different world** within a world. You have the Marine Corps, then inside, there's the infantry.

> **Everyone has this** image that all Marines are crazy, all Marines want to fight. That's just not true.

> **I see a Marine**, I see a guy kicking down a door.

> **You go to the range** and fire and it's very controlled. You go over there, and sometimes you don't even know where you're getting fired at from. So a lot of those rules, they don't go out the window, but they just don't apply anymore.

> **This was after** I got home from my deployment. One of my friends, we were sitting on the couch, and he was like, "Dude, you've been shot at. You're a veteran." And I was like, "Oh my god, you're right." That was the first time I realized that my experiences truly were different, that I had changed.

> **You're not always** in control of what you go through. Especially in the Marine Corps.

> **In Afghanistan**, when they sent us Tootsie Rolls, they were smaller. I don't think they were fun size even. They were party size. You have the regular size, then the fun, then the party. Ever notice the smaller they are, the cooler they sound?

> **There's actually an ant** that will scream before it attacks you. They all screech. They're the size of your finger. They are huge. This was in Afghanistan though. We'd throw pebbles at them, and they'd catch them. They were not to be messed with.

> **At about 1830 every night by the water**, you'll hear the flight of the mosquitoes. It's them all waking up at the same time. You're on post, you have all your gear on, you can't put on bug spray. The jungle's here, then there's this wall, and you're on top of the wall. You realize you are the first thing they come across. Then you realize that sucks.

> **In Afghanistan, they'd watch Dexter** at night. I'd be trying to sleep, and it was a small space. All I'd hear was some woman screaming. And Dexter has this voice that he always uses. It's ridiculous. I'll never forgive that man for that show.

> **I don't understand** these shows about murder. I don't understand why people want to come home from work and watch some show where people find people's dismembered bodies.

> **I enjoyed the fact** of the freedom of mentality. I wasn't worried about my family. I wasn't worried about my payments. My car. All you do is patrol, eat, talk to your friends about what you're going to do when you get home. It's that simple.

> **Ninety percent** of what you talk to your friends about what you're going to do, you don't do.



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Visit the official MCGCC
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Marines collect biometrics evidence during Enhanced Mojave Viper



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. MARK STROUD

Lance Cpl. Mary C. McKenna (center) documents the iris of man displaying suspicious behavior here Nov. 18. The data would be entered into a biometrics database used to identify insurgents and criminals. McKenna is a military policeman with Combat Logistics Battalion 4, Combat Logistics Regiment 3, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

STORY BY LANCE CPL. MARK STROUD

III MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

Military policeman with Combat Logistics Battalion 4 participated in tactical site exploitation training at Wardah-Mir, a Combat Center Enhanced Mojave Viper mock village, Nov. 18.

The Marines conducted foot patrols, room clearing and search operations. During these operations, they collected biometric data on role players acting as villagers who displayed suspicious behavior or possessed contraband.

“We are trying to give the Marines the skill set to assist the Afghan government in criminal prosecutions and to help teach the Afghan National Police these skills,” said Patrick Garrahan, law enforcement professional, Tactical Training Exercise Control Group.

Wardah-Mir is designed for large-scale urban training operations and includes actors who portray both Afghan citizens and insurgents.

The CLB-4 Marines, assigned to Combat Logistics Regiment 3, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force, worked with infantry Marines from 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, during the training evolution.

The ground and combat logistics Marines joined for the training evolution to learn a skill set that both groups can be expected to use when forward deployed.

“Every day in Afghanistan, any Marine outside the wire has a chance to conduct tactical support element operations, and it is important they have a good knowledge of how to do that,” Garrahan said.

The three-day training evolution included classroom sessions, practical application of TSE and evidence processing.

The Marines practiced several TSE scenarios, including vehicle and home searches, where they also applied Military Operations in Urban Terrain techniques.

“We cordoned off the area, provided perimeter security, and conducted room clearing before executing the TSE,” said Sgt. Joseph R. Apsey, security team leader, Company B, CLB-4.

Suspects were processed using a handheld interagency identity detection equipment system, which compared their biometric data, such as fingerprints and iris scans, to a central database.

The system allows Marines to positively identify individuals wanted for questioning or detainment.

The Marines also collected and processed evidence, such as bomb-making materials, weapons and ordnance during the training.

Using TSE to gather and consolidate this evidence is a significant step toward catching bomb makers and intercepting bomb-making materials, which lowers the number of improvised explosives devices built and employed, Apsey said.

The tactics and techniques the Marines learned during the course offer them another tool to help the government of Afghanistan and the Afghan National Police improve security in the country.

“The techniques we learned here will help us capture insurgents and track down the bigger fish, which will help us accomplish our overall mission of making Afghanistan more secure,” Apsey said.

367-3577 For Advertising

Victory in Nawa: Walk of progress

STORY BY CPL. JEFF DREW

2ND MARINE DIVISION

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Helmand Province, Afghanistan — The third day of the Nawa Victory Walk began early. Marines with 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, woke as the sun rose, then filled up on energy bars for breakfast. They checked their equipment, refilled water containers, met up with their Afghan National Army counterparts, and headed for the front gate. The third day of the four-day, 30-mile patrol was in full swing. The battalion commander of 1/9, Mercer Island, Wash., native, Lt. Col. Tyler Zagurski, joined Afghan Lt. Col. Gul Ahmad, the commanding officer for 1st Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, to continue their trek, meeting with local elders and Afghan residents along the way to promote confidence in Afghan security forces.

The Marines' aching shoulders and sore feet seemed to be a thing of the past, as they had grown accustomed to the weight and pace of the movement during the previous days of patrolling.

In the last two days the Afghan soldiers and Marines had seen a lot. On the first day they moved hundreds of meters into the desert to aid local forces if necessary after hearing gunfire in the distance, an event that highlighted the readiness of Afghan police to maintain security.

"During the movement to contact (the enemy), I think the ANA and the Afghan Local Police did excellent," said Lynn, Ark., native, Sgt. Jeremy Cooney, ground element commander for the patrol. "I was impressed. They immediately set out flanking movement and got online and pushed out straight toward (the gunfire). They didn't hesitate and they didn't shoot at anyone because, at the time, we didn't know who was good and who was bad."

A groundbreaking ceremony of a local health clinic marked the second day. Key leaders, including council members, local elders and the district governor, arrived at the Loy Kolay Precinct, an Afghan security outpost, to cut a ceremonial ribbon and place the foundation bricks.

Morale was high as the group set out the third day, marked by a shorter distance of eight kilometers.

As they exited the door that led to the surrounding town of Khalaj, Cooney took charge of his Marines, and they fell in line behind the ANA.

"I think we are setting out to do what we intended," said Cooney. "The biggest part of this was being able to go to the different (patrol bases) and let (the Afghan soldiers) see that their commanders are out here with them. The ANA and the Marines are walking the streets and keeping it safe — I think, so far, this has been a success."

As the ground element commander, Cooney is in charge of all Marines walking in the patrol, taking charge of all security aspects and ensuring coverage in all direc-



PHOTOS BY CPL. JEFF DREW

A Marine with 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, checks his equipment shortly after arriving at Patrol Base Kharaman at the end of a day's patrol. The Marines conducted an eight-kilometer foot patrol on the third day of the Nawa Victory Walk across the district.

tions. His southern drawl matched with the surrounding sea of cornfields and farms highlighted his southern upbringing, and he spoke of his family as the soldiers and Marines walked down the dirt roads. He described his five children and how he couldn't wait to finish the mission and go back to the United States so he could go fishing, hunting and ride horses with them.

Nawa's security stands on the cusp of transition to Afghan control, and as the Marines patrolled to the various patrol bases and outposts, Cooney spoke of some of the district's progress.

"The people were pretty supportive of us when we got here, but I think we've been able to build on that relationship a lot," said the 31-year-old Cooney. "There are many more patrol bases being run by ANA than when we got here; that, in itself, is a big accomplishment. (Afghans) are starting to take care of security and do things themselves."

"You reach a point in a place like Nawa where continued growth and progress is impossible until you take a step back and encourage your partners to fill the gap," said Zagurski. "We won't let them fail; we haven't let them fail. We've watched them very carefully, and they have been very successful."

The ANA soldiers and Marines patrolled to Patrol Bases Luy Jolah, Jangeali, and Toor Ghar. At each stop Afghan

security forces welcomed them, offering food and chai tea. From Toor Ghar the Marines jumped into vehicles and moved to Patrol Base Kharaman, an abandoned mansion turned into an outpost where they would sleep for the evening. With one day left on the scheduled patrol, the service members were excited. They tucked themselves into sleeping bags to fend off the dropping temperatures and fell asleep under the stars.

"I couldn't be prouder of my men," said Cooney. "They keep pushing on without complaint — some have blisters, or their shoulders ache, but they don't show it."

Editor's note: First Battalion, 9th 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 Afghan National Security Force 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 ANSF assumption of security responsibilities within its area of operations in order to support the expansion of stability, development and legitimate governance.



Sgt. Jeremy Cooney, ground element commander, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment prepares to lead his Marines on patrol outside the town of Khalaj, Afghanistan, Nov. 16.



Lance Cpl. Justin Wilson, infantryman with 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, relaxes for a moment before leaving on another patrol.

WeekINPhotos

Exercise Semper Fast

[Right] An Australian army soldier with 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, practices a choking technique on Marine Lance Cpl. Joseph Abadiotakis with 2nd Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team out of Norfolk, Va., during Marine Corps Martial Arts Program training on Robertson Barracks, Darwin, Australia.



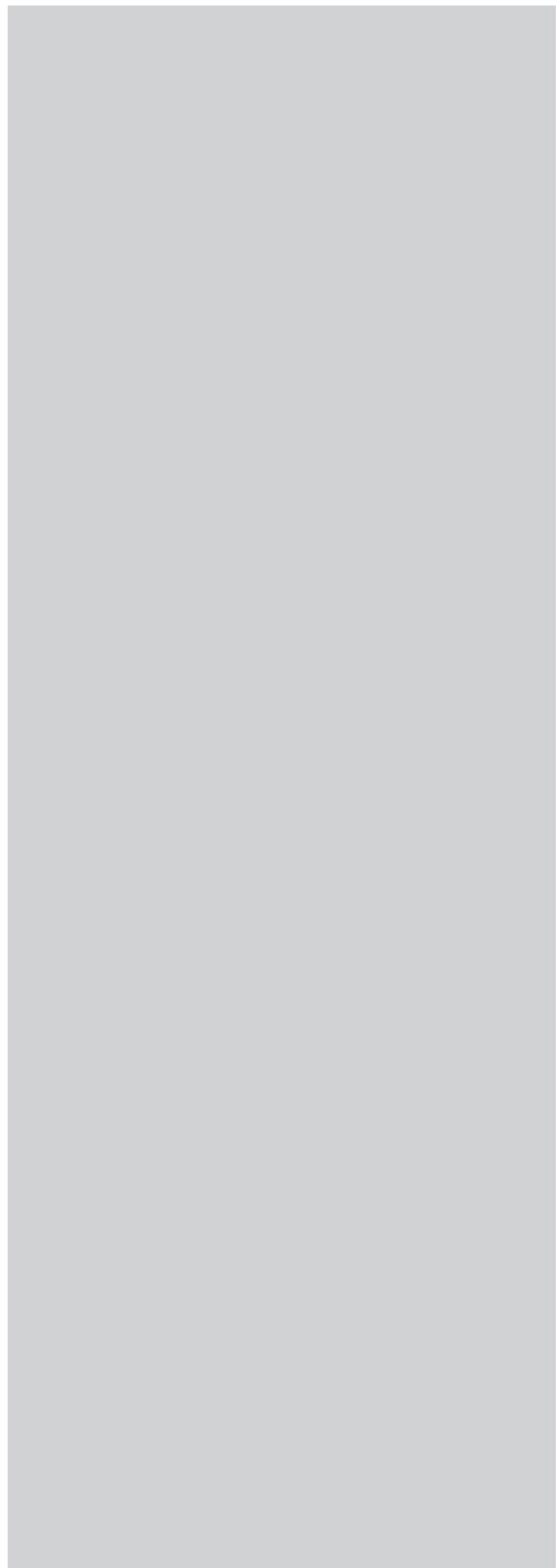
[Below] Marines with 2nd FAST out of Norfolk, Va., and Australian army soldiers with 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, conduct combat conditioning and practice MCMAP maneuvers at Robertson Barracks, Darwin, Australia.



PHOTOS BY SGT. PETE THIBODEAU

[Above]An Australian Army soldier (left) with 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, shows Sgt. Anthony Simmons, with 2nd FAST out of Norfolk, Va., the basic functions of the F88 Austeyr assault rifle during an exchange of weapons tactics, techniques, and procedures at Robertson Barracks, Darwin, Australia, Nov. 24. FAST Marines are attending Exercise Semper Fast 2011, a combined training event hosted by 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, focusing on small arms ranges, direct fire ranges, military operations on urban terrain and light infantry operations.

[Below] Cpl. Brandon Baggett with 2nd FAST demonstrates ground fighting techniques for FAST Marines and Australian Army soldiers with 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, during MCMAP training at Robertson Barracks, Darwin, Australia.



Relax with the paper

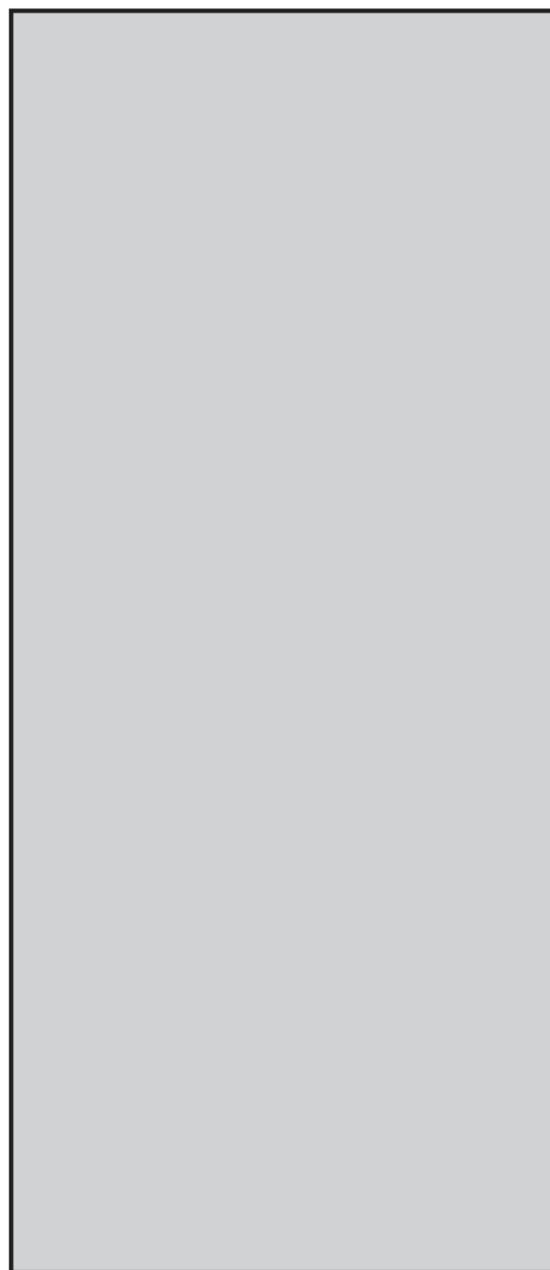
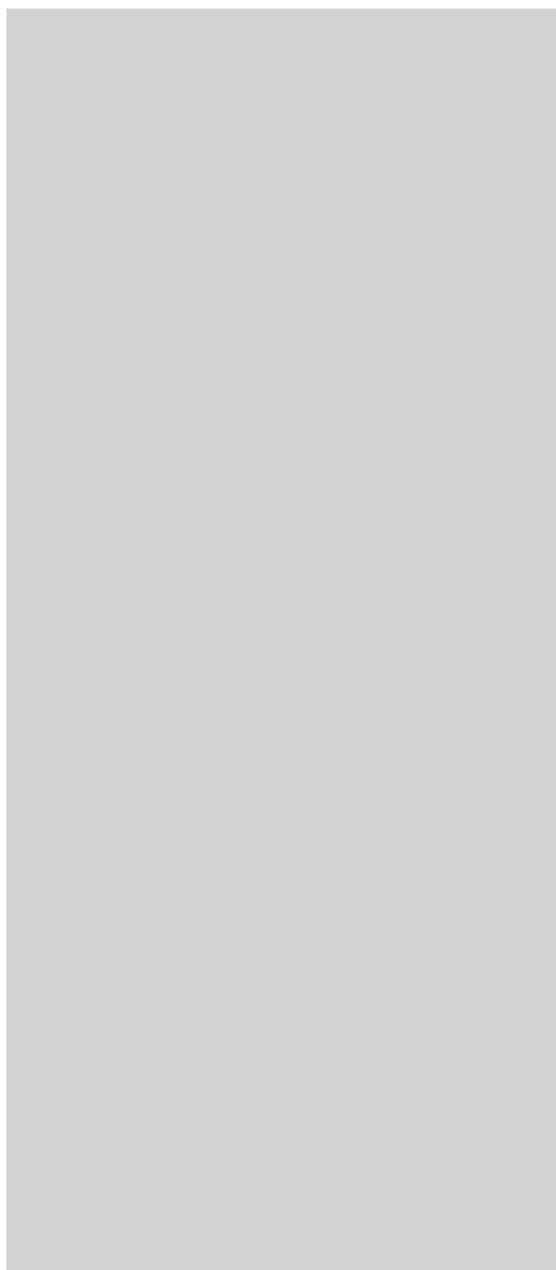


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■ On-base service keep Marines on track

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines can face a dangerous threat, not just on the battlefield, but in their wallets. “They don’t know where their money is,” said Sandra Little, financial specialist, Marine Corp Community Services. The surefire way for Marines to get into financial trouble is “not keeping track with their expenses.”

To help with this, the Marine Corps has personal financial managers like Little to help start properly managing their money.

“The first thing (they need) to do is set up a budget,” Little said.

This first step requires the Marine or sailor to be completely honest with the specialist about his or her spending habits. This conversation can also provide an eye-opener as to how much cash they actually have and how much they waste.

“What I find most of the time is that most of the money is there, but it is being spent frivolously,” Little said. “Provided they stay on this budget that we are going to establish together, they are going to see this residual cash and start doing better things with it.”

For individuals who need help right away, despite responsible spending habits, the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society is an emergency source that can offer help.

“We provide financial assistance and education for our Marines and sailors for any verifiable need,” said Raymond Caldwell, director of the NMCRS aboard the Combat Center.

The NMCRS provides interest-free loans and grants for emergency transportation, funeral expenses, medical/dental bills (patient’s share), food, rent, utilities, disaster relief assistance, childcare expenses, essential vehicle repairs and unforeseen family emergencies, Caldwell said.

The organization even has its own squad of financial counselors who are familiar with life in the Corps and are eager to help.

However, the organization will not lend money for just any reason, such as Christmas shopping.

“If a Marine has a need, then he will have to bring certain documents to prove the need,” Caldwell said. “Loans and grants are given on a case-by-case basis.”

Mismanaging finances can affect not only personal goals, but also have a negative impact on professional ones, too.

Security clearances are one of the many ways Marines can be affected.

When Marines and sailors apply for their security clearances or to receive credentials, they receive a background check from the Department of the Navy Central Adjudication Facility. The DONCAF looks into multiple security problems, including the applicant’s financial history.

During 2010, about 79 percent of the investigations for security clearances that were denied or revoked were related to poor financial responsibility, said Michael Sanford, the Combat Center’s security manager. This could mean losing a job or being denied a lateral move into another job field.

“If they are in a [military occupation specialty] required to handle classified material, they will have to be removed [to another MOS],” Sanford said.

Before making any major financial decisions, Little recommended consulting a financial specialist. These major decisions can include marriage, renting or buying a home, buying a car or any other major purchases that might require applying for a loan.

For more information or to set an appointment for financial counseling, contact Little at 830-7342. For more information on the NMCRS, visit their website at <http://nmcrs.org> or call the Combat Center’s NMCRS office at 830-6323.



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Afghans, Marines examine impact of culture, religion

STAFF SGT. ANDREW MILLER

1ST MARINE DIVISION

CAMP DWYER, Helmand province, Afghanistan – The Afghan National Army 1st Brigade, 215th Corps and Regimental Combat Team 5 conducted a Religious Engagement Conference here Nov. 23.

“In this part of Afghanistan, culture is religion and religion is culture,” said Daoud Parwani, RCT-5 cultural advisor. “The two concepts are inseparable, and unless you are speaking in the language of religion, no one will listen to you.”

The conference brought together religious leaders from the partnered forces, including ANA Religious and Cultural Affairs Officers and U.S. Navy chaplains, to discuss the importance of religious engagement with Afghan forces and the people of southern Helmand province.

Navy Cmdr. Mark Winward, the RCT-5 chaplain and a native of East Hartford, Conn., said the spirit of the conference is best reflected by a quote from a fellow chaplain, Navy Capt. Paul Wrigley, on the impact of religious belief in theater operations.

“An operational commander, however well trained in the military issues, who is ignorant of or discounts the importance of religious belief can strengthen his enemy, offend his allies, alienate his own forces and antagonize public opinion,” Winward recited. “Religious belief is a factor he must consider in evaluating the enemy’s intentions and capabilities, the state of his own forces, his relationship with his allies and his courses of action.”

The successful efforts by Afghan and coalition forces to understand the impact religion and culture can have on operations are due in no small part to the development and utilization of the ANA’s RCAO program.

Currently, Mullahs make up almost half of the RCAO corps, and like U.S. military chaplains, they serve their fellow soldiers as religious officers.

According to U.S. Army Col. Brent Causey, U.S. Forces Afghanistan command chaplain, coalition force chaplains are deeply involved in the turnover of responsibilities with the Afghan government, just as infantry units are deeply involved with turnover of security.

“Engagement with Afghan religious leaders requires a comprehensive, coordinated and focused approach, informed by in-depth knowledge of Afghan religion, culture and history,” Causey said. He believes the partnering efforts of USFOR-A chaplains are essential to mentoring the RCAOs as they develop their roles and responsibilities to serve their fellow soldiers and surrounding communities.

Some roles of the RCAOs include promoting Islamic faith and values, conducting religious observances, providing counseling for ANA personnel and family members, conducting casualty assistance for ANA family members, meeting with local leaders and community organizations for religious or humanitarian purposes, and serving as the principal advisor to the commander on all matters regarding religious, cultural, moral or family related issues.



STAFF SGT. ANDREW MILLER.

Afghan National Army 1st Brigade, 215th Corps Religious Cultural Affairs Officer Lt. Col. Sultan Mohammad (center) addresses the attendees during a Religious Engagement Conference at Camp Dwyer Achmand Province, Afghanistan Nov. 23. The conference brought together religious leaders from partnered forces, including ANA Religious and Cultural Affairs Officers and U.S. Navy chaplains, to discuss the importance of religious engagement with Afghan forces and the people of the province.

“Building a relationship with the RCA officers is as important as building a relationship with the local religious leaders, Mullahs, and religious scholars,” said Causey.

Winward said that religious freedoms are an important part of basic human rights. He emphasized that people of southern Helmand must understand the partnered force will never infringe on their rights.

“As Americans we value freedom

of religion, and that means we value and respect Afghan religion,” Winward said. “Religious engagement is absolutely critical to our initiatives here in Afghanistan. We recognize that religion is central and important to the Afghan people, and it is critical that the Afghan people know that the ANA and coalition forces support their faith, and respect their religion and culture.”

After the conference and

through continued mentoring and training from U.S. military chaplains, the RCAOs will become more proficient in their basic focuses of attention: internal ministry – counseling soldiers at their respective units, horizontal support – building a team to establish relationships, and finally, external support – advising commanders on the effects religious and spiritual activities have on operations.

DONORS, from A1

the financial statements; and net assets.

3. How can I learn more about an organization's financial information?

Charities with annual revenue above \$25,000 must file an annual information return to the IRS, known as the IRS Form 990 (although some faith-based organizations are not required to file). This document can contain useful information about the organization's program, its staff and board of directors and its finances. To access the IRS Form 990 search the IRS database of exempt organizations. You may also request copies of the IRS Form 990 from the State Attorney General's Registry of Charitable Organizations. You can reach the state office corresponding to the organization by contacting the National Association of State Charity Officials at <http://www.nasconet.org>. You may also contact the Guidestar organization and obtain online copies of the most recent IRS Form 990 and, for a fee, more detailed informa-

tion on the organization, at <http://www.guidestar.org>.

4. What is the role of the IRS regarding nonprofit organizations?

The IRS is responsible for reviewing an organization's application to qualify as an organization exempt from Federal taxes (a nonprofit) because of the type of activities it conducts in the interest of public welfare. The IRS also is responsible for conducting examinations of nonprofit organizations and to determine any liability for tax penalties, or revocation of tax exempt status. For more information about the IRS's oversight of exempt organizations, visit <http://www.irs.gov/charities/index.html>.

5. Where else can I get information about the organizations in the CFC?

A number of organizations make information available about the charities they evaluate. Known as charity “watchdog” organizations, these can help donors make responsible choices. Following is website information for each of the leading nonprofit organization rating services: Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving

Alliance – <http://www.giv.org>

Standards of Excellence Institute – <http://www.standardsforexcellenceinstitute.org>
American Institute of Philanthropy – <http://www.charitywatch.org>

Charity Navigator – <http://www.charitynavigator.org>

6. How can I evaluate an organization's use of funds?

The most effective way of obtaining a response is by contacting the Chief Financial Officer or the bookkeeper for the organization and ask them to explain their use of funds for programs, administration, and fundraising. You may also request historical information about the organization's expenses and revenues so you can identify changes over time. You can also review the organization's IRS Form 990 (see Item #3).

7. What documents must the charity make available to the public?

In general, all registrations and annual filings submitted to the IRS are open to public inspection. Only the Schedule B (Schedule of

Contributors) portion of the annual IRS filing is exempt from public disclosure. While not required by law, nonprofit organizations do voluntarily disclose information about their operations and finances on their websites. Donors can play an important part in encouraging this best practice by asking their favorite charities to make it available as well.

8. What can I expect when I submit a complaint to OPM regarding a CFC charity?

The Office of CFC Operations, which is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the CFC, receives inquiries and complaints from the general public, the media and other interested parties regarding questionable practices. All complaints about CFC participating organizations are reviewed by OCFCO staff for possible violation of the CFC regulations. In cases where there is evidence of a violation or gross mismanagement resulting in a loss of charitable assets, the OCFCO will refer the matter to the OPM's Office of the Inspector General for investigation.



WOMEN OF THE FALL



Where My Pitches? claimed ultimate victory during the Commanding General's Intramural All-Women's Softball League championships Nov. 21. Shown above are, from left: Phylinda Murchison, Irene Gonzalez, Christine Estrada, Rachel Critchfield, Jennifer Lancaster and Correia Baker. Not picture are Marisol Berrios, Amber Bilderain, Brenda Edmonds, Victoria Grotberg, Irina Jones, Rose Silvas, Desiree Todd and Adlan Warren.

Where My Pitches? takes All-Women's championship

Story and Photos by Cpl. Sarah Dietz
 Combat Correspondent

The Commanding General's Intramural All-Women's Softball League came to a close Nov. 21 with the league's two top teams battling it out into overtime. In the end, Where My Pitches? walked away with the trophy in hand after a one-point lead.

S.W.A.T and Where My Pitches? teams, nearly equal in talent and skill, kept each other at bay nearly the entire game. At the bottom of the seventh they were tied 7-7.

"I just told them to do what we do," said Where My Pitches? coach

Steve Bilderain, just before the game went into overtime.

The top of the eighth is where the game got interesting.

The S.W.A.T took a huge lead, scoring four runs.

Where My Pitches?, knowing this was their last chance to claim victory, were all in. They pulled ahead of S.W.A.T., 12-11, cinching the title of champions.

"They are dedicated women. When they came out to play softball, they

See CHAMPS, B8



Where My Pitches? short-stop Irina "Russia" Jones winds up to crush the ball into left field during the All-Women's semi-final game against Cherry Bombers at Felix Field Nov. 21.



Where my Pitches? left fielder Jennifer "J-Lo" Lancaster runs to first during the All-Women's championship game against S.W.A.T. at Felix Field Nov. 21.



Liberty Call

Adam Sandler plays two roles in comedic catastrophe



COURTESY PHOTO

In "Jack and Jill," Sandler plays two roles, thanks to modern-day moviemaking technology that lets him appear seamlessly in scenes with himself--in this case, as both Jack and Jill, a pair of now-adult, brother-and-sister twins.

NEIL POND
AMERICAN PROFILE

"Jack and Jill"

Starring Adam Sandler, Al Pacino & Katie Holmes
Directed by Dennis Dugan
91 min., PG-13

The latest comedy from Adam Sandler shares its title with the nursery rhyme about two children whose trek up a hill is beset by catastrophe.

Though it might not seem that the two, ahem, "works" are related, Sandler's "Jack and Jill" is also an uphill slog--a tiresome, childish cavalcade of gross-out gags, crass cross-dressing hijinks, and juvenile stupidity masquerading as sentimentality---that will likely prove to be a stumbling, tumbling wipeout at the box office once word starts to spread.

Sandler tends to make

films that tend to split moviegoers into two camps: those who consider him hilarious, and those who think he's a fart-joke man-child of such hopelessly limited, arrested-adolescence range he'll likely never evolve out of the shallows of his immaturity.

In "Jack and Jill," Sandler plays two roles, thanks to modern-day moviemaking technology that lets him appear seamlessly in scenes with himself--in this case, as both Jack and Jill, a pair of now-adult, brother-and-sister twins.

Jack's settled Los Angeles family life is thrown into a chaotic spin when loud, obnoxious, unlucky-in-love New Yorker Jill comes for a holiday visit.

Throw in Katie Holmes as Jack's wife, a drunk cocktail, an adopted child with a fetish for adhesives, a wacky tooth-

less grandma, a wacky home- less man, a wacky Hispanic gardener cracking Hispanic jokes, twin-speak goobledygook, and a gaggle of gags about sweat stains, body odors, diarrhea and bathroom noises, and voila---you've got a new Adam Sandler movie!

Speaking of things to throw in, Sandler (working once again with director Dennis Dugan, a frequent collaborator) somehow manages to lure a who's who of celebrities into this manic comedy mash-up, including several of Sandler's former "Saturday Night Live" alums, plus Johnny Depp, Regis Philbin, Drew Carey, tennis pro John McEnroe, basketball superstar Shaquille O'Neal, footballers Michael Irvin and Bill Romanowski, and Jared, the guy who dropped all those pounds by

eating at Subway.

But the most astonishing guest celebrity presence of all is Al Pacino, who plays himself in a crucial, plot-driving element involving his attraction to Jill and Jack's desperate efforts to get the "Godfather" actor to appear in a TV commercial he's producing.

You've probably seen Pacino in a number of movies, but you've probably never seen him in one that calls for him to try to seduce Adam Sandler dressed as a woman.

When Pacino sees the over-the-top TV spot he finally agrees to make, he's appropriately mortified. "No one must ever see this," he warns. "Burn this."

Great idea! Might I suggest tossing "Jack & Jill" into the incinerator while we're at it?

Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Friday: Social Hour with food, 5 - 7 p.m. followed by DJ Gjettblaque, 8 - 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 7 p.m., and a Sunday Matinee' Dec. 11
Where: Theatre 29
736377 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
For tickets and information call 316-4151 or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

Christmas Light Show

Fun for the whole family
When: Daily from 5 to 10 p.m., until Jan. 3, 2012
Where: Sunnyvale Garden Suites Hotel
73843 Sunnyvale Drive, Twentynine Palms, Calif.
Tune your radio to FM 88.7 and watch more than 22,000 lights dance to the music.

Free Line Dance Lessons

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

Light from the Porch

Christmas Dessert Theatre, Free
When: 6 p.m., Dec. 3-4
Where: Palms Baptist Church
5285 Adobe Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
For more information, call (210) 269-7822.

Lower Desert

Mannheim Steamroller

Live performance of holiday music
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 3
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Boyz II Men

Live performance of the R&B vocal group.
When: 9p.m., Friday, Dec. 16
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinosort.com>.

Travis Tritt

Live Country music performance
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 3
Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit <http://www.spotlight29.com>.



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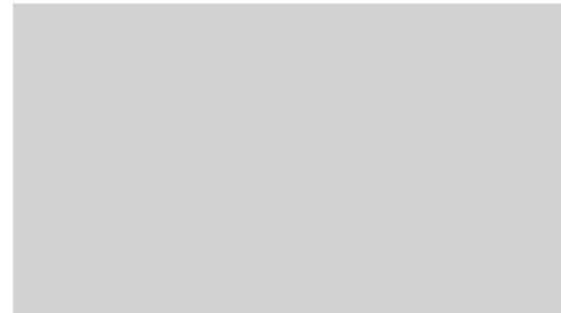
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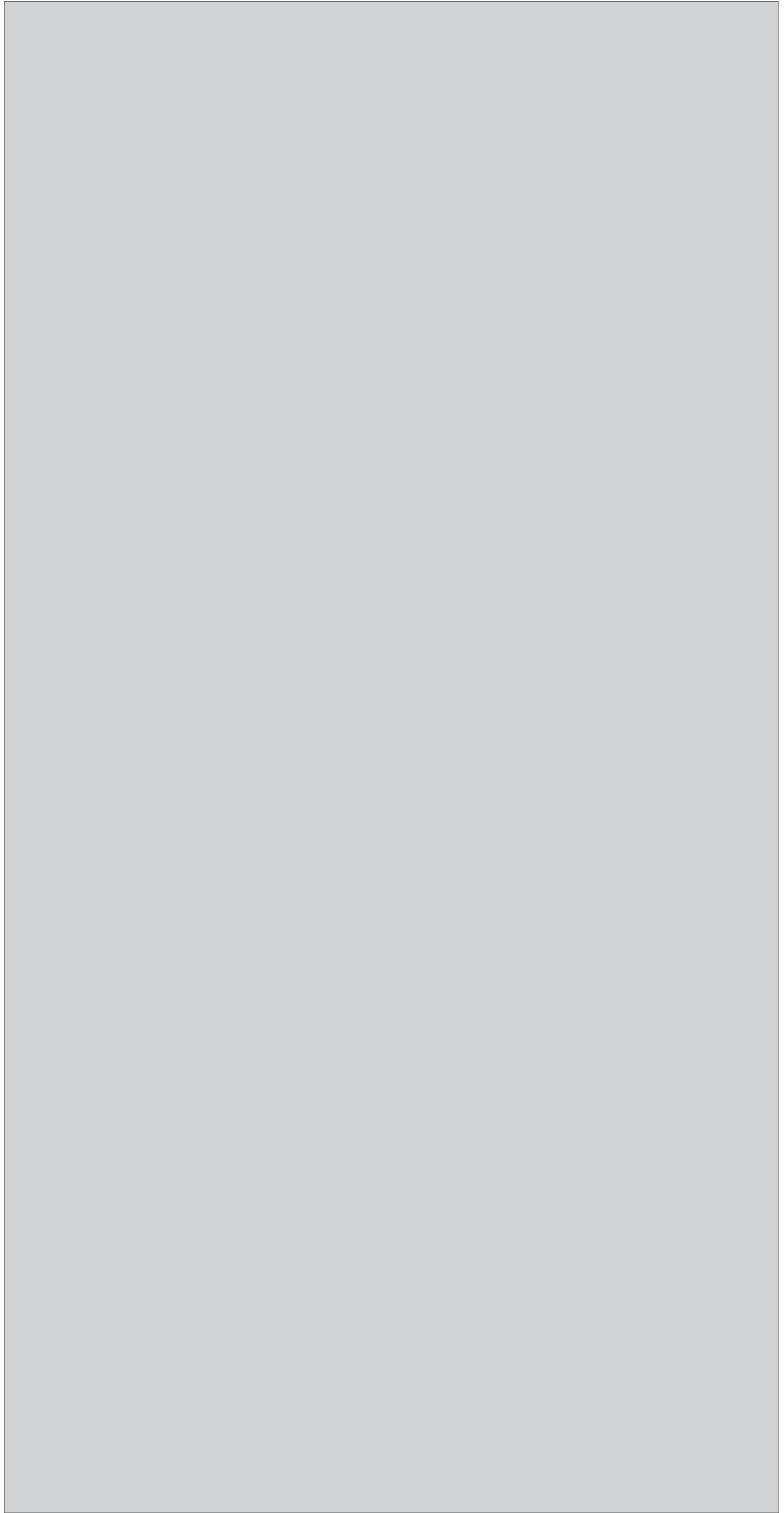
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CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Where My Pitches? players rejoice as they tie up the game with S.W.A.T. in the seventh inning, 7-7, during the All-Women's Softball League Championship game Nov. 22 at Felix Field. Where My Pitches? took the game in the extra inning.

CHAMPS, from B1

showed up to play and win," Bilderrain said.

A blur of pink jerseys, the color of Where My Pitches?, streaked across the field with excitement over the win followed by a traditional Gatorade shower for the coach, in the freezing weather.

"The season has been amazing," said Where's My Pitches? pitcher, Rose Silvas. "I'm so happy they brought the [women's]

season back. There is a lot of talent out here."

The victors were sure to give credit where credit is due, recognizing the competition as their main motivation to excel.

"I have to say thanks to [the S.W.A.T. team] for setting the bar," Bilderrain said. "If it weren't for you, we wouldn't be this good."

After the game, the two coaches, who are teammates on the base varsity softball team, joked about the season.



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