



OBSERVATION POST

MCAGOC TWENTYNINE PALMS

December 16, 2011

Since 1957

Vol. 55 Issue 49

Popular health supplement pulled, on hold

SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

EDITOR / PRESS CHIEF

Concern over troop safety prompted a Department of Defense ban on a popular workout stimulant earlier this month.

Products with the ingredient Dimethylamylamine (DMAA) are now on medical hold in light of an ongoing review of its potentially serious side effects.

DMAA is a stimulant that affects the vasoconstrictor and central nervous systems. It is primarily found in dietary supplements and weight gain / muscle building products. The stimulant has also been banned by Major League Baseball and the World Anti-Doping Agency.

The supplement was originally a nasal decongestant, but now finds its home in many athletics-enhancing products, like the popular Jack3d line.

On-base health stores, such as General Nutrition Centers, were directed to check their products' labels and pull ones containing DMAA from shelves, according to the Department of Defense Hazardous Food and Non-Prescription Drug Recall System alert 036-2011. The alert is an update to ALFOODACT 034/2011.

Products already identified as containing DMAA are:

- USPlabs Jack3d (Tropical Fruit and Lemon Lime)
- USPlabs Oxy Elite Pro
- Nutrex Lipo 6 Black Caps (his and hers)
- Nutrex Lipo 6 Black Ultra Concentrated (his and hers)
- Nutrex Hemo Rage Black Powder (Punch and Berry)
- Isatori PWR
- Muscletech Neurocore
- Muscletech Hydroxylim
- Fahrenheit Nutrition Lean EFX
- Muslce Warfare Napalm
- All American Efx K-Otic
- SNI Nitric Blast
- BIORhythm SSIN Juice
- Muscled Meds Code Red
- SEI MethlHex (4 and 2)
- Grenade (universal) Grenade
- M.A.P. (iovate) Arson
- Gaspari Nutrition Spirodeix

More information on this recall and previous ones is available at <http://www.troopsupport.dla.mil>.

Corps allows bags, bracelets in uniform

LANCE CPL. LAUREN A. KURKIMILIS

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines are no longer restricted to wearing only issued bags in uniform.

Civilian backpacks officially can now be worn in uniform, according to the results of Uniform Board 212 which were released in MARADMIN 695/11 Dec. 6.

Backpacks may be black, brown, olive drab, tan or a combination of these colors, according to the MARADMIN. MARPAT-printed commercial and organizational bags are still authorized as well. Bags

must be conservative and will be worn over both shoulders. Logos must be no larger than five-by-two inches big.

Other changes included the official approval to wear honor bracelets, meant to remember those killed, missing or captured in action, must be either black or silver and no more than half an inch wide. Engraved on the bracelet will be name, rank, operation and date. There is no limit on how many names can be on the bracelet, but only one bracelet can be worn at a time.

For more information or to see other changes, refer to MARADMIN 695/11.



Marines strike cheerful chord



The Combat Center Band plays seasonal music during their annual Holiday Concert at the Palm Springs Convention Center Dec. 7.

Thousands show at Holiday Concert in Palm Springs

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center Band has been providing music for this installation for more than 50 years. Their precise and well-orchestrated playing has been heard by many across the western United States, both Marine and civilian, at ceremonies, parades and celebrations.

This year alone, the band has played at more than 30 public events and ceremonies. They conducted their final performance of the year at the Palm Springs Convention Center for the Holiday Concert Dec. 7.

The stage was filled with chairs and instruments and covered in festive lighting. Marines, veterans and members of the community filled more than 3,000 seats, all gathered together to hear the band's last note of 2011.

"This is kind of like family, it's kind of like playing for home," said Staff Sgt. Jacob Furlong, saxophonist, Combat Center Band.

The band began the performance with a twist on many well-known seasonal tunes, adding their own flare to each song. They had practiced for this night since Thanksgiving.

"We are just trying to give the people a taste that we are more than just what you see on the field for changes of command," said Gunnery Sgt. Joel Daniel,

tuba instrumentalist, Combat Center Band. "We're multifaceted, and that's what we tried to showcase tonight."

The crowd cheered to the band's musical styling, but the holidays are also a time of tradition. During the second half, the musicians regaled the crowd with a selection of traditional holiday songs and melodies as they were originally written.

As the notes faded away, the Marines stepped off the stage to shake hands and talk with their adoring public. After hours of soulful playing, the night came to an end at well after 10 p.m.

"We've poured our hearts and souls into this one," said Furlong, standing proud in his dress blues uniform "We gave it 110 percent."



[Above] Staff Sgt. Jacob Furlong, saxophone player, Combat Center Band, leads a small ensemble in playing a holiday tune.



[Right] Cpl. Sean M. Cobbs, percussionist, Combat Center Band, waits for his cue to play in front of an audience of more than 3,000 people.

Band brings holiday cheer to children

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The children of Condor Elementary School were in for a surprise during their lunch hour as members of the "Bandini Brass Band," an ensemble with the Combat Center Band, went a'caroling during their last solo performance of the year Dec. 6.

The ensemble played famous songs like "Frosty the Snowman" and "Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer" as the children sang along.

"I think it is a great opportunity for the kids to be exposed to the sound of the instruments and the Christmas spirit and to actually see them being played," said Paul Gadduso, principal, Condor Elementary. "For many of them, it is the first time they have seen a group like this."

During the two hours of playing and singing, the musicians took breaks to talk with the children.

"We just asked what they have planned for Christmas, if they have been good and what they asked Santa for

Christmas," said Cpl. Michael Perdomo-Hazen, percussionist, Combat Center Band.

Perdomo-Hazen added that after the kids started to open up, they kept the conversation going until either he had to start playing again or they had to leave.

As the older kids arrived for the later lunch period, they began to not only sing along, but also dance with the music.

Some of the students even got to play along with the Marines and tested out their skills on the drums.

"As a kid I always wanted to play on the drums or on the instruments, so I thought it would be a good idea to let them do that," Perdomo said. "They love it. They made a big line just to see it."

As the lunch period came to an end, the Marines exited to the cheers and goodbyes from their new friends.

"The most rewarding thing is seeing the kids smile. It's a lot of fun to make sure they are having a good time and they are enjoying themselves," said Sgt. Kyle Ryle, sousaphone player.

For more photos from this event and others check out the Combat Center's Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter.

TRICARE adds more vaccines to retail pharmacy coverage

BY TYLER PATTERSON
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

It's flu season, and you know what that means: time for your flu shot.

You probably already knew that TRICARE covers seasonal flu, H1N1 flu and pneumonia vaccines at retail pharmacies. And you probably also knew that TRICARE covers those vaccines at 100 percent, with no co-pay. Combined, that means you and your family can get any of those shots at any retail pharmacy in the TRICARE network. It's convenient and there's no co-pay. So how can the benefit get any better?

It's a tough question, but one that TRICARE's got an answer for. They've added more vaccines to the list.

EXPANDED VACCINATION COVERAGE

Now, in addition to flu and pneumonia vaccines, you can also head to any TRICARE-network retail pharmacy to get immunized against measles, mumps, shin-

gles and many other preventable diseases. Be sure to visit <http://www.tricare.mil/vaccines> to see the full list.

Once you've made the decision to get the shot, finding a network retail pharmacy couldn't be easier. Find a pharmacy online or just call 1-877-363-1303. You'll also want to get in touch with the pharmacy itself to make sure it actually carries the shot you need.

EVEN MORE BENEFITS

Don't forget, vaccinations aren't the only no co-pay preventive care benefits. TRICARE covers most recommended health screenings, too. Check out TriWest's Screening Guide to see what screenings are recommended for you. Keep in mind that while the care itself is covered, you may still need to pay a cost share or co-pay for the office visit. Check your TRICARE plan for details.

While you're online, you should also visit <http://www.tricare.mil/homedelivery> and find out how to have 90 days of most generic prescription drugs delivered right to your door, with no co-pay.

Looking to the future

Head turns keep riders safer

FRANK SANTIAGO
BASE SAFETY

As a motorcyclist, we have many tools that we use when riding.

The problem is that the tools we use while riding cannot be purchased from your local hardware store. Proper techniques are tools learned and not bought. Unfortunately, we as riders don't always use all of the tools in our belt.

The most valuable tool we have as riders is the extremely important head turn.

Our "look" tool is to us what the Bataram is to Batman. "Look" to us is the Shield to Captain America. It is the Magnum to Zoolander. Yes, it's that important. Without those tools Batman, Captain America and Zoolander could not do the job they need to do. And without a head

turn, we cannot do the job we need to do.

Knowing that a simple head turn holds so much weight, why is it that riders fail to use it?

Why do riders still insist on making the ride more challenging? Following riders in curves, I very often notice their refusal to turn their heads. So I wonder at that time, how do they know where they are going? At the same time I'm noticing the bike bobbing up and down. These are all results of simply not identifying an exit beyond the turn. Not looking through a corner is like using a screw driver to remove an oil filter. Does it work? Kinda. But wouldn't a filter wrench be more appropriate? Plus clean-up after the fact is less of a headache. And if you are looking through your turn, clean-up is a non-issue.

Relax, extend your head slightly more and find an exit. This is a simple challenge I would present to you the rider and I also welcome automobile drivers to try. Like with "lefty loosey, righty tighty." If you use your tools correctly, your ride will smooth out considerably and become more enjoyable.

Hot Topics

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.

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.

TAX CENTER OPENING

The Tax Center, Building 1428, will open Jan. 24, with extended hours during the tax season. The center provides free Federal and State tax preparation for eligible clients, include active duty and retired service members and their families. The appointment line will be operational Jan 1. Call 830-4TAX(4829).

GOLF SCHOOL BACK IN DEMAND

Starting Jan. 14 take part in adult golf lessons at the Desert Winds Golf Course. The six weeks of instruction is taught by a PGA Pro and costs \$100 and use of clubs, range balls and greens fees. For more information call 830-6132 or visit www.mccs29palms.com.



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



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

SUDOKU #2386-M

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5		4	2				8	

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2011 HOMETOWN CENTENT

Off-Limits Establishments

Combat Center personnel and their families are reminded that the off-limits establishments are:

IN TWENTYNINE PALMS:

STC Smoke Shop
6001 Adobe Road

Adobe Smoke Shop
6441 Adobe Road

IN PALM SPRINGS:

Village Pub
266 S. Palm Canyon Drive

IN YUCCA VALLEY:

Puff's Tobacco Mart
57063 29 Palms Highway

Yucca Tobacco Mart
57602 29 Palms Highway

For updated information on local and regional off-limits areas, visit: <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms>



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

OBSERVATION POST

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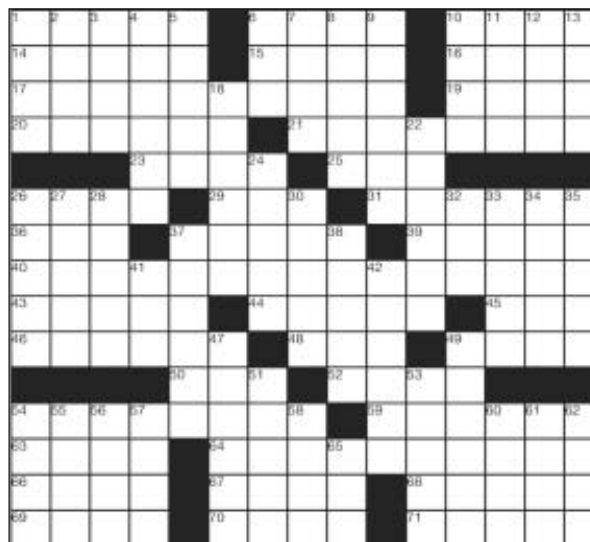
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LOSING TRACTION

[Puzzle solutions on A4]



ACROSS

1. Israel's Ehud
6. Ego or field follower
10. Mouth, slangily
14. Where you live
15. Tilt-A-Whirl, for one
16. Ancient letter
17. Engineers' gear, once
19. Obsessed by
20. Curfews of cosmetics
21. Female hormone
23. Dudley Do-Right's beloved
25. Plumber's union?
26. Varicolored
29. Author McEwan
31. Michelin introduction of 1948
36. Ideology
37. Do over, as a lawn
39. As of
40. Verbal faux pas
43. Cock and bull
44. Simpleton of rhyme
45. Boot one, in baseball
46. Gangster's code of silence

48. "High ___" (Anderson play)
49. Supercomputer name
50. Big Band ___
52. Practice with a pugilist
54. Schnozz adornment
59. 1998 Masters winner Mark
63. Fast-shrinking Asian waters
64. Stereotypical sighter of pink elephants
66. Salty septet
67. Raines or Cinders
68. Ebbets Field hero
69. Ran like heck
70. O'Casey or O? Faola?in
71. Barkin or Burstyn

DOWN

1. Big shindig
2. Up to the task
3. Muddy up
4. Either 2 in "2 + 2"
5. New Hampshire city
6. Play about Capote
7. Steam up
8. That is, in Latin
9. Be a royal pain to
10. The Magi, e.g.
11. Ladder segment
12. Pot builder
13. Menial laborer
18. Help from the bull pen
22. Think logically
24. Hangs tough
26. Large edible clam
27. Sufi's faith
28. Writer Zola
30. Hold to a .000 batting average
32. Cacophony
33. Stevens of "The Farmer's Daughter"
34. MDX and RDX automaker
35. Distrustful
37. Personnel listing

38. Audition CDs
41. Part of wpm
42. Lethargic state
47. Comes to mind
49. Embroidery yarn
51. Spot for a bracelet
53. Dean Martin's "That's ___"
54. GOP elephant creator Thomas
55. Stackable cookie
56. German coal region
57. "If all ___ fails ..."
58. ___ monster (large lizard)
60. Genesis victim
61. Crafty move
62. Sermon closer
65. Veep before Al

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

THE BROTHERS

LANCE CPL. JARED "RED" CHAMBERS
LANCE CPL. JORDAN "BLUE" CHAMBERS

INFANTRYMEN, 1/8
 21 YEARS OLD, PIGEON FORGE, TENN.

INTERVIEWED AND
 PHOTOGRAPHED BY
CPL. SARAH DIETZ

DEC. 11, 2011

TROUBLE WITH TWINS

- > *Jordan:* We usually talk at the same time.
- > **Jared:** We talk to each other in our sleep. *Jordan:* That's the weird one. We carry on conversations every once in a while.
- > **Jared:** If you think of the most common twin questions, they have been asked.
- > **Jared:** It was really easy to switch places.
- > *Jordan:* We've been to each other's classes just to mess with the teachers.
- > **Jared:** We never switched on girls. It's usually followed by why not? But it never happened.
- > *Jordan:* Everybody compares all the time, me and him.
- > **Jared:** They call me Red and call him Blue. We both got our left arms tattooed. I got Red and he's got Blue.
- > *Jordan:* When we got into the fleet he was Red I, was Blue.
- > *Jordan:* We hate country music. We both listen to metal.
- > **Jared:** We both have Harleys, we both listen to the same music.
- > *Jordan:* Both of us skated a lot, had hair down past our shoulders.
- > **Jared:** He plays guitar, I play drums. We both play video games like its cool.
- > **Jared:** We had the same friends growing up.
- > *Jordan:* We weren't in any cliques, kinda liked by everybody. We layed low on the radar. Everybody knew us just because we were twins.
- > *Jordan:* We were pretty much good kids, we never got into trouble.
- > **Jared:** Spontaneously just hit each other? Yeah, it happens. Something gets out of control and somebody takes something too serious and so it begins.
- > **Jared:** It's usually over as soon as somebody taps out. *Jordan:* It's usually over something stupid or off the wall.

BROTHERS IN ARMS

- > **Jared:** I joined first and after mom got over it he joined. *Jordan:* I let the fire die a little bit. **Jared:** She lost her mind.
- > *Jordan:* Shes all about it now. She's happy that we are both in now.
- > **Jared:** This was always the plan, or something along this line.
- > **Jared:** The drill instructors didn't even know til like three weeks in that we were twins. One of us would get yelled at to go do something and be gone and the other would get yelled at, "Why are you still here?" and when I come back they were like, "Oh, god."
- > **Jared:** We've already been to Afghanistan together. *Jordan:* We'd rather be there in case something did happen than not be there in case something does happen and not be able to do something about it.
- > *Jordan:* I had fun on the last deployment, **Jared:** Yup, have fun getting money; our parents didn't feel the same way.
- > *Jordan:* We've had a reporter come and try and do this in country, they got to him but they couldn't get to me.
- > *Jordan:* It's about the same, **Jared:** pretty much the same throughout the board. *Jordan:* And now we are both in this platoon. *Jordan:* It just happened, somebody probably didn't realize what they were doing.
- Jared:** Someone asked us once what we wanted to do and he said probably EOD, and I said the same thing. *Jordan:* It happens.



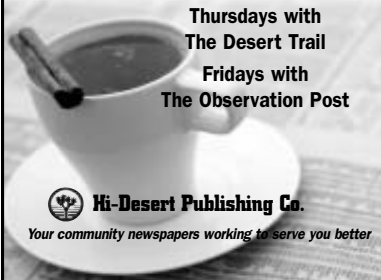
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 facebook page at
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‘Desert Kids’ help military children understand parents’ deployments

**STORY AND PHOTO BY
CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN**
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Telling a small child that their parent is deploying to Afghanistan can be hard, but so can explaining where it is or what the culture is like.

Military Families United holds a Desert Kids program to teach kids about where their parents go on deployments.

“It is to take away the mystery away from the kids,” said Robert Jackson, executive director, Military Families United. “Because kids don’t understand when their parents are being deployed. They don’t understand what it is and where they go. There is a natural curiosity, and there is a natural fear, especially with children.”

The information is presented in a clever way to help them also enjoy what they are learning.

“We march them through a mini-deployment,” Jackson said. “They get their passports. Then they go through the briefing for Afghanistan. They learn some basic phrases in Dari. They learn how far away Afghanistan is from Twentynine Palms. It’s 7,700 miles.

“From there, they ‘go’ to Afghanistan and taste some of the food and tea. Then

they vote on their favorite part so they can understand they are not only there to keep the bad guys away, but to help build a democracy,” he said.

“If you were to follow multiple kids through, each kid is going to pick something different that they like the most,” Jackson said. “Most like trying on the clothes and talking with the cultural expert. We have not had one kid that I have talked with that said their favorite part was the pizza.”

While the children enjoyed their time learning about a foreign country, the Marine volunteers had just as much fun teaching.

“It’s cool because when you tell these kids they are going to learn another language, they get all excited,” said Lance Cpl. Chacoi Jorge, heavy equipment mechanic, Combat Logistics Battalion 7.

The Desert Kids program has been to military installations all over the country including at Fort Bragg, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. But the program representative said, so far, the Combat Center has been one of the most impressive installations.

“These folks are excellent,” Jackson said. “Usually we go to a base and they will guarantee us 30, and only 10 show up. There are 38 here today, and they are the ones that make this (event) successful.”



Lance Cpl. Chacoi Jorge, heavy equipment mechanic, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, teaches Dari to children Mya and Skye as their father, Staff Sgt. Thomas Winson, staff noncommissioned officer in charge, Support Company, 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, looks on during the Camp Desert Kids program Dec. 3.

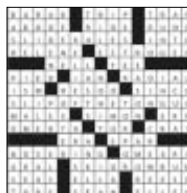
Seasons greetings



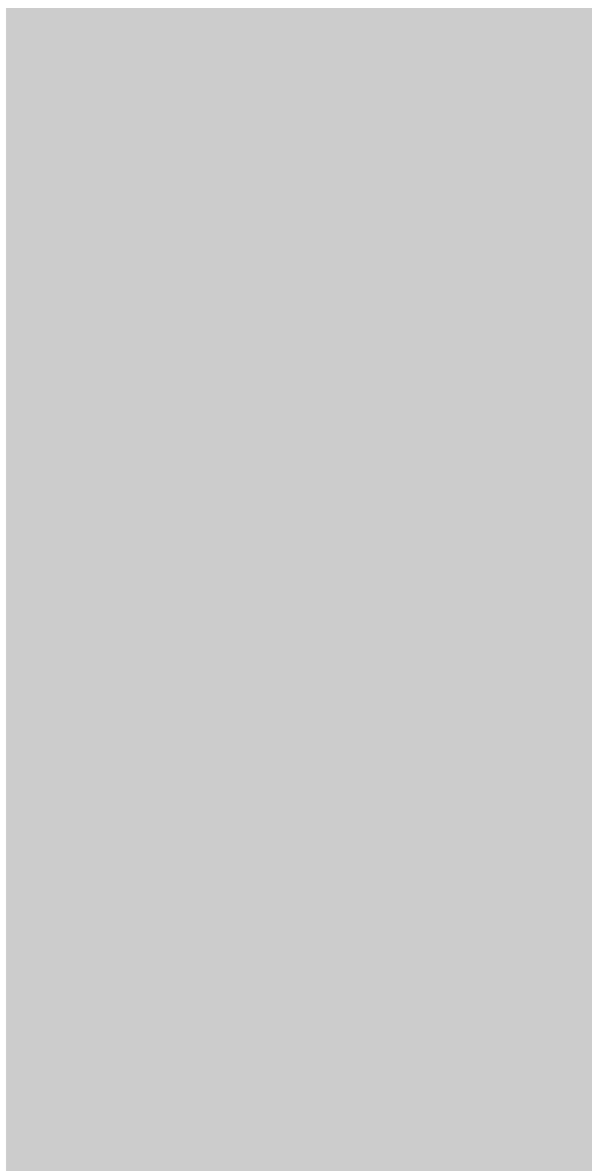
CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Cpl. Ashley Estep, deployments clerk, Installation Personnel Administration Center, adds a paper stocking bearing the name of her best friend, Sgt. Jeremy Fuka to the wall of deployed Combat Center Marines’ stockings Dec. 8. Fuka, motor transport operator, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, is currently deployed to Afghanistan. The display features more than 1,700 names, and it took 30 hours to set up. Estep, with the help of fellow coworkers Lance Cpls. Brook Bolton, legal clerk, and Brandi Offield, diary clerk, IPAC.

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



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



Bulk fuel Marines prove importance during EMV

STORY AND PHOTO BY
LANCE CPL. MARK W. STROUD

III MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

Bulk fuel is a much needed (military occupational specialty),” said Staff Sgt. Jay J. Jenkins, bulk fuel chief, Engineer Company. “When we are out here planning and implementing, it provides a good picture of how important (bulk fuel) is.”

Marines with Engineer Co., CLB-4, Combat Logistics Regiment 3, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force, took advantage of an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of bulk-fuel specialists when they constructed and manned a forward fuel farm at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., beginning Nov. 27 during Enhanced Mojave Viper.

The Camp Lejeune-based Marines of Engineer Co. are attached to CLB-4 to provide general engineering support.

EMV is the battalion’s final training exercise before deploying to Afghanistan early next year in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“(The bulk fuel specialist’s) role in Afghanistan is to maintain the fuel farms, ensure proper accountability and to receive and dispense fuel,” said Capt. Scott D. Graniero, commanding officer, Engineer Co. “There is no organic bulk fuel capability within the (Regimental Combat Team) and we bridge that gap by providing bulk fuel support.”

Engineer Co. will use the fuel farm as a training tool for the bulk fuel specialists and to support training operations in the area, according to Jenkins. They will man the fuel farm until Dec. 10, he added.

“The fuel farm will provide more efficient access to fuel for (1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II MEF) and the units attached to 1st Battalion, 8th Marines,” Graniero said. “They will be able to maintain their training operations instead of having to come back to Camp Wilson to refuel.”

A small contingent of Marines and sailors, including corpsmen, utilities and communications Marines and 10 bulk fuel specialists, manned the fuel farm.

“They constructed the site in 48-hours with the assets on hand,” Jenkins said. “It was a heavy workload for the Marines and it will benefit them in the future in case we need to move to a new site and construct a fuel farm rapidly.”

The fuel farm stored 12,500 gallons of fuel, with a maxi-



Marines with Engineer Company retract a fire hose after an immediate action drill at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., Dec. 2, where they responded to a simulated fire in one of the fuel reservoirs on a forward fuel farm they established during Enhanced Mojave Viper. In the event of a real incident, the Marines would be called upon to contain and extinguish the fire before it jeopardizes the functionality of the fuel farm. Engineer Co. is attached to Combat Logistics Battalion 4, Combat Logistics Regiment 3, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

mum capacity of 60,000 gallons, and could fuel the full range of Marine Corps tactical ground vehicles, Graniero said.

In Afghanistan, the bulk fuel specialists will be organized into small groups of two-to-three Marines and deployed to forward-operating bases in support of logistics and security operations, according to Jenkins.

“What the (bulk fuel specialist) learn here, they will implement in theater,” said Jenkins. “Because they will be working in such small groups, it is important that they are familiar with all aspects of the job.”

The construction and operation of the fuel farm was also an opportunity for its fuel chief to witness the progression and growth of his Marines.

“When I was an instructor, I taught some of these Marines when they came through (military occupation specialty) school,” Jenkins said. “Seeing them out here and witnessing the progress they’ve made and how they’ve grown really shows the cycle of how the Marine Corps works.”

The next stage of growth for the bulk fuel specialists of Engineer Co. will take place in Afghanistan, where they will provide the fuel that keep CLB-4 operations running.

“The bulk fuelers are always saying, ‘that if the fuel don’t flow, the proud don’t go,’” Graniero said. “Without fuel and without the capability to store fuel forward of the main logistical hubs, operations are slowed down. Everything relies on fuel.”



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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>

'Beirut Battalion' wraps up EMV with CHB-4

STORY BY LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines with 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, from Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., began their Clear, Hold, Build - 4 exercise at Range 220 Monday.

The four-step CHB exercises prepare infantry units for future deployments by simulating fighting conditions. They are trained in countering improvised explosive devices, patrolling, role player scenarios and helicopter operations.

The 1/8 Marines and sailors, scheduled to deploy early next year, began their training at the Combat Center Nov. 11 and progressed from CHB-1 through to CHB-4.

Each stage of the exercise implemented a different type of training, such as coordination of artillery and aerial support or battalion defense, leading up to the CHB-4, where all the parts are put together.

"It helps us gain a little more confidence," said Seaman Elwyn Holt, hospital corpsman, Company B, 1/8.

CHB-4 was a culmination of all the training the Marines received during their pre-deployment exercise in the Combat Center's

Enhanced Mojave Viper.

Marines responded to their environment as they would in battle.

The Tactical Training Exercise Control Group, which runs EMV, incorporated Afghan role players into the operations to simulate the closest possible model of the overseas environment the Marines will encounter during a future deployment.

These role players dressed, spoke and acted the part of Afghan nationals. They played civilians, security forces and tribal elders simulating different situations Marines may come across.

"It's great for these guys to be able to talk to people from Afghanistan and pick up on the culture," said 1st Lt. Jason W. Blydel, executive officer, Co. A, 1/8. "It's a pretty big impact having those guys out there helping us."

Through the pouring rain and freezing winds, Marines kept their focus on the mission at hand, clearing buildings and rooms. They carried themselves as they would on deployment, cautious of every building and every person.

"The guys have been going hard at it since day one," said Blydel, still drenched from the rain. "Only a couple days left out in the rain, they're still going pretty hard, and they're going to finish strong."



PHOTOS BY CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Lance Cpl. Nyles Rife, dog handler, Co. B, 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, takes his explosive ordnance dog, Cpl. Otis, to search a vehicle approaching the Marines' position, during Clear, Hold, Build - 4. The Beirut Battalion is nearing the end of their month long predeployment training and is scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan early next year.

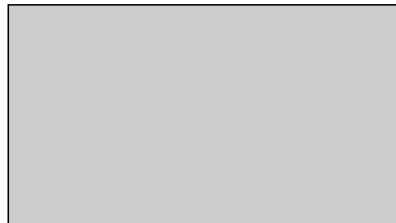


Pfc. Andrew Ellis, assaultman, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Battalion 8th Marine Regiment, peers through the scope of his weapon during the battalion's Clear, Hold, Build-4 exercise Monday at Range 220. CHB-4 is one of the last exercises the battalion conducts before their completion of Enhanced Mojave Viper. 1/8 is scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan early next year.



[Above] Cpl. Tyler Weaver, squad leader, Co. B, 1/8, uses an interpreter to converse with role players.

[Below] Staff Sgt. Candelario Alvarez, staff noncommissioned officer in charge, charges through Range 220 with his Marines and roleplayers acting as Afghan National Army soldiers.



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CPL. GENE ALLEN ANSWORTH III

WeekINPhotos

11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

[Above] CHANGI NAVAL BASE, Singapore – Marines serving with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit prepare to depart USS Makin Island to begin a training exercise here Dec. 12. The Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., unit embarked three U.S. Navy ships in San Diego Nov. 14 and arrived in Singapore Dec. 12 as part of a regularly-scheduled deployment to the Western Pacific and Middle East regions.

[Right] REAM NAVAL BASE, Cambodia, U.S. embassy – Defense attaché Army Col. Mark Gillette (right) greets Royal Khmer Navy Adm. Ouk Seyha before a ceremony here Dec. 13, marking the beginning of a humanitarian assistance and disaster-relief exercise between the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and U.S. sailors and Marines.

[Below] GULF OF THAILAND – Sgt. Maj. Jonathan Morris rides in a landing craft headed for USS New Orleans anchored off the coast of Cambodia Dec. 11. Morris is the sergeant major for Combat Logistics Battalion 11, which provides logistics and services to the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. The 11th MEU embarked three U.S. Navy ships in San Diego Nov. 14 and arrived in Southeastern Asia Dec. 11.



CPL. TOMMY HUYNH







Bulldawgs kenneled



LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

Miramar Falcon half-back Davis Cordero evades the Combat Center Bulldawgs' defense at the annual Best of the West football game at Felix Field Dec. 7.

Combat Center falls to Falcons 34-15

LANCE CPL. D. J. WU
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The previously undefeated Bulldawgs went into the Best of the West football championship with their heads held high to meet their opponents, the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Falcons at Felix Field Dec. 10.

The two teams worked hard in their respective league seasons to prepare for the match up in the championship game, held at the Combat Center this year.

"The team has been working hard. We lost the championship a couple years back and now we're here to win it," said Falcons coach Bennis Branch.

The sun warmed the cool December day as well as the teams' competitive spirits as the game progressed.

Both teams had something to prove in this year's championship.

The Falcons wanted to show they could come back from losing in the Best of the West two years ago, and the Bulldawgs were on their home field and had to defend it.

Bulldawgs coach John Maddox told his players what they needed to do.

"We're here representing this installation. We just need to do what we do and play clean and fair," he said.

The Falcons had their own plan in place to win the game.

"If we're going to win, we need to get out in front early and keep the pressure on the other team," said Branch.

The Falcons did just that. They stuck it to the Bulldawgs in

Miramar's defense was astounding throughout the game. They kept the Bulldawgs' from scoring in the first half and during most of the second.

It was in the fourth quarter when a glimmer of hope showed itself in the form of a Bulldawgs late game rally.

The Bulldawgs scored their first touchdown with less than 10 minutes left in the game. They were still trailing the Falcons by more than a few possessions.

The Falcons didn't take the push by the Bulldawgs lightly. Even with a double-digit lead, the Falcons continued to play hard and still demanded the best out of their players.

Some of the Falcons' hard play led to some fluster and loose penalties, allowing the Bulldawgs to score yet again in the fourth.

As Bulldawgs saw a comeback in their sights, the Falcons made one last stand and ousted any chance the Bulldawgs had left.

The Falcons finish off their domination of the championship in convincing fashion and took the Best of the West title by a score of 34-15.

"We did what we needed and we pulled it out," said Branch. "We won!"

"We did what we needed and we pulled it out. We won!"

— Falcons Coach Bennis Branch

the first half and got their strong start.

The Bulldawgs could not get past the Falcons' defensive line, and the Falcons' pass rush gave the quarterback little time to execute their intended plays.



LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

[Above] Bulldawgs quarterback George Romero runs the ball forward at the annual Best of the West football game against the Miramar Falcons at Felix Field Dec. 7.



LANCE CPL. LAUREN A. KURKIMILIS

[Right] Bulldawgs receiver Mark Wood catches the football after a kick by the Miramar Falcons during the second quarter of the game.



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
 The Combat Center's Officers' Club will be closed from Dec. 21 to Jan. 12 for repairs and upgrades.

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

Local Events

Bless Me Father
 When: 7 p.m., Friday, Dec. 16, and Saturday, Dec. 17
 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: Sunnyside Garden Suites Hotel
 73843 Sunnyside 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.

Lower Desert

Carol Channing Christmas Show
 Live performance of holiday music
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 21
 Where: Agua Caliente
 32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
 For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>.

760 Christmas - Presented by U-92.7
 Live performance of hip hop music
 When: 7 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 17
 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.morongocasinoresort.com>.

Jingle Bell Rock Tour
 Live classic rock performances
 When: 8 p.m., Friday, Dec. 16
 Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
 46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
 For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit <http://www.spotlight29.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, Dec. 16
 6 p.m. - In Time, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. - Tower Heist, Rated PG-13
 Midnight - The Rum Diary, Rated R
Saturday, Dec. 17
 11 a.m. - **Free Matinee** The Santa Clause, Rated PG
 2 p.m. - Puss in Boots, Rated PG
 6 p.m. - Disney's War Horse, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. - The Rum Diary, Rated PG-13
 Midnight - Ides of March, Rated R

Sunset Cinema will open weekends Dec. 14 - Jan 6.

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

Kermit, Miss Piggy and other beloved puppet stars make a merry comeback



COURTESY PHOTO

Jason Segel (who also co-wrote the screenplay) plays Gary, a Muppets fan who rallies the now-dispersed gang for a telethon to save their old theater, which will otherwise be demolished by an evil oil baron (Chris Cooper) with plans to drill, baby, drill.

NEIL POND
 AMERICAN PROFILE

"The Muppets"
 Starring Jason Segel & Amy Adams
 Directed by James Bobin
 98 min., PG-13

Can a new generation of moviegoers weaned on computer-effect razzmatazz cozy up to characters made out of old-school felt and foam?

The folks at Disney are counting on it with the return of Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy and the other beloved pop-cultural puppet icons that last appeared on the big screen in 1999.

Kids will certainly find a lot to like, but much of the new movie "The Muppets" is clearly geared toward their parents - who were likely kids themselves in the late 1970s when the Muppets' TV show first hit the airwaves.

Disney, which several years ago bought the rights to the late puppeteer-genius Jim Henson's empire and had been waiting for just the right project to

relaunch it, has found it. This merry musical romp jubilantly renews the signature mix of craziness, cleverness and camp that made the Muppets multimedia superstars in a previous entertainment era.

Jason Segel (who also co-wrote the screenplay) plays Gary, a Muppets fan who rallies the now-dispersed gang for a telethon to save their old theater, which will otherwise be demolished by an evil oil baron (Chris Cooper) with plans to drill, baby, drill.

Amy Adams is Gary's perky girlfriend, Mary, and a brand-new Muppet, Walter, makes his debut alongside such familiar cast members as Fozzie Bear, Swedish Chef, Animal and curmudgeonly balcony coots Statler and Waldorf.

Fans of a certain age may get a little misty when Kermit and others join voices for a heart-tugging tune that has become entrenched as a Muppet standard, "Rainbow Connection." But the movie also offers several delightful new numbers, including "Man or Muppet," "Me Party,"

"Life's a Happy Song" and "The Answer Is No," in which Chris Cooper breaks into an hilariously absurd rap.

Like the Muppets' TV show, the new movie attracts a gallery of guest stars. Jack Black plays his gonzo self through-out, but don't make a mid-movie popcorn run or you might miss Mickey Rooney, Alan Arkin, Emily Blunt, Zach Galifianakis, Selena Gomez, Sarah Silverman, Neil Patrick Harris, Jim Parsons from TV's "The Big Bang Theory," Foo Fighters lead singer Dave Grohl (in a role that recalls one of his previous gigs, as Nirvana's drummer) and other familiar faces that also pop up alongside the puppets.

And by all means, stay for the credits and the irresistibly goofy "Mah Nà Mah Nà," which has no real words but is guaranteed to produce genuine grins.

It looks like this movie was a lot of fun to make. It certainly is a lot of fun to watch. Will kids laugh? Absolutely. Will grown-ups be charmed? Indeed. "The Muppets" is a rare movie that not only the whole family can see, but one on which the whole family can agree: It's terrific.

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

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Tanks take flag football title



PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

1st Tanks and the Rhinos get together for a final photo at the end of the Commanding General's Intramural Flag-Football season. 1st Tanks won the championship against the Rhinos. Both teams fought hard, but Tanks pulled it out in the end with their impressive offensive assaults downfield led by Tanks quarterback, Brett Bergeron.



[Top Left] Rhino Player Lonnie Williams, takes a hit from 1st Tanks' Matt Anderson as Williams runs the ball down the field. Williams was a big part of the Rhinos' offensive game, but his effort was not enough to overcome his team's trailing score.



[Left] 1st Tanks quarterback Brett Bergeron throws the ball as the Rhinos' Alex Esparza pass rushes the QB.



[Bottom Left] Rhinos quarterback Adam Aldridge prepares to quickly get rid of the ball in the face of 1st Tanks' cunning defense.



Hey Combat Center fans – Spread the word!
The Combat Center has its own
YouTube channel.
Find it at <http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>.

