

Happy 55th Birthday, OP!



March 23, 2012

Since 1957

Vol. 56 Issue 10

1st Tank's Marine, double amputee named best Marine in 1st MarDiv

CPL. SARAH DIETZ
CORRESPONDENT

Cpl. Carlos Torres has a quiet spirit and is a man of few words. He is not arrogant, but he is proud of what he does.

Torres, infantryman, Company D, 1st Tank Battalion and double leg amputee, was named Marine of the Year for 1st Marine Division while serving in Afghanistan in 2011.

He is humble and almost casual about the award. He

is still positive, even after losing his legs.

Torres grew up wanting to be a Marine, a tanker to be exact. He knew he needed to move on from his hometown of Inglewood, Calif., he said.

He decided to go in the infantry when there wasn't an opportunity to sign up as a tanker, but ended up being assigned to 1st Tank Battalion anyway as an infantryman.

When Torres found out about the award, it didn't faze him too much. "I love my job," he said, simply.

See **MARINE, A4**



LANCE CPL. D.J. WU

Cpl. Carlos Torres, infantryman, Company D, 1st Tank Battalion is hugged by his best friend and hospital corpsman Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Raphael J. Holthaus, who saved his life when Torres stepped on an improvised explosive device last year.

(Part 1)

WARRIORS IN THE MAKING



Infantry officer Marines train in the desert



[Above] 2nd Lt. Altan Kandiyeli, student, Infantry Officers Course, speaks over his radio during exercises for IOC at Range 220 March 14.

[Right] Lieutenants in the Infantry Officers Class circle around a terrain model as they are briefed on the day's exercise at Range 220 March 14.



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

CORRESPONDENT

Four Marines line a corner of a building. As one of them peek around, he spots someone dressed as a member of the Afghan Security Forces walking directly toward them. Something is not right. His helmet is off and he's not carrying a weapon. He isn't friendly.

The man rips his shirt open, screaming out as he presses the detonation button. White powder bursts around him and the suicide bomber role player drops to the ground, feigning death.

Lieutenants with the Infantry Officers Course conducted a series of patrols at Range 220 March 13.

IOC prepares future infantry officers to train and lead warriors for

See **IOC, A5**

Check out more photos from Infantry Officer Course training and a link to the video coverage at <http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

We'll be spotlighting women throughout the month of March. Check out our timeline every week for events in women's history.

Look for this bookmark next to our women's history features all month.

WE CAN DO IT

Open house to explore alternative education

LANCE CPL. D. J. WU
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center School Liaison, in conjunction with the Home Educators Local Network, is hosting an Education Options Open House at the Community Center March 29.

The event will explore education and effective education methods for all types of learners. The School Liaison's Office invites all parents and guardians of school-aged children to learn more about K-12 education options in the area.

"There have been an increased amount of calls from parents wanting alternative education options," said Carol Burton, School Liaison Officer. "This is the first open house that we have had for alternative education."

The open house will feature several alternatives to the traditional schooling. Parents will meet Local Home Educators Co-Op Groups, review online credit recovery options and learn about a variety of home school resources and private schools.

For more information on the Education Options Open House, call the School Liaison at 830-15743.

There have been an increased amount of calls from parents wanting alternative education options,

— Carol Burton

This Week in Combat Center History



Reprinted from the Observation Post dated March 25, 1958, Vol. 2, No. 13

Observation Post one year old

WRITTEN BY: UNKNOWN

One anniversary candle and 47 issues ago, the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base newspaper became a reality. Its name, THE OBSERVATION POST, was selected through a "Name Your Base Paper" contest, and the first issue went to press on Thursday, March 21, 1957 as a four-page bi-weekly.

As stated in the first issue, the primary functions of this newspaper will be to supplement the broad news-coverage of the American press and radio by giving military personnel detailed coverage on service matters of particular interest to them.

Went Weekly
When only six issues old THE OBSERVATION POST went weekly on June 6. On July 18, the paper became eligible to compete for the Marine Corps' for the Marine Corps' Annual Journalism Award. The privilege to compete was extended

to the Base Paper on the basis of its growth and development, new coverage, journalistic excellence and general contribution to the welfare and morale of the Command.

The Palms publication has been putting out a six page paper since February 4, 1958, which has enabled wider coverage of local events as well as supplementing coverage on service matters of particular interest to members of this Base.

Birthday Celebration
In honor of its first birthday, the staff of the Informational Services Office had a birthday party. A cake, baked and decorated by Mess Hall No. 6, and other refreshments were served.

Guests of honor for the occasion were Brigadier General R. M. Victory, Commanding General Marine Corps Base, Colonel C. W. McCoy, Assistant Base Commander and Base Sgt. Maj. L. C. Delozier.

Swing into spring with a nutritious diet

KRISTIN SHIVES
TRICARE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY

March is the beginning of a new season, and the start of National Nutrition Month. With nutrition such an essential part in staying healthy, TRICARE beneficiaries can spring into a healthier life starting with a more nutritious diet this month.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, published by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture, say a healthy diet should include plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk products, lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts. The guidelines also recommend Americans choose foods with low saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt and added sugars. Dietary fats are needed, but should be limited to 20 to 30 percent of the amount of calories consumed, with no more than 10 percent of total calories from saturated fat. Read the nutrition label to find out the amount and types of fats in foods.

Many fruits and vegetables contain vitamins, minerals and fiber that may help prevent the development of chronic diseases including stroke, cardiovascular disease and cancer. Think color when picking fruits and veggies to add to a diet. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention list several examples of fruits and vegetables that have

a wide range of valuable nutrient; green spinach, orange sweet potatoes, black beans, yellow corn, purple plums, red watermelon and white onions. Beneficiaries can find the daily amount of fruits and vegetables needed at <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov>.

Balancing food choices is vital for the body to get all its needed nutrients and should include fiber, potassium and vitamins A and C. Fiber can help decrease the risk of coronary artery disease. Potassium helps keep blood pressure at a healthy level. Vitamin A keeps eyes and skin healthy plus boosts the immune system. Vitamin C helps bones, teeth and gums remain healthy and aids in the healing process.

Beneficiaries looking for a healthy eating plan can visit <http://www.mypyramid.gov>. The site offers information on how many calories are needed daily, how much food equals a portion and how to make healthy choices in each food group.

Nutrition and exercise affect the overall health for today, tomorrow and the future. Eat fewer calories, make informed food choices and be physically active: these steps can help TRICARE beneficiaries maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of chronic disease and achieve overall health. For more information on how to live healthy visit <http://www.tricare.mil/healthyliving>.

OFF-LIMITS ESTABLISHMENTS

MCIWest off-limits establishments guidance prohibits service members from patronizing the following locations. This order applies to all military personnel.

Local off-limits guidance prohibits service members from patronizing the following locations.

In Twentynine Palms:
- Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Rd.
- STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.

In Yucca Valley:
- Yucca Tobacco Mart, 57602 29 Palms Hwy.
- Puff's Tobacco Mart, 57063 29 Palms Hwy.

In Palm Springs:
- Village Pub, 266 S. Palm Canyon Dr.

For the complete orders, but not off-limits, check out the Combat Center's official website at <http://www.marines.mil/units/29palms>

HOT TOPIC

LAPD ENTRANCE EXAM

The entrance exam for the Los Angeles Police Department can be taken March 21, at the Christ Chapel, Building 1541. Participants must be at least 20 years old, have a high school diploma, GED or CHSPE, must be a U.S. citizen or applied for citizenship and have a background suitable for employment in Law Enforcement. For more information on applying, call 866-444-LAPD, or visit <http://www.joinlapd.com>.

SUDOKU #2488-M

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

PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2011 HOMETOWN CONTENT
[Puzzle solutions on A6]

KEEPING TIME

- ACROSS**
- Airline that introduced transatlantic service, for short
 - Numero ___ (first-rate)
 - Not these
 - Safe havens
 - Component of solder
 - Words to a hitchhiker
 - Reef material
 - Rambler mfr.
 - "Dallas" family name
 - Working stiff's stint, perhaps
 - Lyrical Gershwin
 - Slangy affirmative
 - Coming into existence
 - Fertilizer ingredient
 - Bunyan's tool
 - Squirrel's snack
 - Height: Prefix
 - Officer Candidate School grad, perhaps
 - ___ Nostra
 - Cul-?-end street)
 - She raised Cain
 - Exit one's cocoon
 - Lou Grant portrayed
 - Easy victory
 - Before, to bards
 - 1955 Marilyn Monroe movie, with "The"
 - 38th parallel land
 - Chemist's hangout
 - "The Highwayman" poet Alfred
 - Gather together
 - Right-angle bend
 - Film cowboy Gene
 - Irascible
 - Get the picture
 - Acknowledged the
 - DC fund-raising org.
 - Dating from
 - "Stoney End" composer Laura
 - He sacked Rome in 410
 - Subject to abuse
 - Brigham Young's state
 - Spock portrayer Leonard
 - When prompted
 - "Tommy" band
 - Hockey great Gordie
 - Sheriff Taylor's kid
 - Drop to the bottom
 - Chang's Siamese twin
 - Old TV's "___ Derringer"
 - Seance sound
 - 1933-?41 veep John ___ Garner
 - Beachgoer's acquisition
 - Pilgrim John, who courted Priscilla
 - Martin or McQueen
 - Jobofferer
 - Charlotte of "Bananas"
 - AMEX counterpart
 - Corn unit
 - One in the kiddie pool, perhaps
 - Ovoid wind instruments
 - ___ spoon (diner)
 - Foreve and a day, seemingly
 - Embark, as on a journey
 - "Black Velvet" singer Alannah ___
 - Family of early American painters
 - "You've got ___ nerve!"
 - Bull pen stats
 - One piece of a three-piece suit
 - Up to the job
 - Prefix meaning "cell"
 - Hefty sandwich
 - Herriman's "Krazy" feline
 - One of the Chaplins

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

OBSERVATION POST

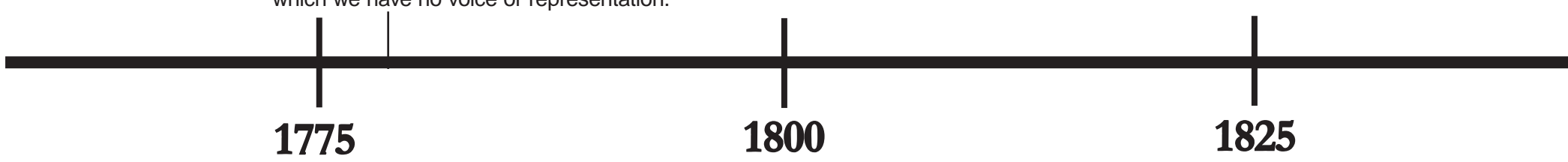
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1776: Abigail Adams writes her husband, John Adams: "If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation."



WE CAN DO IT

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

THE FIRECRACKER

1ST SGT. CHRISTINE RAMOS

Company First Sergeant, Paramount, Calif., 34
Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School

INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY
SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

March 21, 2012



> **I don't know what my friends would say about me.** They're going to tell you I'm crazy, loud, outspoken, rough around the edges, I don't put up with BS, belligerent. You know, all good things.

> **I'm not PC at all.** I know dirty jokes, yes. Racial jokes, yes. But, conservative jokes? No.

> **I see people stressed,** and I laugh. I'm beyond that. I like to have fun, and I like to laugh, and I like to have friends.

> **I tell everyone I'm 27, but I'm 34.** It works. You stay with 27 because people won't believe you're 25.

> **My father's from Mexico.** He came here illegally when he was 17. My mother's from Brownsville, Texas. They met in California.

> **I grew up in a dysfunctional home.** Your father's a Mexican who doesn't know anything about the United States. And then you have a crazy mother, like other side of the tracks, crazy.

> **I'm stuck right in the middle.** I have an older sister and a younger sister. My older sister didn't have her dad around. She had mine. So everybody pitied her. My little sister, she was the baby. She's the last one. So, I didn't exist.

> **I took care of us. I grew up at the age of 8.** I was cooking full meals at the age of 9 by myself. My parents did drugs and drank. I had to be the adult. They weren't around.

> **When I was 13 or 14,** we moved to Missouri because the gangs in L.A. were really bad. My mother wanted to get us out before we got caught up in that. We had no idea where we were going.

> **I experienced everything** you never want to experience in Missouri.

> **California is so diverse.** You don't learn about race in California. You don't see black or white or Hispanic. I never knew about that until Missouri. That's where I learned about racism. It wakes you up to a lot of things you never realized was in the world.

> **My mother was very overprotective.** Overbearing. I joined the Marine Corps because I was tired of living there like that. There's no other reason. I didn't do it for teamwork. I didn't do it for college. I joined because I wanted out of that house. I didn't know about the opportunities that Marine Corps had until I was already in it.

> **Boot camp didn't do anything for me.** Living at home was worse.

> **My comm chief at 10th Marines,** Master Sgt. Sylvain, he was a drill instructor. When I was a corporal, he said, "You need to funnel your belligerency to recruits. You'd make a great drill instructor." I was very loud and in-your-face. It was his way of saying use what you've got for something good.

> **I didn't understand what being a drill instructor** was until I met my best friend, Staff Sgt. Carrillo. She's a master sergeant now. I really thought being a drill instructor was just to make recruits' lives miserable. But what we do as DIs impacts not only the recruits, but the whole Marine Corps. It was to set that foundation. So I changed how I did things.

> **How you are as a drill instructor,** what you give your recruits, they're going to take that. What is the purpose of boot camp if you're not teaching them?

> **Being a DI was a good experience,** and it's one not a lot of people get, and that's awesome. But it didn't change me.

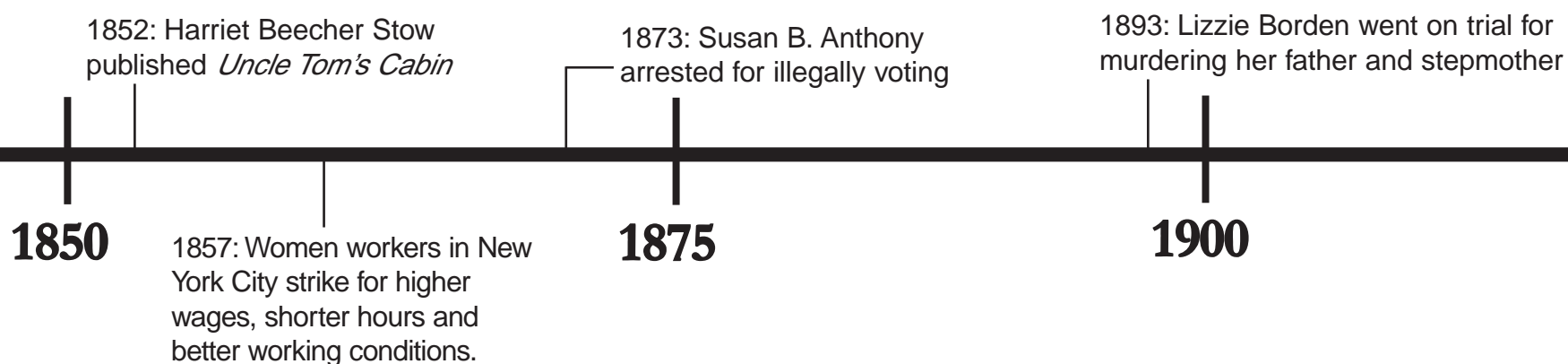
> **I refuse to change** who I am because I'm a first sergeant. Even as a first sergeant, I don't act like I'm any better than you. I'm laidback.

> **The Marine Corps is not that serious.** You have to realize everybody is doing the same thing. You're not any better than anyone else because of your rank.

> **The job of the chief instructor at the schoolhouse** is not teaching the students. You manage the section. I think I took it to a different role. If you take care of the Marines, they will take care of you. So I never worried about the students. I knew if I took care of the instructors, they'd take care of the students.

> **Everybody always focuses on that water-walker Marine.** That poster child. But that's not what the Marine Corps is. It's that kid on mess duty, the ones cutting grass because they're the new privates. They make the Marine Corps. The other ones are great; I don't want to steal their thunder. But they are not the ones we are here for.

> **The Marines want to be taken care of.** They don't care who you are or what rank you are. They just want to be taken care of. And that's our job. As long as they are good, I don't care what happens to me.



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HONORED WITH THE SWORD

Words by Cpl. Sarah Dietz
 Photograph by Lance Cpl. D.J. Wu

Continued from A1

Not even an IED and loss of limbs can knock down the 1st Marine Division's top Marine

He reenlisted during the same deployment that cost him his legs.

The fateful day of the attack, and how Torres reacted to its consequences, reinforced 1st Marine Division's choice to name Torres with Marine of the Year.

Two weeks before his scheduled return home to the states, Torres and his squad patrolled through a familiar compound. The group had taken the route more than once. Torres rounded a corner of a building when a sudden flash took everyone by surprise.

"I had a guy in front of me, [sweeping for mines], I look back, and as soon as I turned around, I got knocked out," Torres said. "After a couple seconds, I woke up, I was looking around, and everyone was crouching. I looked down."

Torres' best friend, who happened to also be his corpsman, saved his life and his knees.

"It was surreal. I didn't believe what just happened. It was intense," said Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Raphael J. Holthaus, hospital corpsman, 1st Tanks. "I knew I had to go directly through that dust cloud to get to him. I didn't know how bad it was going to be once I got through there.

"It was probably the scariest moment of my life. That explosion, that close. It affected me greatly. Because he is such a good friend of mine, I had to stop and take a breather once we got him on the bird."

Holthaus recalled personally stepping over the same spot where the IED was buried. Other Marines stepped over the spot without it exploding, too.

Although Torres was greatly affected physically by the blast, he kept a positive and inspiring attitude throughout his continuing recovery.

"I just kept telling myself I was going to be fine. There are prosthetics out there. I'll get the best medical care," he said. "It sucks, because I can't do my job like I used to, but it happened. You just got to learn to deal with it and make the best out of it."

Torres was presented with a noncommissioned officers sword in front of his 1st Tank brothers March 16 during the ceremony officially naming him as the Marine of the Year.

He went on to race in the Los Angeles Marathon Saturday during the hand cycling event, and finished with a time of 2 hours, 38 minutes.

He plans to beat that time during the San Diego Marathon June 3.

Although it was Torres' leadership and love for the Corps that earned him the nomination for the annual recognition, it was how he reacted to the explosion and his unfailing positive attitude during his recovery that serve as an inspiration to his Marine family and others who hear his story.

"You can't stop this guy, he will just push on. He is a man of few words, but his actions speak louder," Houlthaus said.



"You can't stop this guy, he will just push on. He is a man of few words, but his actions speak louder."

— Petty Officer 2nd Class Raphael J. Holthaus

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

1914: President Woodrow Wilson declares Mother's Day a national holiday.

1942: Ann Frank receives a diary to use to record her thoughts.

1922: Betty White is born.

1925

1950

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FORTY	FOUR	WEEK							
THA	YEAR								
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NINETY	DAY	WONDER							
COSA	OPSAC	EVE							
EMERGE	COASNER								
HOME	ERE								
SEVEN	YEAR	BITCH							
KOREA	LAR	NOYES							
AMASS	ELL	AUTRY							
TESTY	NEE	STOOD							

IOC, from A1

combat. They travel to California from their school houses in Virginia for this, their last consistent 20 day field exercise.

They are familiar with improvised explosive devices and training at a military operations on urban terrain town, but here they encountered a third element that made this training far more real than anything they've ever seen before - Afghan role players.

"We've conducted raids before, but on a smaller level. The raids we've done before in IOC dealt directly with enemy and friendly," said 2nd Lt. Altan Kandiyeli, platoon commander, 2nd platoon, IOC. "In this environment, we deal with friendly, enemy and civilian population."

The exercises consisted of two evolutions for each platoon, a "cordon and search" and "cordon and knock."

Each platoon began with the cordon and knock, trying to verify the presence of a suspected enemy cell or a cache of illegal weapons hidden within the town.

After spreading out and gathering information from the locals, the Marines came to suspect an abandoned Afghan National Army post.

The Marines tactically searched the building and surrounding area. They found fully automatic and hand machine guns, and five 60-millimeter mortar rounds.

The Marines completed the evolution by collecting the weapons

and ordnance, and taking those caught with the contraband into custody.

"The only way to learn is by doing it," said 2nd Lt. Joseph Pizzillo, student, IOC. "You can spend all day in a classroom, but you're not going to learn anything."

The second evolution was the cordon and search. Unlike the knock, a search does not require the Marines to gather intelligence for what they were looking for beforehand. The Marines had a positive identification on a person-of-interest from an adjacent reconnaissance unit and were ready to go.

"We had a photograph and knew what the individual looked like," Kandiyeli said. "We found him immediately."

However, before the Marines caught him, the role player had time to make one telephone call.

The Marines were put up against two simulated IEDs, one on a road and the other in a vehicle, and a role player acting as a suicide bomber.

A crowd of local Afghan role players and the Afghan media added to the chaos.

The lieutenants defused each situation, provided medical care for the wounded and controlled the crowd and media.

"This is what we do," Pizzillo said. "This is the infantry."

Editor's Note: This is the first of a three-part series showcasing IOC and what the Corps does to get new lieutenants ready to lead in combat. See next week's edition of the Observation Post for part two.



LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI



LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

[Above] A Marine in the Infantry Officers Course uses the radio off a simulated casualty of an explosion during exercises for the IOC at Range 220 March 14.

[Left] A role player playing the part of a suicide bomber dressed as an Afghan police officer explodes with white powder, creating simulated casualties during exercises for the IOC at Range 220 March 14.

1972: Equal Rights Amendment was sent by Congress to the states for ratification.

1979: Women's History Summer Institute at Sarah Lawrence College led the founding of Women's History Month.

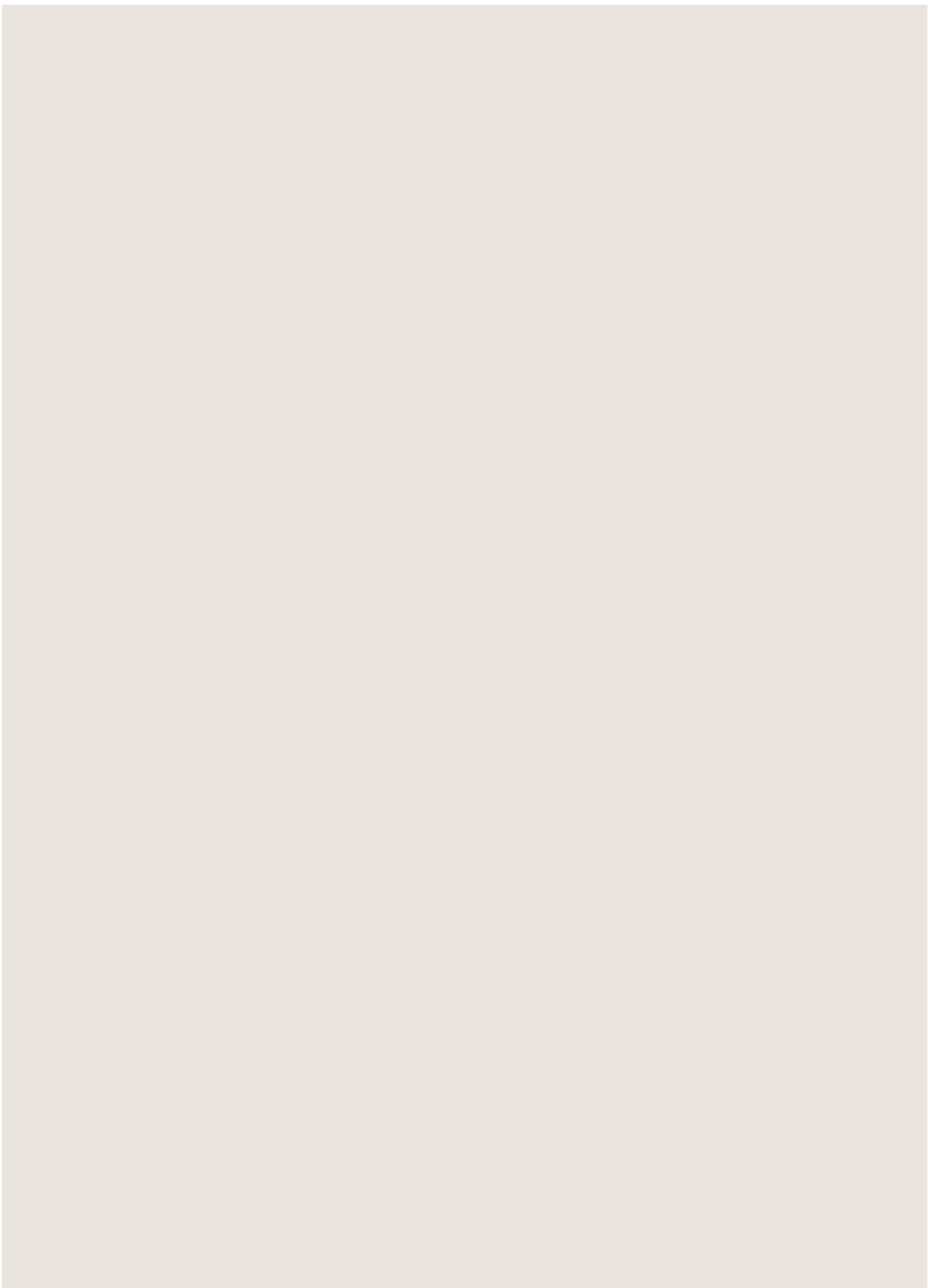
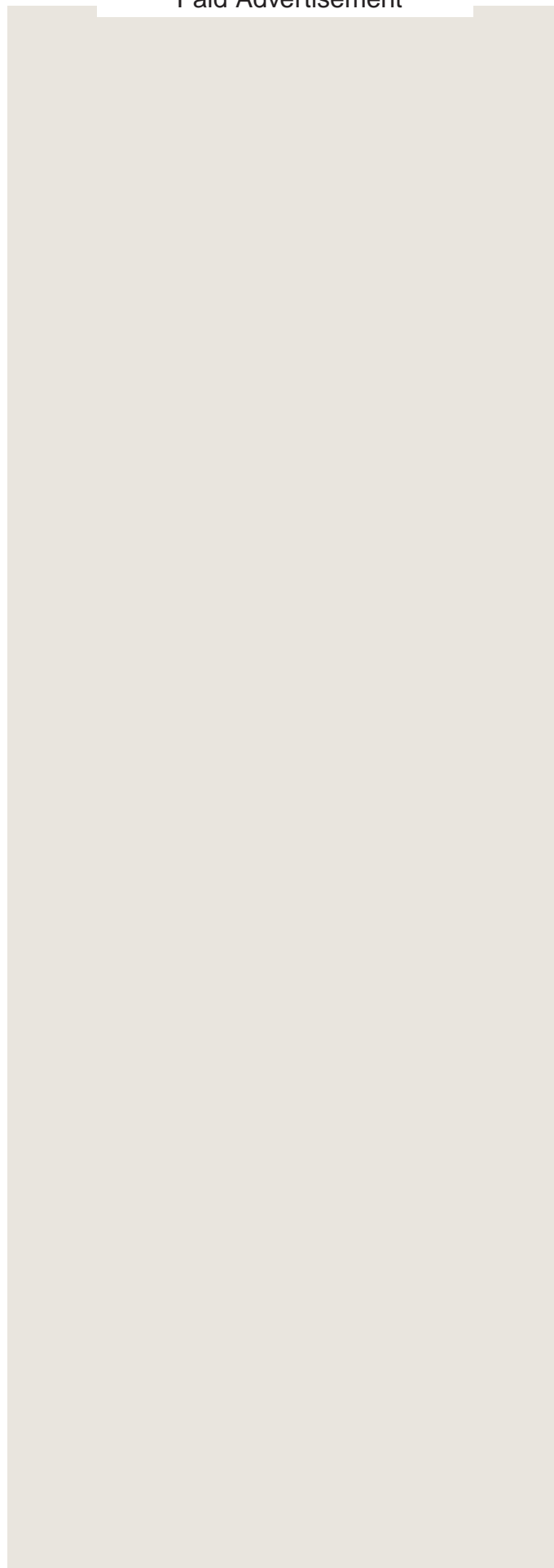
1979: Women's National Basketball Association began first season.

1975

1985

2000

Paid Advertisement



Joining

FORCES

STORY AND PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

The war in Afghanistan is not fought by Marines alone. All of the U.S. Armed Forces work together to complete the nation's mission.

Airmen with the 210th Air Rescue Squadron have been training alongside Marines during their Enhance Mojave Viper cycle since they touched down March 14 at the expeditionary airfield in their Boeing C-17 Globemaster III.

The Anchorage, Alaska-based squadron arrived shortly after sunset. The C-17 was loaded up with about 40 airmen, two HH-60 Pave Hawks and all the equipment they would need for their 10-day training cycle.

"This exercise gave us a unique opportunity to work with the Marines who we will be working with down range," said Air Force Lt. Col. Steve Latham, operations officer, 210th RQS.

"We're always looking for different branches to come out here," added Glenn Helm, joint air planner, Tactical Training Exercise Control Group.

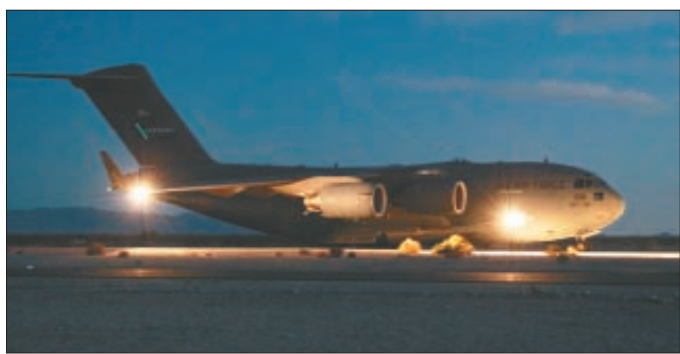
Helm said the squadron's visit here is the first of hopefully many.

The 210th RQS, along with Marines from 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment; 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion; and 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, supported EMV and practiced their medical evacuation capabilities. They also joined in on several integrated assaults with the Marine ground elements.

Latham said most of his airmen have never had any contact with Marines, and there was initially a bit of a language barrier to overcome.

"In the past, we've worked with the Army in Kandahar and Bagram in previous deployments, but every service does things a little bit differently," Latham said. "Being able to integrate beforehand is important for our mission of getting an injured Marine out of an area and into medical care within an hour."

The airmen of 210th RQB's last day of training with the Marines was today, and they said they look forward in teaming up with the same Marines during their deployment to Afghanistan later this year.



The Air Force Boeing C-17 Globemaster III touches down at the expeditionary airfield at Camp Wilson. The C-17 held members of the 210th Air Rescue Squadron, based out of Anchorage, Alaska.



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CLIMBING Kids for

Indoor rock wall
 now open to tiny
 adventurers

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi

David Stark helps his 3-year-old daughter, Madelyne, climb during the West Gym's first family day at their rock climbing room March 9.



The West Gym and Fitness Center's rock climbing walls have been a big hit with the Marine and sailor population since it opened last month.

But up until recently, its' fan base has been limited to adults. Now, it's something the whole family, including kid climbers, can enjoy together.

Every Friday night, both kids and parents traverse the room's tall, color-speckled walls during the Family Night events. Children as young as 5 strap into harnesses and scale the 20-foot walls side-by-side with their parents.

"We're already pulled away from our families so much, why not have sports that can help accomplish the Marine mission while you spend time with your family?," said Capt. Jeremiah Davis, installation adjutant, who has taken advantage of Family Night with his kids. "I think that's a win-win."

"It was the first opportunity for the little ones to get to come in here and use it," said climber Leslee Davis, whose family attended the first Family Night March 9. "None of our kids are old enough to come during normal hours."

While the normal climbing rules prevent anyone under the age of 16 from using the room, Family Night loosens those restrictions to allow children between the ages of 5 and 15 to climb with parental or guardian supervision.

"He's been climbing before he could walk," said young climber Clayton Davis, 10, as he pointed toward his younger brother. "We love it because it's a sport everybody can enjoy."

That first night, as children stretched to reach the rock grips, parents climbed beside them guiding them upwards. With their siblings below cheering them on, the mini-climbers reached the top and sat gently back in their harness to be slowly lowered down by the automatic pulley system each harness is attached to.

Family Night is every Friday, from 6 to 8 p.m. Harnesses, helmets, climbing chalk and shoes are provided for all climbers.

Kids must weigh a minimum of 35 pounds and wear a helmet while climbing. Parents, guardians and children must complete the 10-minute safety course and check-in at the front desk prior to climbing.



[Above] Joy Davis, 5, straps on her helmet before taking on the climbing wall.

[Left] Capt. Jeremiah Davis guides his 7-year-old daughter, Kaylee, as she climbs.



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.
Thursday: Social Hour, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Friday: Social Hour with food, 5 - 7 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 - 8 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: Taco Night, 5 - 7 p.m.

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

Local Events

Lost in Yonkers

When: Every Friday & Saturday from March 9 to April 7
Where: Theatre 29
736377 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
For tickets and information call 316-4151
or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

Shadow Mountain Band

60's and 70's live music
When: 5 p.m., Saturday, March 24.
Where: Pappy and Harriet's
53688 Pioneer Town Road, Pioneer Town, Calif.
For more information visit
<http://www.pappyandharriets.com>

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

Brantley Gilbert

Country star
When: 9 p.m., Thursday, March 29
Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit
<http://www.spotlight29.com>.

Beach Boys

Legendary band performs live
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, March 26
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit
<http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Lisa Lampenelli

Snarky comedian takes the stage
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, April 7
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit
<http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Larry the Cable Guy

Live blue collar comedy performance
When: 8 p.m., Friday, March 23
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit
<http://www.morongocasinosort.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, March 23

6 p.m. - NO MOVIE
9 p.m. - The Grey, Rated R
Midnight - Safehouse, Raged R

Saturday, March 24

11 a.m. - **Free Matinee** Gnomeo and Juliet, Rated PG-13
2 p.m. - Journey 2: Mysterious Island, Rated PG
6 p.m. - One for the Money, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. - Chronicle, Rated PG-13
Midnight - Woman in Black, Rated PG-13

Sunday, March 25

2 p.m. - Big Miracle, Rated PG
6 p.m. - This Means War, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. - Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance, Rated PG-13

Monday, March 26

7 p.m. - The Grey, Rated R

Tuesday, March 27

7 p.m. - Safehouse, Raged R

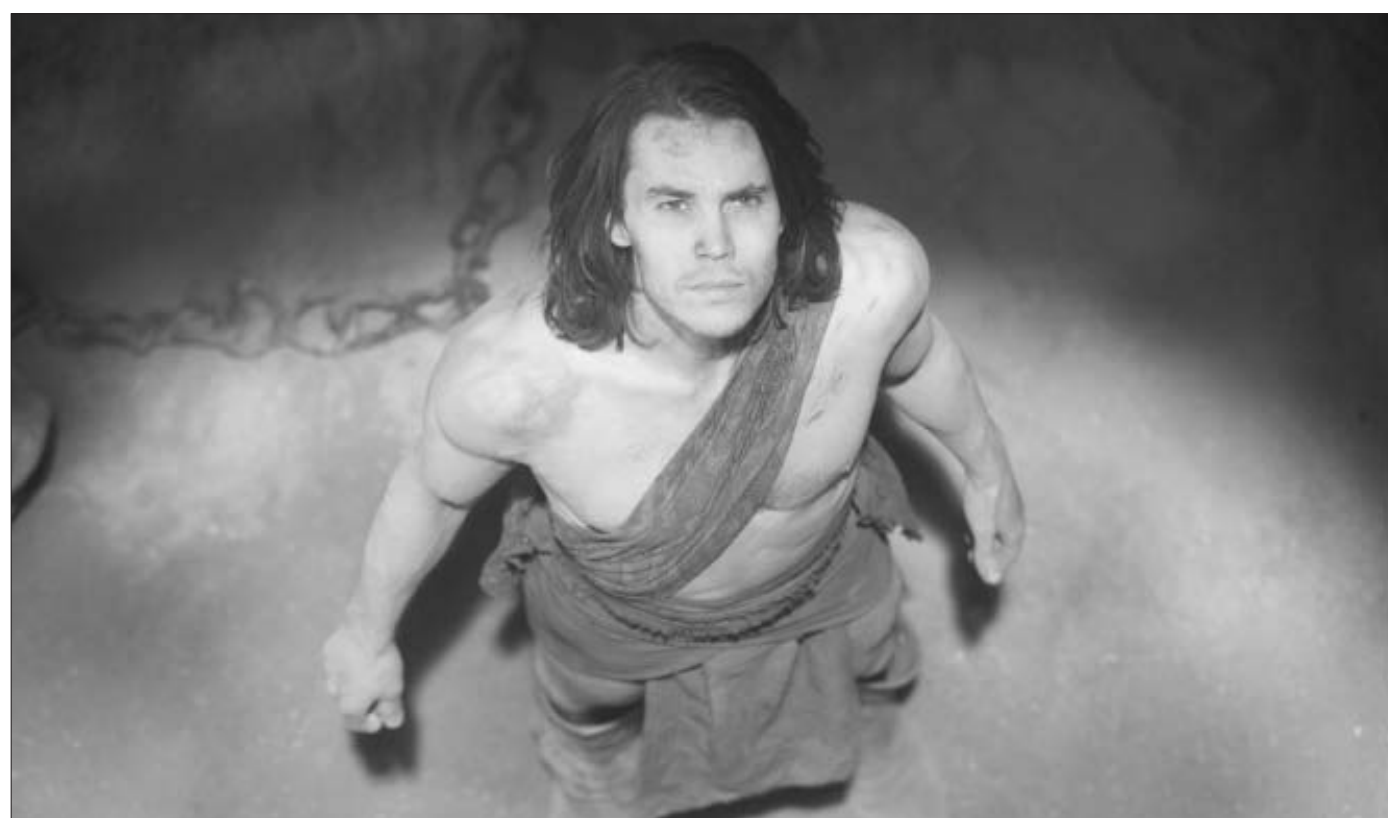
Wednesday, March 28

7 p.m. - One for the Money, Rated PG-13

Thursday, March 29

7 p.m. - Man on a Ledge, Rated PG-13

Character created a century ago finally makes it to the silver screen



COURTESY PHOTO

100-year-old pulp-fiction character finally makes it into the movies in "John Carter," the rollicking new Disney 3-D romp about an astral-traveling Civil War veteran and his wild adventures on the planet Mars.

NEIL POND

"John Carter"

Starring Taylor Kitsch & Lynn Collins
Directed by Andrew Stanton
132 min., PG-13

100-year-old pulp-fiction character finally makes it into the movies in "John Carter," the rollicking new Disney 3-D romp about an astral-traveling Civil War veteran and his wild adventures on the planet Mars.

John Carter, created in the early 1900s by later "Tarzan" author Edgar Rice Burroughs, appeared first in serialized "adventure" magazine stories that were later reprinted as novels. His popular yarns came close to becoming movies a couple of times, as far back as the 1930s, but something always happened to sidetrack the projects.

Most recently, sci-fi geeks have been eager to see how the House of Mouse would handle

this dime-store-rack cult classic, and I don't think they'll be disappointed. The "John Carter" movie is a sweeping, sometimes eye-popping spectacle structured faithfully in the service of Burroughs' original tale of a battle-weary Confederate captain who becomes a swashbuckling savior to a parched, war-ravaged planet in need of a hero.

"Finding Nemo" and "WALL-E" director Andrew Stanton makes an impressive live-action debut, integrating the movie's real actors into a teeming special-effects world of whiz-bang computer-generated gusto. Among the digitized delights, there's a race of towering, green, tusked nomads with four arms; flying warships that resemble giant dragonflies; enormous toad-like watchdogs; and enraged blind apes that tear victims to shreds.

But at the heart of the spectacle is Carter (Taylor Kitsch, who played Tim Riggins on TV's "Friday Night Lights"),

whom we meet at the beginning of the movie on Earth, several years after the Civil War has ended. He's on a crazy quest that has led him to a cave way out West, deep in Apache territory, where he stumbles onto an ancient secret that suddenly, mysteriously transports him—poof—to Mars.

On the red planet, Carter, freed of the stronger gravity of his home, finds he can jump astounding distances and pack quite a punch, qualities that come in handy in the raging war in which he finds himself. But for reasons we won't fully understand until later, he has vowed to never again fight on behalf of anyone, or any cause.

Perhaps the plight of a beautiful Martian princess (Lynn Collins, who played Dawn Green on TV's "True Blood") and her people will rekindle his sense of loyalty. "Our world is dying," she tells him. "Fate has brought you here."

The story's got romance,

humor, and even some philosophical gristle: Is war a cosmic constant? Is anything worth fighting for?

The mature, film-reviewing grownup in me found it bit chaotic and confusing at times, sluggish and dull at others, and occasionally remindful of its long line of sci-fi motion-picture predecessors ("Star Wars," "Avatar," "Thor," "Lord of the Rings").

But in some deep, neglected part of my brain, when John Carter was squaring off against those monster apes, or hopping like a flea from the wing of one flying warship to another, or rallying an army of the green, desert-dwelling Tharks to fight the evil humanoids of Zadonga, I felt like I was a wide-eyed 10-year-old again.

If you know what I mean, and you also get that 10-year-old's itch that sometimes just needs a good movie scratching, well, "John Carter" is probably that kind ... your kind ... our kind ... of movie.

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