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OBSERVATION POST

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Vol. 56 Issue 14

Woman Marines

Luncheon honors lady Leathernecks

■ 1st MarDiv Association kicks off 3rd annual event

Sgt. Heather Golden
Combat Correspondent

INDIAN WELLS, Calif.—A busload of the Combat Center's women Marines were the special guests at a luncheon in their honor April 21 at the Indian Wells Golf Resort in Indian Wells, Calif.

This is the third year for the annual event, hosted by the Mitchell Paige Medal of Honor Chapter of the 1st Marine Division Association. It is funded solely through donations by the association's members and through a silent auction that takes place during the meal. This year's

“From the day you earn the right to call yourself as a Marine, you take your place in an extremely proud heritage.”

— Sgt. Maj. Jennifer L. Simmons

sought-after bid items were hand-painted pieces of fine jewelry.

“Enthusiasm (for the luncheon) is very high,” said Jim Sullivan, member, 1st Marine Division Association. “We like it. Women Marines need to be recognized for what they do.

“My personal opinion is they don't get enough credit for what the Marine Corps is all about,” Sullivan said. “Everybody thinks of Marines, they think the grunt out there with a rifle. They forget about all the support that goes into it.”

The guest of honor and speaker for the afternoon was Sgt. Maj. Jennifer L. Simmons, sergeant major, 1st Radio Battalion, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Simmons spoke on the intangible characteristics that gives the Marines their solid reputation, and about the history and impact women have had in the Corps.

“From the day you earn the right to call yourself as a Marine, you take your place in an extremely proud heritage,” Simmons said, addressing the group. “One must

See **LUNCHEON** page A7



SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

Marines laugh with members of the Lower Desert community during a luncheon held in honor of Women Marines' at the Indian Wells Golf Resort in Indian Wells, Calif., April 21.

April is Autism Awareness Month...



A sister's letter to her autistic brother

EXTRAORDINARY LIFE

(And you're so hard to understand)

Story by **Lance Cpl. Lauren Kurkimilis**

Patrick, seated middle, takes a Christmas photo with his little brother Kieran, and the author, his sister Lauren. Cera the dog joins in.



Patrick, you are a mystery.

No matter how much you choose to talk, because I know sometimes you just don't feel like it, we will never understand the intricacies of how your mind works.

You are unbelievably smart and not enough people know it. You are a master of deception.

You watch the dozens of school buses roll on to the ramp everyday and you memorize their three-digit numbers. You write them all accurately down hours later, in the exact order they lined up.

You can figure out on what day of the week July 7, 1989 fell. You can do it with any date, in less than 10 seconds, without looking it up.

You could count past 1,000 at the age of three. You memorize the alpha-numeric serial numbers on the side of VHS tapes, and you could probably tell me the exact duration, down to the second, of any song you've ever heard. You should have just taken the ASVAB for me.

You've memorized the pattern in which Cheez-It crackers mark expiration dates on their boxes. Only certain dates will be good enough for you. Your selection process is still a curiosity. You discard the box when you get home, and don't like to share them with anyone; except for me.

You feel things differently than we do. You see, hear and taste things differently, too. Boy, is your taste in food different. How do you eat all that cheese?

You don't worry about paying bills, or about politics, religion or war. You're above it all, and you could care less about what society thinks.

The rest of the world should live more like you.

You say, out loud, when the overweight woman wearing a spaghetti strap tank in the grocery store has “big arms.” And you say it loud enough for her boyfriend to start giving dirty looks. You bring your note pad and dictionary into the movie theater along with a stash of the snacks you'll eat. And we dare the movie theater guy to come tell you that you can't. No really guy, try it. Autism aside, you're

See **PATRICK**, page A6

Women take on combat roles

Sgt. Heather Golden
Combat Correspondent

Women Marines will soon be serving in ground combat elements.

A new research trial approved by Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos will allow some senior officer and enlisted women Marines and sailors to be assigned in their current primary military occupational specialties to many of the units previously off limits to women.

This was prompted by a directive from the Secretary of Defense to access the impact women serving in other newly-opened positions and to begin evaluating where else women service members can effectively serve. This research includes the exemption to the Ground Assignment Policy, quantitative research and a total force survey.

Amos said he will take the combined information to make an “informed and educated recommendation on potential policy changes.”

Active duty and unrestricted Marine
See **WOMEN** page A7

Building convenience

Marine engineers pave the way



A bulldozer dumps sand into the back of a 7-ton truck during Company A, 7th Engineer Support Battalion's visit to the Combat Center to construct a parking lot where deployed Marines can leave their personal vehicles.

■ New parking lot makes it easier to store vehicles

Lance Cpl. D.J. Wu
Combat Correspondent

The Marines with Operations Platoon, Company A, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, are essentially the construction workers of the Marine Corps. They allow combat Marines to move forward with the roads they carve out of sand and dirt, and give their brethren somewhere safe to live with the bases they build.

The Marines with 7th ESB were at the Combat Center training, but also took the time to make life a little easier for Marines and save the Corps a little money.

They built a parking lot where deploying

See **ESB** page A7

Thundering Third



Photos by **Cpl. Andrew D. Thorburn**

Lt. Col. Robert C. Piddock relinquished command of 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment to Maj. Jeffrey R. Kenney April 20 at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Grey Field. During the change of command, Piddock received a Bronze Star Medal, second award for meritorious service. Piddock turned over command of nearly 1,000 Marines to Kenney, who previously served as the future operations planner for 2nd Marine Division (Forward) in Afghanistan.



This Week in Combat Center History



Reprinted from the Observation Post dated April 28, 1960, Vol. 4, No. 14

Three Man Crew Plays Vital Role

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

One of the most unique groups of Marines at this, the World's Largest Marine Corps Base is the 3-man crew at the Flight Operation Tower.

This three man crew although not working in their Military Occupational Specialty are performing a vital mission for this base.

The Marines have had no formal training except for a few days schooling at the Marine Corps Air Facility, Santa Ana. They perform their jobs well. This has been proven by a perfect field safety record since opening in May 1959.

The miniature operational tower where the crew operates is also the pilots' ready room. This is where the pilots file their flight plans. By direct telephone communication to the Flight Service Center at San Raphael, Calif., the Marines enable the Federal Aviation Agency to know the intended routes and altitudes of pilots flying from here.

From sun up to sun down the "ops" tower is manned. Most landings that occur at the field are by helicopters. The largest type of aircraft that can land is the military version of a super DC-3, the R4D-8.

Even though the field is restricted to military aircraft, private planes land at the field on the average of four a month. They often get out of the plane saying "Were am I?"

The flight crew will then show the stranded pilot on a map where he is and how to get back on his regular flight course.

The field is a helping hand to Marines stationed here, as proven last Feb. 19. A Marine was hurt in a car accident and had to be moved to the Naval Hospital at San Diego. A call was put through to March Air Force Base for a helicopter. The 'copter was dispatched from March and landed here n high winds. The injured Marine was placed aboard the whirlybird an flown to his destination.

The field is under the administration of Base G-3. ASSgt P. C. Karako is the NCO in charge of the crew.

What are early signs of autism?

■ April is Autism Awareness Month

SHARI LOPATIN

TRIVEST HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

Did you know a child as young as 1-year-old can show signs of autism, according to Autism Speaks?

"If your child does have autism, early intervention may be his or her best hope," the organization says on its website.

If you're planning to have a baby or are currently pregnant, getting to know the early warning signs of autism can be a huge advantage for you and your kids. In fact, research suggests if you already have one child with autism, your risk of having another autistic child increases by about 20 percent, says Daniel Openden, vice president and clinical services director of the Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center.

Some early warning signs that should serve as "red flags" to get your child checked, from SARRC and Autism Speaks are, no good eye contact with you: babies

learn through engaging with others, no large smiles or other happy expressions by 6 months, no variety of sounds (i.e. ba, ma, da) starting around 6 months, no interest in exploring the world around them, no back-and-forth sharing of sounds and facial expressions by 9 months, no babbling by 12 months, no single words by 16 months, and no meaningful phrases (without imitating or repeating) by 24 months.

"Thus far, research presented by experts at several autism conferences suggests that, while we typically cannot reliably diagnose autism until children are about 2 years old, the earliest signs of autism may begin to emerge between 6 and 12 months of age," Openden says.

Talk to your pediatrician immediately. Together, you will determine the best steps to get your child evaluated for an autism spectrum disorder as quickly as possible.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say that early intervention methods can greatly improve a

child's development. Therefore, if you suspect anything, don't wait—have your child evaluated and, if necessary, begin early intervention right away.

TRICARE, the military healthcare benefit, covers Applied Behavior Analysis therapy for eligible children under its Enhanced Access to the Autism Services Demonstration.

To get ABA services, children must have an active duty sponsor and be enrolled in TRICARE's Extended Care Health Option—or ECHO. Then, they must have an eligible diagnosis, be living in the United States and be 18 months or older.

Autism Demonstration covers all therapies that fall under the umbrella of "Educational Interventions for Autism Spectrum Disorders," which includes ABA. It also covers services from more providers than are available under the basic TRICARE coverage. Available providers must be TRICARE-authorized in order for the treatments to be covered.

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In Oceanside:

- Angelo's Kars, 222 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054
- Angelo's Kars, 226 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054

In San Diego:

- Club Mustang, 2200 University Ave.
- Club San Diego, 3955 Fourth St.
- Get It On Shoppe, 3219 Mission Blvd.
- Main Street Motel, 3494 Main St.
- Vulcan Baths, 805 W. Cedar St.

In National City:

- Dream Crystal, 15366 Highland Ave.
- Sports Auto Sales, 1112 National City Blvd.

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

MARTIAL ARTS INSTRUCTOR COURSE TO BEGIN

A Martial Arts Instructor Course is scheduled at the Combat Center Dojo for May 7-25. Any interested Marines can view the requirements and gear list on the official MACE website at <http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/mace>. Any instructors interested in helping can contact the Dojo's chief instructor, Gunnery Sgt. Lindstrom at 830-0290.

SUDOKU #2516-M

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			6					5
9					8	7		

PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2011 HOMETOWN CONTENT

MUSCLE HEADS

See answers on page A6

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53						54	55						
56						57				58			
59						60				61			

ACROSS

- 1.Plod through the mud
- 5.Ketch's pair
- 10.Places to shape up
- 14."Damn Yankees" siren
- 15.China's Zhou ___
- 16.New Ager John
- 17.Edward VIII's action of 1936
- 19.Feel sore
- 20.Like most new drivers
- 21.Rainbow-?shaped
- 22.Like a boiled lobster
- 23."West Side Story" tune
- 25.More steamed
29. Indian nationalist ___ Gandhi
- 32.Thumb-?turning critic
- 33.Orange variety
- 34.Out of sorts
- 35.One on your side
- 36.Tribal symbol

DOWN

- 1.Jalousie part
- 2.Stud spot
- 3.Shoppe sign word
- 4.Put on a spare tire?
- 5.Piddling
- 6.Fed the kitty
- 7.Rode the banister
- 8.Lao-tse's "way"
9. Gluttony or sloth
- 10.Head the cast of
- 11.Small transgression
- 12.1975 Wimbledon champ
- 13.Cast off
- 18.Insertion mark
- 21.Sea fed by the Amu Darya
- 23.Pulled up stakes
- 24."Beg pardon ..."
- 25.Stiller's mate
- 26.More proficient
- 27."Designing Women" costar
- 28.Like some martinis
- 29.Whipped, a? la Kasparov

- 30.Little green man
- 31.Mushers' vehicles
- 33."___ I can help it!"
- 36.Muscular fitness
- 37.Nanki-?___ of "The Mikado"
- 39.Like a dime
- 40.Blow up
- 42."Geel!"
- 43.Crude digs
- 45.Scorpion attack
- 46.Composer Barto?k
- 47.Third ___ (track adjunct)
48. Getz or Kenton
- 49.Canal feature
- 50 Dr. Pavlov
- 51."Scream" actress Campbell
- 52.Shot up
- 54.Flight from justice
- 55.Ex of Mickey, Artie and Frank

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Every clime, Every Place

■ Final exercise puts 'War Dogs' to the test

Story and photos by **Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi**



That first night there was a snowstorm. Marines of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment completed their week-long final exercise of the cold-weather package at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center April 20 in Bridgeport, Calif.

After a week of learning how to survive and be combat effective in the harsh environment, Fox, Echo and Golf Companies faced off against Weapons Company in simulated warfare.

"Now when I think of cold-weather training, this is what I think of," said Lance Cpl. Jacob B. Schreder, team leader, 2/7, as he sat in the snow during the exercise.

It may seem as though the odds were unfair, with three companies along with the support of the Headquarters and Service Company at the Combat Operation Center against a single company, but they were not.

Weapons Co. had the home field advantage, and the help of the red hat instructors who had knowledge of the terrain and are experts in mountain tactics.

The exercise simulated Marine Corps' operations in a foreign country, Marines versus local enemy combatants.

After that first snowstorm, temperatures dropped below the 20s. Marines hunkered down in their tents until the next morning.

"Our Gortexes would get wet. Then when we would wake up, we had frozen Gortexes," Schreder said.

The storm eventually blew over, but the Marines' work was still cut out for them as they continually relocated their positions, moving through the mountains looking for their enemy counterparts.

"In the desert, everything is flat," said Sgt. Jonathan Hatcher, squad leader, 2/7. "But in the mountains, you don't

know what's over the next ridgeline."

The Marines continued day after day, surviving in the cold mountains, eating their cold-weather Meals, Ready to Eat, and firing their blank rounds when making contact.

Rules of combat were simple. Any obvious kill made by one side would result in a casualty and the Marine would play dead. But Marines being Marines, would never want to admit they'd been hit and never want to be taken out of the fight. So on occasion, the leadership would have to step in and order a Marine to swallow his pride and play dead until the attack ended.

After seven days of mounting attacks and fending off enemy troops in the freezing conditions, the exercise was over. There wasn't a single Marine who didn't look forward to the warm bed and hot shower awaiting them after they finished their final hike back down the mountainside.



[Top] 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment Marines hike down the mountain on skis April 8.

[Far Left] Cpl. Jorge Garcia and Lance Cpl. Trevor Baker, both team leaders, Fox Company, 2/7, provide security during their Basic Mobility exercise at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center April 8.

[Left] Sgt. Eric Fred, squad leader, F Co., 2/7, provides security for Marines climbing to his position at the top of a mountain at the training center April 8.



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WeekINPhotos

24th Marine Expeditionary Unit



CPL. MICHAEL PETERSHEIM



CPL. MICHAEL PETERSHEIM

[Top] Marines and sailors with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit toss bean bags during a steel beach on the flight deck here, April 22. The 24th MEU is currently deployed with the Navy's Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group as a theater reserve and crisis response force capable of a variety of missions from full-scale combat operations to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

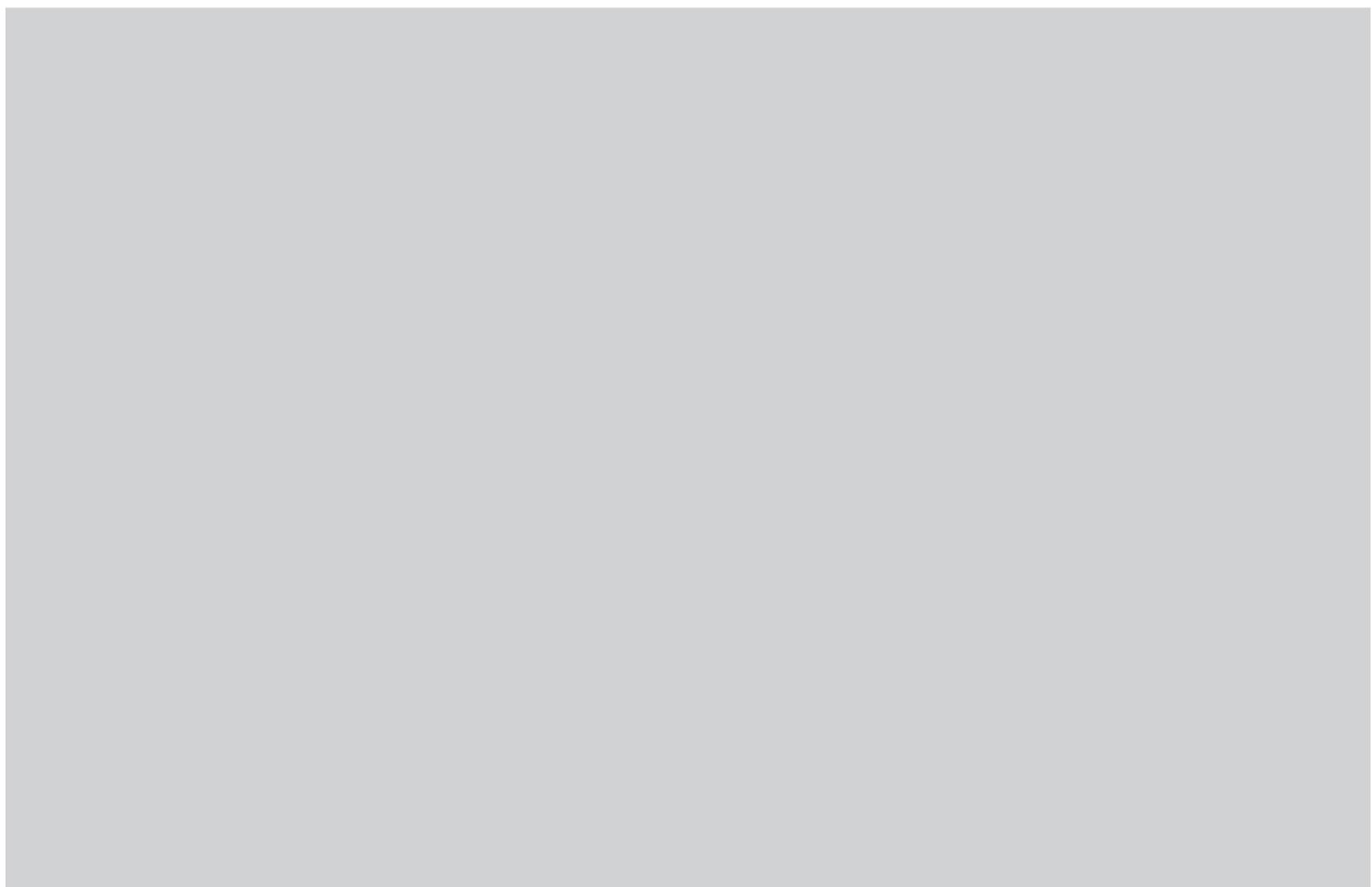
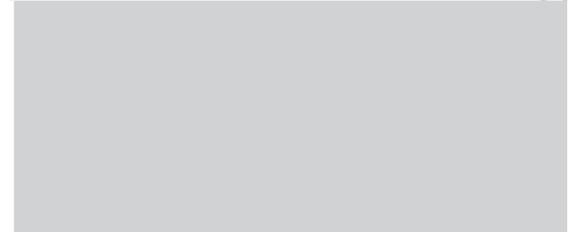
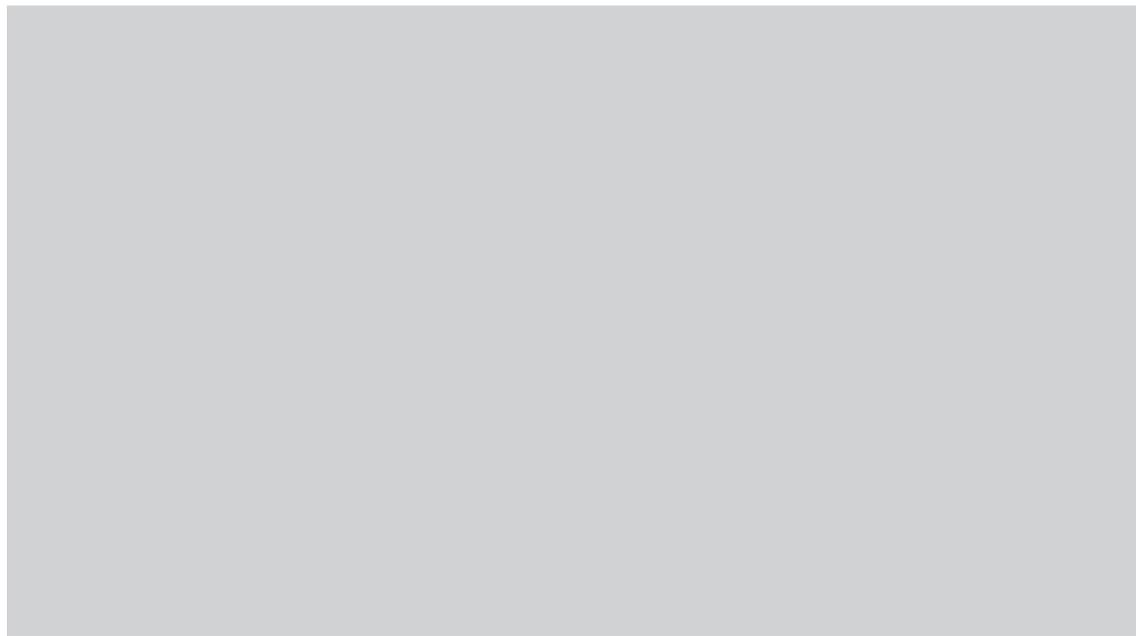
[Above] Marines with Weapons Company, BLT, 1/2, 24th MEU, sit behind an M2 50-caliber heavy machine gun, providing security for the ship as she passes through the Straits of Gibraltar, April 20.

[Right] Marines with 24th MEU dressed in sumo wrestling outfits duel for bragging rights during a steel beach picnic on the flight deck here, April 22.



CPL. MICHAEL PETERSHEIM

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WHAT I'VE LEARNED

THE MASTER GUNS

Master Gunnery Sgt.
Douglas L. WebsterSNCOIC, Battle Simulation Center
Las Vegas, 52INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY
SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN
April 25, 2012

> **I was just the average kid**, but I was born in Japan. My mom's Japanese, dad's Air Force.

> **I grew up in a community that** is not unlike the Marine Corps. You have a very blended culture society. Everybody got along. It was unlike, say out in town or in big cities where you have geographically separated folks who never mingle. But in the military, you have that.

> **That diversity was** with me early on. I had friends of all walks. People of every nationality blended into our military community everywhere. You see that here. That was something I experienced early on.

> **Las Vegas was a culture shock**, moving there after coming back from Japan, because of the lifestyle there. And even though you're too young, it's still around you. You know, the gambling. It's interesting. I don't gamble though.

> **I would imagine** anyone moving to Las Vegas, it'd be a culture shock.

> **In the early 70s**, things were very different then. This was after the Vietnam War. Hippies everywhere. Probably some of the funnest times of my life were during those years.

> **I had long hair as a kid**, too. But then, most of us had long hair.

> **I was married** a few times.

> **I'm married for the last time**, to my high school sweetheart. It's a facebook thing. That's how we re-met. So there are good things about facebook.

> **My son, if this was 1971**, 1972, my son would be a hippie. He's a young guy who is involved in all things beautiful.

> **He sells** insurance. But in the meantime, he plays his guitar waiting for his big break in today's music, which I do not understand.

> **I'm not a grandfather** yet. I kind of wonder why, but I'm not going to worry about that. I shouldn't say I'm overdue, but maybe I am.

> **I had open heart surgery** as a kid, in 1974. I had a hole in my heart that had to be repaired at an early age. And the Marine Corps accepted me after the Air Force turned me down. Because, you know, you think, "I'll join the Air Force. I know it because of my dad." They said no. And let's be for real, they had more than enough people lined up at the door.

> **So, 1979, I'm looking** through a TV Guide magazine and I saw a Marine Corps recruitment ad. It said send for the free poster, and I did. I said, "You know if the Air Force won't take me, they sure won't." But he said, "No, don't worry about that. We'll go around that. Everything's waiverable." And I joined.

> **I'm a grunt**. Been a grunt from the beginning.

> **There's nothing you can do** in a professional career that can eclipse being in combat, and that's true.

> **I did not attend** college. That is my only regret. And since I'm too old to use my GI Bill, I gave it 50/50 to my two teenage daughters.

> **You know, back when I was a young Marine**, it was always like Chesty or somebody. In the past several years, it's been that young first term Marine. They take that last several meters to the objective. I mean, you see that around here, let alone over there. So they are my heros. They're the ones busy. They're the ones on that working party.

> **It's hard to get promoted** now. You have to be on the cutting edge.

> **I'm winding down** my career after 32 years as a drilling Reservist.

> **The economy's been** tough. And retiring is tough. It is humbling.

> **I like the Reserves mostly** because you manage your career. There are many, many opportunities that are unknown to many. And that's the secret, probably, that should have been let out a long time ago.

> **When you're in Las Vegas** as a state trooper, you're arresting a lot of DUIs and druggies. You wrestle all kinds of people. Mostly locals, oddly enough. People who are so impaired by drugs or alcohol that they don't know what they're doing. People who are barely dressed. People who are wanting to fight.

> **One guy I arrested four times**, and I only know that because I saw him driving the same car with the same broken windshield, over a several-month period. I got to know that guy pretty good. And then I'd see him in court when I was a bailiff.

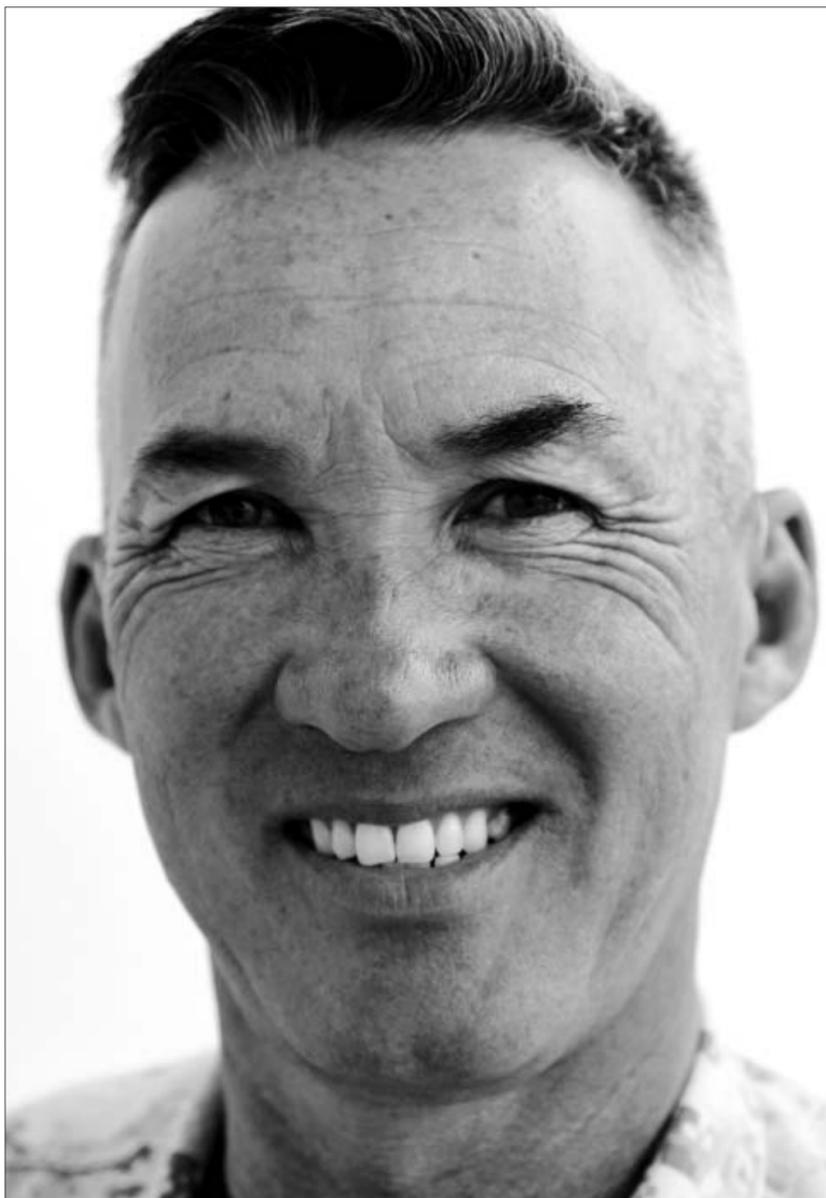
> **Sometimes it was a lot of fun**, sometimes it was humorous. But anytime you have to put the handcuffs on someone, it's a serious matter.

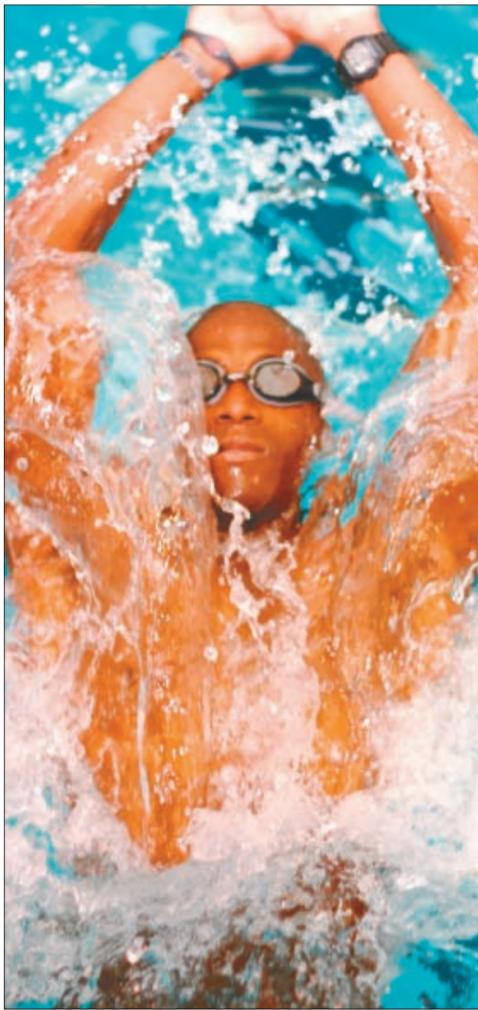
> **You put on the uniform** as a cop, you have to turn on the charm. Very firm, very assertive. A just-the-facts man.

> **I did park cars** for a while in Vegas. And that was an outstanding job because of the money.

> **There are people with degrees still parking cars** after many years. And I don't understand that. But I guess money talks.

> **I'm kind of a cool guy**, a regular guy. Nothing special. I just want to live life right.





PAT CUBEL

Wounded Warrior Trials

Corps comes together for athletic events



STAFF SGT. HEIDI AGOSTINI

[Above] Cpl. Justin Gaertner, Wounded Warrior battalion, 23, trains to compete in track and field, cycling and wheelchair basketball April 30 to May 5. Gaertner is recovering at Walter Reed in Bethesda, Md., and is a bilateral above-knee amputee who was injured in an improvised explosive device explosion. More than 200 wounded, ill or injured service members from the Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Special Operations Command are scheduled to compete in the Paralympic-style competition.

[Left] Cpl. Kionte Storey, who was wounded by an improvised explosive device while deployed to Afghanistan, trains to compete in track and field and swimming in the 2012 Warrior Games April 30-May 5.

WOMEN, from A1

company grade officers, gunnery sergeants and staff sergeants serving in administration, logistics, communications, supply or motor transport fields may now be assigned to artillery, tank, assault amphibian, combat engineer, combat assault and low altitude air defense battalion staffs, according to All Marine Message 012/12.

Women Navy medical officers, chaplains and hospital corpsmen, ranked E-6 and E-7, can also now be assigned to these units.

All women assigned to GCEs will continue to serve on the battalion staffs in their primary job fields.

The Corps will also be gathering physical performance data. The research teams are look-

ing for both men and women in entry level training, and men from a current GCE to volunteer for three tests – heavy machine gun lifts, casualty evacuations, and marches under load. How well the group holds up to these pre-exist-

the formal training for their primary MOS'. Data gathered from these volunteers' time spent training with their male counterparts may lead to the Commandant also opening the Infantry Training Battalion to enlisted

The Total Force Survey is scheduled to be conducted this spring, and the Commandant said he is looking forward to the "input regarding potential changes to the current assignment policies related to female Marines." He called on all Marines to share their experiences and opinions and said both will be invaluable to him as the Corps evaluates the results of all three parts of the research plan.

Amos said in the ALMAR that he is relying on leadership at all levels to ensure this research period is successful.

"I expect all leaders to be fully committed to providing every Marine the opportunity to compete and excel, while sustaining unit effectiveness, readiness and cohesion, and maintaining good order and discipline."

I expect all leaders to be fully committed to providing every Marine the opportunity to compete and excel, while sustaining unit effectiveness, readiness and cohesion, and maintaining good order and discipline.

– General James F. Amos

ing readiness standards will further help Amos make his final recommendations.

Amos also opened up the Infantry Officers' Course to women graduates of the basic officer course before they attend

women as well.

However, these opportunities exist only for the sake of research, and any women graduates of either IOC or ITB will not receive infantry as a primary MOS.

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

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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

PATRICK, from A1

ultimately still a 17-year-old little brother. You want to sleep in, play baseball, buy stuff on E-Bay and not talk to your parents unless absolutely necessary. You've taken countless CDs and DVDs from me, and you chewed on the head of my favorite Beanie Baby. You wrote in my diary and left it out for our parents to find. And read. Thanks buddy. You don't want to anyone to disrupt your routine. We can only listen your music in the car, and you pass gas in public.

Did I mention how messy you can be?

You eventually learned that a plastic Winnie the Pooh toy will not swim and will not flush down the toilet. Your dad only had to take the toilet off the floor twice for you to understand it, or you just lost interest. I'm thinking it was the latter.

You found out the hard way that the oven rack gets really hot, so I wrapped up the hands of your Barney stuffed animal so you wouldn't take the bandages off your own

hands, and so you wouldn't feel different.

I would give you baths, take you to the park and worry that you would hit your head when you ran around the kitchen counter in your Teletubby slippers.

I helped raise you, but you saved her.

Growing up, you were the one that was always there. You were diagnosed with autism the same year your mother passed away. I came to live with you.

Your path was a challenged one, but your sister knows think I needed you more than you ever needed me.

Things weren't easy, but you brought me happiness when it was otherwise hard to come by.

You were, and still are, my constant reminder that life is only as good as you choose to perceive it.

You're like a brilliant musician, playing for the deaf. Those who love you, hear you. But ultimately we're still stuck in a different world, apart from you, where everyone is just typical. We could only dream to be as talented, innocent or unique as you.

Mystery of the 'lake'

■ Unraveling the inner-workings of Lake Bandini

Story By Lance Cpl. Lauren Kurkimilis

The Combat Center's Waste Water Treatment Plant, better known as "Lake Bandini," has been a valuable water resource for the installation for decades.

While the plant's presence on the base is well-known, the inner-workings of how it treats the water is not.

The 60-year-old "lake" takes waste water from the base and treats it until it meets the standards necessary to use that water for irrigation. The plant got its Bandini nickname from a local fertilizer company, Bandini Fertilizer.

"While the water that is pumped out can be used for irrigation, per the regulations it can't come in to contact with people," said the installation Water Resources Manager, Chris Elliott. "For example, if the golf course is watering the grass, they will water the back

nine holes while the front nine are being played, and vice versa."

The waste water is pumped in to the treatment facility, and all the non-organic materials, such as things that aren't meant to be flushed, are filtered through something like a giant mesh screen. All of this debris is then collected, compacted and thrown away. The remaining water then goes in to a fermentation pit that is about 18 feet deep.

"The depth allows any remaining solid material to drop out and the rest of the water then travels through the system to the wet land ponds," said Elliott.

The wet land ponds use plants to naturally clean the water. Once done there, the water then gets processed with a flocculent.

"The flocculent is a chemical that takes small particles in the water and attracts them

to each other," said Elliott. "When they are brought together, it allows them to sink to the bottom of the tank."

After that a disinfectant is added and the water is ready to be sent out to the Desert Winds golf course and some of the tree line areas on main side.

This water source never intermingles with the base's drinking water sources.

"We get all of our potable water from a deep wells located away from the Mainside area," he added. "That water is practically able to be consumed right out of the ground due to its high quality, but it won't last forever. It would be more difficult for us to preserve our potable water source if we didn't have the waste water treatment plant."

"The idea is, we want to use our potable water for consumption and use our non-

potable water and recycled water for other things such as irrigation and wash racks," Elliott said. "This will assist us in meeting water reduction goals and requirements."

People need to understand we live in the desert and we have to do what is necessary in order to sustain the troops out here, he added. Our drinking water comes from other resources, and Bandini helps keep those resources intact for as long as possible.

"The facility saves the Combat Center 86 million gallons of water taking waste water from main side and Camp Wilson and treating it until it is safe to use for irrigation," said Elliott. "That would be 86 million gallons of drinking water if this facility wasn't here. Not only is that great for the Combat Center and the Marine Corps, but most importantly it is beneficial to planet Earth."

ESB, from A1

Marines can safely store their vehicles while they are deployed.

The task of building a parking lot in a sand pit is not an easy one.

The engineers had to make sure that precise measurements were made and are executed correctly.

"This job would be a tough one if it was their first time," said 1st Lt. Ian Chuckran, platoon commander, Co. A, 7th ESB. "But these guys have been working together for a while."

Operations platoon recently returned from a deployment from Afghanistan where they were doing work similar to this project.

"We were just in Afghanistan making this raised road that was about 15 kilometers," said Cpl. Christopher Wright, lot chief, operations platoon.

The platoon's responsibilities can range from

constructing a forward operating base and entry control points to building roads and culverts.

"Wherever dirt is moving, we're there," Wright said.

The experience and expertise the platoon gained in Afghanistan translated into ensuring the project here ran smoothly.

For the platoon, this was also an opportunity to refine their skills with the heavy machinery.

"Operating the 120M Grader can be stressful," said Wright. "But, it's my favorite piece of gear out here. I love it."

Working in the Combat Center's unique desert environment was also an advantage for the platoon, which is based along the coast at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

"This setting is a lot like what we used to in Afghanistan," said Chuckran. "All the skills they're using here can be used in whatever else they're doing it."

LUNCHEON, from A1

remember the Marine Corps is a small organization, but yet the most dynamic force in the American arsenal. That is why we are known as a few good men and a few good women."

Four Junior Marine ROTC cadets were also invited to get a firsthand glimpse at what they can expect to be if they ever join the Corps.

"I am hoping to go into the Marine Reserves right out of high school," said Cadet 1st Lt. Rachelle Scott. "I found this really inspirational because I've had lots of things try to bring me down.

"My entire life I've been into things that usually girls don't try to take part in, and I've gotten lots of criticism for that," Scott said. "This made me feel confident, feel good about what I'm choosing to do."

Toward the end of the event, Simmons parted with words meant to bring back memories for the Marines in the crowd, and inspire the four girls still yet to enlist.

"As a drill instructor on Parris Island, I used to have a final talk with my female recruits prior to them walking across that parade deck for the last time," Simmons said. "After 13 weeks of training, after fighting sand fleas and smelling like Skin So Soft (lotion) every day in an effort to become one of the world's finest, I would remind them that many have attempted to earn the title of Marine.

"Many have gotten off the bus, many have stepped on those yellow footprints, many arrive, many try, but only a few actually survive," Simmons said. "Be proud of your accomplishment as a woman Marine and wear your title with utmost pride."

"This setting is a lot like what we were use to in Afghanistan. All the skills they're using here, can be sued in whatever else they do," – 1st Lt. Ian Chuckran

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BULLDOGS VS. TROJANS



Gunnery Sgt. Benjamin Hester directs Ivana King, first-year student at the University of California Marshall School of Business, to "keep her bag up with elbows locked." King was one of 17 students here with the Marshall Military Veterans Association 2012 Leadership Challenge.

Story and photos by **Lance Cpl. D. J. Wu**

Once a year, students with the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business volunteer to come to the Combat Center and get a glimpse of the Marine Corps world. By the end of the 36-hour program, they hope to take in some leadership lessons to become better business professionals.

The students were invited to the 2012 Marshall Military Veterans Association Leadership Challenge by members of the school's MMVA. The veterans association is comprised of students at the school. The veterans linked up with the Combat Center's Sergeants Course staff to give their civilian classmates a taste of what they went through when they were in the military.

The students' day began at the base's gate. Gunnery Sergeants Benjamin Hester and Jarvis Johnson, both Sergeants Course instructors, were there to meet them and to introduce them to the military standards expected at the Combat Center.

The staff also enlisted the help of a Provost Marshal's Office sergeant to give the rundown of the rules and regulation the group needed to follow while on the installation.

A trio of drill instructors also added to the realism Marines go through to earn their title.

"In the program, we use a bit of shock and awe," said Master Sgt. Todd Lewis, director, Sergeants Course. "It gets really intense in the beginning of the program, and then we ease it up."

The day started off by giving the students the Marine Corps boot camp experience during their brief 36-hour challenge.

The students had an idea of what they were getting into, but the look on their faces as they rushed off the bus said they weren't expecting exactly what was waiting for them.

The drill instructors, with the help of some Sergeant's Course staff, flooded to the door of the bus and guided the students off in a flurry of orders and indiscriminate shouting.

"We came here with some expectations that it would be tough," said first-year student Pieter Breur. "But you never really know how tough until you get here."

The students were swept up and ran through the "receiving" phase of boot camp in a mere hour.

Just as quickly as the students came on to the Combat Center, the students were formed into squads and leaders assigned.

The night was coming fast, so the students were rushed into squad bays where they would be sleeping for the night. There, they had procedures for making a proper military rack drilled into their head.

"Not 40 degrees, not 50 degrees, a 45-degree angle fold," said one of the drill instructors.

The next morning was the start of an eventful day for the students.

The students were woken up at 5:30 a.m., with a somewhat decreased intensity than the evening prior. They went from the first phase of boot camp to the third phase overnight.

In a classroom setting, the students learned more about the Marine Corps and what it does. Their time included classes on Marine Corps leadership traits and customs and courtesies. They were also treated to a display with a wide array of weaponry.

The students then stepped into the boots of a deployed Marine, getting a taste of training a Marine endures before entering a combat zone. They went through the Improvised Explosive Device simulator. Some left the IED trailers with a new appreciation for what Marines have to go through while deployed to a combat zone.

"I didn't realize that the Marines had so many hardships," said first-year student Ivana King. "Those IEDs really can be hidden in anything."

The students had difficulties in parts of the day. They took on the Marine Corps obstacle course. They ran individually, and then as squads. They worked their team through, with the help of the instructors.

At the end of the day, the group boarded their bus and headed back home. The 2012 MMVA Leadership Challenge proved to be just that, a challenge. The business students from USC now know a little bit more in how the Marine Corps operates and leads.

"I think we pushed it to the limit," Breur said. "I'm glad we did it."



A student from the University of California Los Angeles takes a break on a log on his way through the obstacle course. Some students had a hard time going through the Marine Corps obstacle course as part of the Marshall Military Veterans Association 2012 Leadership Challenge.



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: All-hands 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

A Little Murder Never Hurt Anybody

When: Every Friday & Saturday from May 4 to June 2
Where: Theatre 29
736377 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
For tickets and information call 316-4151
or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

The Dustbowl Revival

Ever evolving group of more than 10 local folk bands
When: 8 p.m., Friday, May 4
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

Tony Bennett

Legendary entertainer sings live
When: 9 p.m., Friday, May 11
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit
<http://www.morongocasinoresort.com>.

Dwight Yoakam

Country music star live
When: 8 p.m., Friday, May 25
Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit
<http://www.spotlight29.com>.

Sugarland

Country group live in concert
When: 9 p.m., Saturday, May 25
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit
<http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Joan Sebastian

Grammy Award-winning Mexican singer, songwriter
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, June 16
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit
<http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

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Crazy-sounding project isn't the only obstacle characters face in this laughter-sprinkled romance



COURTESY PHOTO

This sweet-natured, British-flavored, laughter-sprinkled romance hinges on a crazy-sounding project to bring salmon fishing, a cold-water sport, to the dry, dusty desert of Yemen, where a wealthy sheikh has deep pockets for the obsessive pastime he developed at his pastoral waterside retreat in Scotland.

NEIL POND

"Salmon Fishing in the Yemen"

Starring Ewan McGregor & Emily Blunt
Directed by Lasse Hallström
PG-13, 107min.

If you've ever felt misled, confused or ill informed by the title of a movie, here's a film that's about exactly what you think it's about when you hear what it's called.

This sweet-natured, British-flavored, laughter-sprinkled romance (based on the 2007 comic novel by English writer Paul Torday) hinges on a crazy-sounding project to bring salmon fishing, a cold-water sport, to the dry, dusty desert of Yemen, where a wealthy sheikh has deep pockets for the obsessive pastime he developed at his pastoral waterside retreat in Scotland.

Emily Blunt is Harriett, the chipper London invest-

ment representative in charge of managing the international assets of the wealthy potentate (Amr Waked). Ewan McGregor plays the flabbergasted fisheries expert, Dr. Alfred Jones, charged with the seemingly impossible plan by his higher-ups in the British government, which has a vested interest in keeping the sheikh happy.

"You think I'm mad?" the sheikh asks Dr. Jones, then interrupts him before he can answer. "Of course you do. I would question your judgment if you did not."

McGregor's fishing expert and Blunt's investment handler are attracted to each other...eventually.

He's married, settled but not particularly happy, and she's in love with someone else, a handsome British soldier. Importing salmon to the desert, it turns out, isn't the only obstacle their characters must confront.

Beyond romance, there

are other threads to the movie's charming weave of elements, which include a running subplot about the comedic bureaucracy behind the project.

Kristin Scott Thomas brings spunk and spark to every moment she's onscreen as the British prime minister's workaholic press secretary, who doesn't know a flipping thing about fish but pushes the salmon project to the tip-top of her priority list after she sees its potential to spawn some good-news headlines.

There's also a plot to assassinate the sheikh, and some absolutely gorgeous on-location photography from Scotland and Morocco. Fishing becomes a metaphor for patience, tolerance and faith, and the movie presents the idea that life's flow of natural, unquestioned instinct can sometimes be unexpectedly, wondrously interrupted by rewarding opportunities to swim upstream.

McGregor and Blunt bring a splash of freshness to the tired old "rom-com" convention, giving Alfred and Harriett believable personalities, depth and dimension, and an honest sense of how real people would really react under the circumstance in which their characters find themselves—especially when things take a mixed-emotions turn that leaves them, and viewers, wondering if they've been left high and dry.

Life, love, fishing, acts of instinct, bursts of impulse, leaps of faith. I can't think of any other movie that's ever tried to lure all those topics into one story. I certainly can't think of one that's done a better job of making me believe the world would, indeed, be a better, happier, more peaceful place if we could all just stop what we're doing every once in a while, find some water, throw out a line, have a little patience, and wait for a gentle tug.

COMBAT CENTER

BASKETBALL

Photos by
Cpl. Andrew D. Thorburn



[Above] DeWitte Mandley, player 32, Old School, chases the ball down the court during the Commanding General's Intramural Basketball League championship game against Tatitlek at the East Gym and Fitness Center April 19. Tatitlek lost 68-66.

[Far Right] DeWitte Mandley, player 32, Old School, takes a jump shot over Tatitlek defenders during the Commanding General's Intramural Basketball League championship game at the East Gym and Fitness Center April 19.

[Right] Thomas Burke, player 10, Tatitlek goes for a layup during the Commanding General's Intramural Basketball League championship game.

