



May 18, 2012

OBSERVATION POST

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS
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Vol. 56 Issue 16

Lesson in a poem

Cpl. Sarah Dietz
Combat Correspondent

“A well trained sharp mind is more important than our M-16s. When we run out of bullets, we can still think and make stuff happen,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Bryan Mackal, ground communications maintenance section, Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School. “That well trained, sharp mind is our most valuable asset.”

The sergeants and below of Ground Communication Maintenance Platoon, Headquarters Company, MCCES, participated in a writing competition last week. The assignment was to read a poem and write a response essay on how the piece impacted them personally and what they can learn from the principals it contains.

The writing competition, while seeming like an English class homework assignment, was meant to be much more than that to the Marines.

“What I try to do with the Marines is make them look at life lessons bigger than the Marine Corps,” Mackal said. “None of us can stay in the Marine Corps forever, we will eventually have to do something else and at that point it won’t be good enough to just be a good Marine, you have to be a good man, woman, person, citizen. Ones personal knowledge is the key to all of that.”

The poem assigned to read was “If,” by Rudyard Kipling, which was originally written from the point of view of a father to a son, giving advice on becoming a better man and pushing the son to be greater than his current state.

“It’s about people, how we can look at ones self and figure out what we can do to make ourselves better in every aspect of our lives,” Mackal emphasized. “I pride myself on lifelong learning. Everyone can take something away from this.”

The assignment’s origin came from the impact the poem had on Mackal’s own life.

“I was a sophomore in high school, my varsity basketball coach gave it to the entire team, he said it was something he thought it could be incorporated into our lives,” Mackal said. “He was thinking about how our individual performance can effect the people around us. I’ve probably read it 25 times since then and every time I do I take something away from it.”

The impact the poem had on Mackal drove him to

share it with his students.

“You read it and you think it has absolutely nothing to do with the Marine Corps. Then you read it again and it could be the very blue print of how to have success in the Marine Corps.”

The winner of the response competition, Lance Cpl. Casey L. Tulk, wrote his paper on how the poem applies to him becoming a better father.

“He’s about to be a new dad, so he’s definitely taking stock in his own life right now,” Mackal said, who has children of his own. “He wants to be that good role model for his new son or daughter, to look at him and be proud of him, not just because he was a Marine, but because he is a good man. When I read Tulk’s assignment, I could see him in it.”

The purpose of the particular poem essay assignment was not to sing praises to a talent poet, but to show the students at MCCES life lessons written in a simple, beautiful and poetic way they could understand easily.

“Long after you can no longer do a single pushup, fireman carry your buddy or buddy drag him, something that you took away from this can get you over that next obstacle in your life.”

Words from the winner

Lance Cpl. Casey L. Tulk

This poem really speaks to me in three different ways. The first and most important way it speaks to me is as a soon to be father. I will use this poem not only as a guideline for my child, but to teach them the important traits that each individual should have, in any situation.

The second way this poem speaks to me is as a husband. I found the third stanza to be the most important to me, I took this stanza as a statement of, even when things aren’t going your way you need to keep going. For myself, my wife, and everyone around me, I need to be man enough to keep on keeping on when everyone else might give up hope or faith.

Lastly, this poem speaks to me as a Marine. I found

See **POEM** page A4

Combat Center Major earns Australian medal

Cpl. Benjamin Crilly
Combat Correspondent

Maj. Michael Johannes, executive officer of 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, was awarded the Australian Chief of Army Gold Commendation Medal at a ceremony here, May 9.

Brig. Paul Nothard, a general with the International Engagement Branch, Australian Army, presented the medal to the artillery officer for his accomplishments while serving as an individual augment in the Marine Corps Foreign Personnel Exchange Program to Australia.

The award is the highest of three levels of the commendation awarded to individuals by the chief of the Army. The billet is currently held by Lt. Gen. David Morrison who serves as the senior officer in the Australian Army.

“The Australian Army is a lot like the Marines,” said Nothard, who traveled half way across the world to present the award. “You’ve got to earn awards and medals. We don’t just hand them out.”

Johannes, from Keno, Ore., spent two years in Australia assigned to the Australian Army’s Experimental and Research Section. He was responsible for testing force



CPL. BENJAMIN CRILLY

Brigadier Paul Nothard (left), a general with the International Engagement Branch, Australian Army, congratulates and awards the Australian Chief of the Army Gold Commendation Medal to Maj. Michael Johannes, executive officer of 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, during an awards ceremony here, May 9.

structure plans for the coalition army and advising on ways to improve the partnered force.

“It’s unbelievable what they do with the limited number of resources and manpower that they have,” said Johannes. “Their army is about an eighth the size of our Marine Corps. They are small, but for their size they pack a really good punch.”

His role in the exchange program allowed Johannes to be a subject matter expert in expeditionary warfare and enable the Australian Army to improve their capabilities.

“The Australian Army is going through a big transition right now, especially in their amphibious or expeditionary warfare capability,” said Johannes. “Being a Marine, we naturally know amphibious and expeditionary operations; I was able to help them a lot with that.”

The exchange program allows Marines and Australian Army personnel to train with the others’ forces, gaining new perspective and giving insights from their own methods of conducting warfare.

“Anytime you are in an organization for a while you just start seeing things because that’s the ways they have always been,” said Johannes. “Anyone coming in

See **AWARD** page A4

Marines best friend

■ Military working dogs uphold safety standards aboard the Combat Center

Story and photos by

Sgt. Heather Golden

When Myke Erdmann first put in his application to join the Provost Marshal’s Office as a dog handler, he wasn’t sure he even liked dogs. Now, after more than a year working with his K9 partner Rex, he shares a strong enough bond with his dog that he has eventual adoption in mind.

There are 12 military working dogs stationed at the Combat Center, and 11 handlers who see to their well-being and training. These dogs sniff out everything from people to explosives to narcotics, and together with their handlers, add a little something extra to the installation’s police force that wouldn’t be possible without them.

“Their detection is outstanding,” said Erdmann, who spent 15 years in the Marine Corps and five years as a soldier afterward. “They are good with crowd control, too, because they are a deterrent. When you see a dog barking with his teeth barred, you’re

going to think twice.”

These dogs are hand selected and undergo intensive training. Even after they graduate from the K9 version of basic training, they still have continuous hours of detec-

See **DOGS** page A4



Dennis, military working dog, Provost Marshal’s Office, waits for the next busload of passengers to arrive at the gate before he makes his rounds checking the vehicle and the luggage for contraband May 14, during a routine search at the gate.

‘Phantoms’ welcome leader



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3, welcomed its new commander, Lt. Col. John D. Thurman in a change of command ceremony. Burton (right) passes on the squadron’s colors to Thurman (left) to relinquish his responsibilities as commanding officer of VMU-3. The Marines marched in the pass in review at the end of the ceremony to welcome their new leader.

To see more photos visit the Combat Center facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>

LAW ENFORCEMENT ADVISORY PROPERTY CRIME

As the summer months approach, individuals bearing criminal intent seek out opportunities to take advantage of unsuspecting citizens who leave valuables unsecured.

Based on the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, the National Incident-Based Reporting System, and local statistics

26%

Property crime increases April through September

63%

Of the crimes involve theft of personal property from unsecured locations

Be proactive and safeguard your personal property. Take the following steps to minimize the likeliness of you becoming a victim:

- Park in well-lit parking spaces.
- Ensure that all doors and windows are locked before leaving your vehicle.
- Keep anything of value out of sight such as shopping bags, back packs, briefcases, laptops, cell phones, MP3 players, handheld video games, digital tablets, cameras, purses, wallets and military gear.
- Always keep a close eye on your valuables. Never leave your things unattended or unsecured.
- Report suspicious activity, persons, or groups of people to law enforcement immediately.

Current trends indicate thieves primarily are opportunist who gain access to unsecured vehicles and steal personal property within minutes. If you become a victim, seek assistance through your local law enforcement office, legal assistance office and/or Chain of Command. Take action immediately to safeguard your valuable and protect your community.

Take an active role in keeping our community safe: Report Crime immediately and do your part in community policing. You may remain anonymous: Simply call 760-830-6800. IF AN EMERGENCY DIAL 911.

How does high blood pressure cause strokes?

SHARI LOPATIN
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Did you know that one in every three U.S. adults has suffered from high blood pressure, a major risk factor for stroke? And, stroke is the third leading cause of death in the U.S.

Those facts came straight from the American Stroke Association and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

The relationship between stroke and high blood pressure has been well-documented. The American Stroke Association states, "Managing high blood pressure is the most important thing you can do to lessen your risk for stroke."

What is blood pressure?

As the heart pumps blood through the body, it also pushes blood against the body's arteries. The force of this push is blood pressure.

However, if this pressure rises too much and stays high it can damage the heart, blood vessels, kidneys and other parts of the body, according to NHLBI. It can also lead to a stroke.

What causes high blood pressure?

Blood pressure tends to rise with age.

However, other causes may include obesity, chronic kidney disease, thyroid disease, sleep apnea or certain asthma and cold-relief medications.

Unfortunately, high blood pressure usually has no symptoms, according to NHLBI. Occasionally, it may cause headaches. Many people have high blood pressure for years and don't even know it.

The best ways to prevent high blood pressure from escalating are to:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise regularly
- Manage stress effectively
- Limit the amount of salt and alcohol consumption
- Avoid cigarette smoke
- Check your blood pressure regularly

The stroke correlation

According to the American Stroke Association, a stroke happens when a blood vessel to the brain is either blocked by a blood clot, or completely bursts. This prevents oxygen from reaching the brain, causing the affected part to die.

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for stroke because it damages arteries. And when arteries are damaged, they clog or burst more easily.

OFF-LIMITS ESTABLISHMENTS

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

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.

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.
- K Smoke Shopp, 5865A 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

WE SALUTE YOU 2012

Marine Corps Community Services and TriWest Health care bring American Idol star Kelly Pickler and special guest Brett Eldredge to the Combat Center, for We Salute You 2012.

The free concert will be held at 7 p.m. at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, May 19. Food and beer vendors will be present. For more information, call 830-5086 or go to mccsspecialevents29.com.

SUDOKU #2537-M

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See answers on page A3

HOW MUCH?

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ACROSS

1. Become wearisome
5. "Hold on ___!"
9. Cruise quarters
14. Bhutan's locale
15. The Mideast's ___Strip
16. Sheepish?
17. Scott Baio sitcom
20. Control mechanism, for short
21. According to ___
22. Took the reins
23. ___?Seltzer
25. Mrs. Chaplin
27. Desktop publisher's task
31. Da __, Vietnam
35. Earth-?friendly prefix
36. Baby blues
37. NY Met or LA Dodger, e.g.
38. Rep.'s rival
39. Lead tenor in "La Bohe?me"
43. "What surprise!"
44. Pub offerings
46. 1964 Oscar winner Kedrova
47. "___ y Plata" (Montana's motto)
48. Hang i the hammock
49. Giant's chant
52. "Where there's a ___"
54. Of great proportions
55. Audiophile's collection
58. Fit for a king
60. Get naked
64. Auditing firm that merged with Coopers & Lybrand
67. TV exec Spelling
68. Take ten
69. Trapper's trophy
70. Garbo, by birth
71. Tracy's Trueheart
72. Bad day for Caesar

DOWN

1. Campaignfunders, for short
2. Netman Arthur
3. Bull artist
4. Grubsand maggots
5. Get mellow
6. Strutted
7. Basso Pinza
8. "___ believ this?"
9. Skater Sasha
10. Gardner of film
11. Compete in logrolling
12. "Picnic" playwright
13. Have to have
18. One given to vegging out
19. Circulatory blockage
24. Drop for a ten-? count
26. Massachusetts cape
27. Gas or clutch
28. Amtrak's Northeast Corrido bullet train
29. Morticia's husband
30. "___ Mio"
32. Standoffish
33. India's first prime minister
34. Best man's best friend, maybe
40. Having no pizazz
41. Toss wit spatula
42. Klutzy
45. Ensure, with "up"
49. Too t th air
50. Bandleade Les or Larry
51. Squids' kin
53. Dunne orPapas
55. No. brains?
56. Oater challenge
57. Your excellency
59. Suit to ___
61. Felt sorry about
62. Castaway's locale
63. They'r often unwell come at motels
65. Massachusetts cape
66. ACLU concerns: Abbr.



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

Wounded Warriors

Photos by:
Lance Cpl. Lauren A. Kurkimilis

■ Medical retirement ceremony of two Combat Center Marines



[1] Lt. Col. Ted Wong, battalion commander Wounded Warrior Battalion, gives a medical retirement flag to Cpl. Joshua N. Koph, Wounded Warrior Battalion.

[2] Claire Husty, age 2, daughter of Cpl. Charles Husty, Wounded Warrior Battalion, watches her father's medical retirement ceremony.

[3] Lt. Col. Ted Wong, gives a certificate of appreciation to Kelly Roybal, Armed Services Young Mens Christian Association, Special Events Coordinator, for her services coordinating events for Wounded Warrior Battalion.

[4] Heather Husty, wife of Cpl. Charles Husty, Wounded Warrior Battalion, was awarded a certificate of appreciation during her husband's medical retirement ceremony.

[5] Retirement flags were given to Cpls. Charles Husty and Joshua N. Koph, Wounded Warrior Battalion, during their medical retirement ceremony.

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DOGS, from A1

tion, obedience and aggression training required every week. Their handlers work with them Monday through Friday to make sure their skills stay sharp.

“They have training requirements, just like Marines,” Erdmann said.

When they aren’t training or resting, the dogs are out with their partners patrolling, on the look-out for any situation where their superior noses come in handy. One of their routine duties is at the gate inspecting vehicles bringing new role players for Enhanced Mojave Viper cycles and their luggage for contraband while the military police are busy physically patting down visitors. Rarely does the group ever find anything of note, though.

“We usually don’t find anything, but better to be safe,” said PMO dog handler Joshua Billig, who is partnered with a dog named Dennis. “It’s that one time when you don’t check.”

The dogs’ duties are not restricted to the Combat Center. Erdmann and Rex have deployed together four time to various parts of the country to augment security for the President of the United States and other dignitaries.

“You get close, spending a week and a half in a hotel together,” Erdmann said. “They put his kennel right in the room with me.”

Each dog is paired with their human counterparts based on personalities and ability. One afternoon around several teams, and the thought that goes into the teams is obvious.

Rex has deployed six times and is 10 years old. He has a gruffer edge to him, and less patience. Erdmann,

being a veteran of several deployments himself, understands how Rex feels.

Dennis is more laidback and playful than Rex, and is perfectly suited with his handler, Billig, who is younger than Erdmann. Dennis has never deployed to a combat zone, and Billig has never worn a military uniform.

However well matched these two pairs may be, the handlers go into the job knowing the dogs are considered military equipment while on the force, and that’s something they all have to accept.

“When you start this job, you know they’re government property,” Erdmann said. “I got close to him (Rex). But you take this job realizing you can have a new dog tomorrow.”

The uncertainty of a partnership is balanced by the knowledge that there is a chance to one day turn the working relationship into a permanent family tie. Handlers have first dibs on ownership when a dog is ready to retire.

“He’s like family now; he’s a part of me,” Erdmann said. “When he retires, either me or another handler is adopting him. I just have to get a fence put up around my house.”

Rex is slated for retirement soon, and Erdmann has already started training Rex’s replacement. As soon as the new dog is ready to take on full duties, Rex will reap the benefits of his years of service and live out the rest of his life as a private citizen.

Billig also expressed a strong determination to adopt Dennis when it is his time to leave the force as well.

But, for now, the four, along with the rest of the military working dog crew, focuses on the task at hand – to protect the Combat Center community.

“Our sole purpose in life is to make things safe,” Erdmann said.

AWARD, from A1

from an outside organization and taking a look at what they have is beneficial.”

Johannes was also able to see how another organization operated and learn from them before returning to the artillery community.

“When you go over to [Afghanistan] you are going to operate with these guys,” said Johannes. “Having a shared experience is very important, and that exchange program allows us to do that.”

His hard work and contribution was recognized by those he had worked with and he was rewarded above his peers.

“Every exchange officer doesn’t automatically get a Chief of the Army Commendation Medal,” said Nothard. “[Johannes] definitely earned that, so it’s fantastic for me to be able to come over and present that in front of his battalion.”

“It’s awesome. It’s an unbelievable honor,” said Johannes. “It was great seeing Australian uniforms and hearing the accent again.”

Johannes will relinquish his position as the executive officer of 3/11 in the coming weeks to be posted as a senior adviser with a border adviser team.

POEM, from A1

the first stanza to be the most important by far in this respect. I feel that if you cannot express those traits within this poem then you cannot be an effective or well respected leader of Marines.

If I follow this stanza day in and day out, Marines around me will listen, not because they have to, but because they want to.

I recommend this poem to any Marine who cares enough to better themselves, and those around them.



[Top left] Handler Myke Erdmann and his military working dog partner, Rex, search a bus for contraband before it and it's passengers are allowed to enter the base May 14.

[Right] Military working dog Rex soaks in the loving scratches from his handler, Myke Erdmann, in between vehicle searches May 14.

[Bottom left] Lance Cpl. O'Donnell, military policeman, Provost Marshal's Office, pats down a new role player entering the base for the next Enhanced Mojave Viper Cycle, May 14.





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DESERT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH Sunday 10:00 A.M. - Worship Sunday School Child Care 29 Palms • 5688 Sunrise Drive 760-361-0086	Skyview Chapel Church of God <i>Worship Service</i> 10:30 A.M & 6:00 P.M. <i>Wed. Bible Study 6:00 P.M.</i> 7475 Sunny Vista Rd., Joshua Tree Pastor Abe Casiano Church (760) 366-9119	This Week's Spotlight Church  United Methodist Church of Twentynine Palms 6250 Mesquite Springs Road Phone: 367-7338 Sunday School: 8:00 a.m. - Worship: 9:00 a.m. (Child Care Provided) Reverend Lynn Reece <i>"open hearts, open minds, open doors"</i>		First Church of Christ, Scientist 56039 Santa Fe Trail - 760-365-4185 Sunday Service 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Wednesday Testimony Meeting 7:00 PM www.ChristianScienceYuccaValley.org Reading Room Tues. & Thurs. 12-3 PM Sat. 9-Noon (Except Holidays)	29 PALMS CHURCH OF CHRIST 72309 Larrea Ave. (1 block up from KFC) Sunday Bible Study 10:00AM Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM Sunday Evening Worship 5:00PM Wednesday Bible Study 6:00PM 367-9400
firstsouthern <small>Southern Church of Jesus Christ</small> Sun. 9:15 AM Life Groups Sun. 10:30 AM Worship Wed. 6:00 PM Bible Study <i>"first hope in Jesus"</i> 56374 Onaga Trail in Yucca Valley (760) 365-5771 www.fistcyc.org	FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA Sunday Worship 8:30am Adult Sunday School 9:45am 6336 Hallee Rd Joshua Tree 760-366-8146	St. Martin-In-The-Fields EPISCOPAL CHURCH Sunday School & Eucharist 10:00 am Sunday Gospel Meditation 9:00 am Weds. Morning Prayer 7:30 am "We are baptized into ministry." 72348 Larrea Road (2 blocks N. of KFC) www.stmartinschurch29.org (760) 367-7133	St. James Anglican 6082 Carmelita, Yucca Valley 760-989-0006 www.christprayerpower.com Sunday Worship 6:00 pm Walk of the Cross 04/06 12:00 pm <small>Beginning at the Hi-Desert Stn. 56445 29 Palms Hwy.</small> Easter Celebration 04/07 7:00 pm	United Methodist Church of Twentynine Palms 6250 Mesquite Springs Road Phone: 367-7338 Sunday School: 8:00 a.m. - Worship: 9:00 a.m. (Child Care Provided) Reverend Lynn Reece <i>"open hearts, open minds, open doors"</i>	
The EPISCOPAL CHURCH WELCOMES YOU St. Joseph Of Arimathea 56312 Onaga, Yucca Valley (760) 365-7133 revjanec@aol.com Jane L. Crase, Priest Holy Eucharist Sunday 10:00 a.m. Bible Study Friday 10:00 a.m. Mutual Ministry 3rd Fri of the month 9:00 a.m.	Yucca Valley Center for Spiritual Living Healing Lives & Building Dreams Reverend Ron Scott Sunday Celebration 10 AM 7434 Bannock Trail, Yucca Valley 760-365-2205 yvcsl.org	 St. Martin-In-The-Fields EPISCOPAL CHURCH 59077 Yucca Trail, Yucca Valley Preschool & Daycare: 369-9590	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) WORSHIP SERVICE 9:00 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 AM WE PREACH CHRIST RISEN CHURCH: 365-2548	Truth Tabernacle Apostolic Church 73493 29 Palms Hwy., Twentynine Palms Pastor Titus R. Burns Sunday Service 10:00 AM Wednesday Night Bible Study 7:00 PM Call 760-367-4185 for more information  <small>"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38</small>	First Christian Church OF YUCCA VALLEY, CA 760-365-4014 www.fcycv.com The Lord Who Saves Ex 31:13 & Jer 23:6

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WHAT I'VE LEARNED

THE SPECIALIST

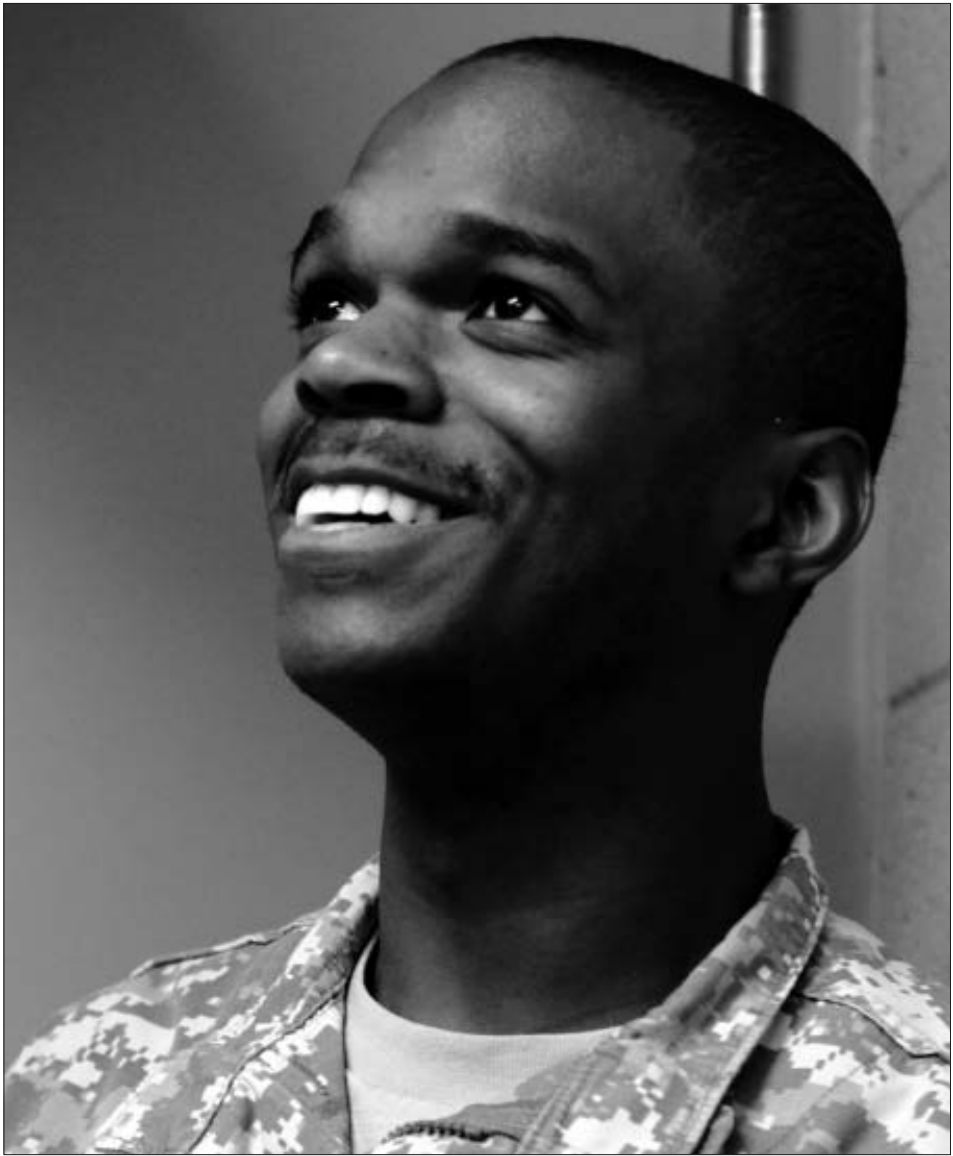
Spc. Daniel Dukes

Veterinary Food Inspection Specialist,
Public Health Command District San Diego
Tallahassee, Fla., 20

INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY
LANCE CPL. D. J. WU
May 9, 2012

> **I originally wanted to join the Marines**, but they couldn't guarantee me a job. The Army said they would give a job and a bonus.
> **It's frustrating** having to explain to Marines what we are doing here.
> **Someone actually asked** our PT group if we bought Army PT uniforms to be funny. It gets old after a while.
> **When I got here**, it was quite interesting, the Marines kind of saw the soldiers as exotic creatures.

> **As a soldier, I've seen** some interesting stuff on this base.
> **For the most part**, I do like my job. I just keep educating myself so I can keep current with the information. So when a Marine does ask me a question and they want to know why, I want to be able to inform them.
> **It is weird** having to do the two different things. The job that I do is technically called Veterinary Food Inspector. I didn't know what that was. Before I went to school I thought I would be inspecting dog food or something.
> **I like to cook** too. I cook a lot. You can ask anyone here. I love cooking southern food.
> **I wanted to be a cook**, but now that I see what they do, I think I made the right choice.
> **One time we had to** do an inspection in a pie factory. It was the best inspection ever! They gave everybody free slices of pie. It was the most delicious pie I've ever tasted.
> **As nerdy and uncool** as it sounds, I do read up on my job in my off time.
> **We do cross-train** with the veterinary side of the job.
> **I don't mind the animal side** of things, but there are kind of a lot of technical things involved.
> **I've helped put in** microchips, rabies shots and assisted in surgery. Well maybe not assisted, but I was in the room with a mask on. Occasionally they need help holding the animals down.
> **For the most part**, I would say that I'm family oriented.
> **Since I've moved out here, my mom calls me** constantly. Like every day. She can't go two days without calling.
> **A lot of the time** she's just calling so that I can fix her computer. She doesn't realize the time difference sometimes and ends up calling me at five in the morning.
> **I don't talk to my siblings** much. It's like one of those relationships you don't have to talk, but you still love each other. It's like you can be away for a while and then just pick up where you left off when you see them.
> **My older brothers weren't in** the house when I was growing up. It was like being an only child.
> **Tallahassee is a lot like** it is here, but with grass.



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Bring it to the MAT

Fight Club 29 took home the Armed Forces Mixed Martial Arts Champion trophy in the Armed Services MMA Championship at Camp Pendleton.

Combat Center Marines not only fought against fighters from the Army, Navy, Coast Guard and Air Force in the tournament, but also other Marines from Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., and Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz.

The MMA tournament was made up of two parts, grappling and pankration, which is a style of fighting that combines grappling, submission and strikes.

In the grappling portion, Fight Club 29 entered four Marines. The club contestants came out strong defeating most of their opponents, submitting some in the first minute of the five-minute matches.

In his first match, Fight Club 29's Sang Son, 185-pound weight class, submitted his opponent in 55 seconds. Son's quick victory was followed by David Masias, 170-pound weight class, who defeated his opponent in under 45 seconds.

Fight Club 29 members walked away with two gold medals, silver and a bronze in the grappling portion.

The pankration portion did not have the same quick finishes as the grappling portion for the team, but they won by landslide victories.

In the first fight of the pankration portion, Dahlen "D" Wilson, 185-pound weight class, crushed his opponent, winning 17-3. In his third fight of the tournament he won by a white out, defeating his opponent by more than 20 points, 31-9.

Kyle Stewart, 170-pound weight class, won his second fight without his opponent scoring a single point, 14-0.

After multiple matches, the fighters had one last round to give it their all. It would be the deciding factor between going home with a gold or silver medal.

"I think you saw that our fighters, especially in the finals, had a lot more gas left in their tank than the guys they went

up against," said Mark Geletko, coach, Fight Club 29. "Those teams didn't take conditioning as seriously as we did."

One of the most interesting fights of the finals was by Fight Club 29's Arthur "Neno" Powell, their 170-pound weight class fighter. Powell went toe-to-toe with a member

I think you saw that our fighters, especially in the finals, had a lot more gas left in their tank than the guys they went up against. Those teams didn't take conditioning as seriously as we did."

— Mark Geletko

from the Coast Guard team for 5 minutes.

Powell was down two points in the last minute of the match. Toward the end, he gained one point but was still down by one. At the final second of the round, Powell struck his opponent in the abdomen, gaining him the final point to tie up the score and send them into overtime.

"I focused on striking, I didn't want to get into a jitsu or wrestling match with these guys," said Powell. "These guys are ridiculously strong."

After a quick break, Powell and his opponent stepped back onto the mat for a one-minute bout. In order to win in overtime the fighter needed to be two points or more ahead of the other. The round started with striking but soon led to the ground where Powell was forced to grapple.

At the end, Powell came out on top with the two points, leaving the mat as the victor of his entire weight class.

"When I won I was really excited and all I could think was that I wanted some Korean barbeque," Powell said. "My system was depleted".

Every point from every match was counted up for the Armed Forces MMA Championship trophy. Although

Photos and story by
Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi

■ Fight Club 29 claims victory over every other branch of service

Rivalry has always been present among the different branches of service. Saturday was no different when Fight Club 29 Marines challenged the branches to do what Marines do best — fight.

some teams, such as Camp Pendletons, had approximately twice the number of fighters as Fight Club 29, the Twentynine Palms fighters claimed victory with one point over the Camp Pendleton team, thanks to their consecutive wins in first and second place throughout the tournament.

Fight Club 29 won a total of seven gold, four silver and two bronze medals, including Michael S. Smith who won in the Heavyweight division, 205-pounds and up, for the second year in a row.

Geletko attributed their victory to both the skill of his fighters and their endurance.

After the end of the tournament, the team headed out to fill Powell's appetite for some Korean barbeque and get ready for training Monday.



Sang Son, 185-pound weight class, takes the dominant position over his opponent during a grappling match in the Armed Service Mixed Martial Arts Championship at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., May 12.



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



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



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

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BOSSES ROLL IN

VIPs visit 1st Tank Battalion, get a first hand experience in the M1A1 Abrams

Lt. Gen. Duane Thiessen, commanding general, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific, stands with Staff Sgt. Alexander Echols, tank commander, 1st Tank Battalion, just after the general drove an M1A1 Abrams Tank on the Combat Center's Tank Trail May 14. This was Thiessens first time driving a tank.



Ron Perlman, actor in the Sons of Anarchy TV series, shakes hands with Sgt. Derek Schaap, tank crewman, 1st Tank Battalion at the tank ramp, May 11. The Sons of Anarchy actors visited the battalion and took the opportunity to ride in the tanks. Later that day the group signed autographs for fans in the Marine Corps Exchange.



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



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



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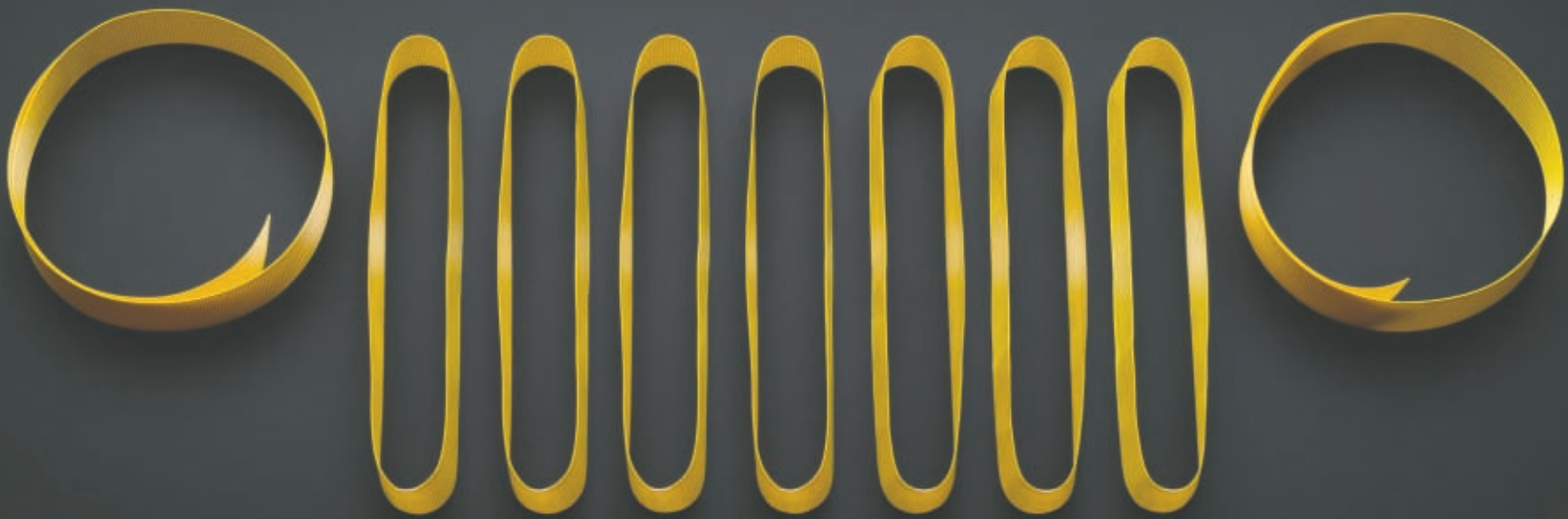
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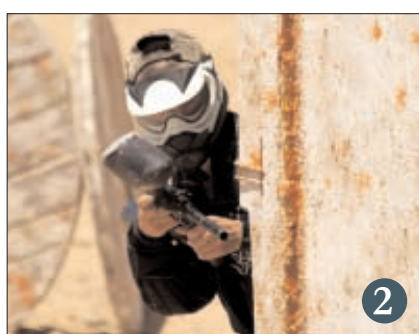
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Combat Center

CHALLENGE

Combat Center Marines go head to head in base-wide competition



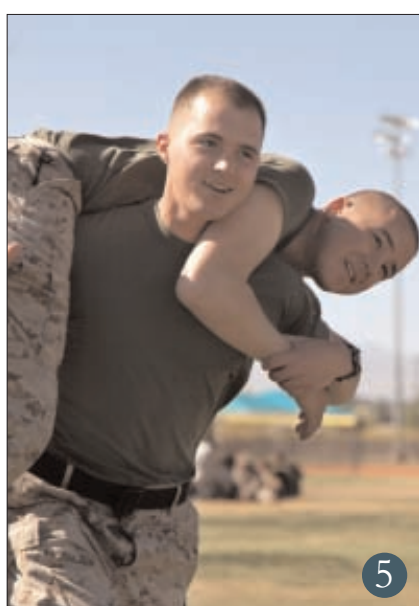
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1

For the second year in a row, the Marines and sailors of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, dominated the 7th annual Combat Center Challenge competition, returning the trophy to its place at the battalion's headquarters May 11.

The challenge, sponsored by Marine Corps Community Services, consisted of 30 separate, physically demanding events conducted within a nine-day period.

"The Challenge has grown significantly since its first year," said Charles Dougwillo, Semper Fit area coordinator, MCCS. "This year's challenge we had nearly 1,500 participants compared to 500 the first year."

The Challenge began May 1, when seven teams competed in a single elimination volleyball tournament at the East Gym and Fitness Center. Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School took an early lead, winning the tournament in the final match against 2/7 Weapons.

Throughout the competition, teams battled in events that would test their athletic abilities, as well as build their unit camaraderie.

"We're in the field enough weeks out of the year, it's important to build morale and make sure their home life and family life is good. Taking care of things and having fun is important" said 1st Lt. James Collins, motor transport officer, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment.

Daily tournaments in water polo, paintball, dodge ball and basketball allowed teams to battle in familiar sports. New events and variations of common ones added to the excitement of this year's challenge.

Bowling was added to the list of events this year, but not your standard bowling. Contestants were surprised to discover they would be required to use the dinosaur ramp, sit

in a chair and use a pool stick to launch the ball down the lane. The variants were rotated through the line-up.

Most bowlers found the ramp to be the most challenging element added to bowling.

"It would not go straight," said Lance Cpl. Matthew Colvin, machinist, 1st Tank Battalion. "We couldn't figure it out."

In a sudden death type bowl-off, one bowler each from Tanks and 2/7, threw a single ball to determine the tournament's winner. Staff Sgt. Derrick Cantrell threw a strike securing a first place standing for 2/7. Tanks and Naval Hospital teams took second and third, respectively.

On the final day of competition at Felix Field, events like corn hole, jousting, and horseshoes were part of the Challenge, and events like human foosball, football toss and an inflatable obstacle course were set up to entertain contestants between competitions.

Teams continued to be neck-in-neck as they completed the Corpsman race and the Hummer Push, both won by 2/7.

Five teams competed in the final event, a double elimination Tug-of-War tournament, and would determine the final rankings for the lead teams.

"Pull! Pull! Pull!" was the enthusiastic chant heard throughout the field as spectators cheered for their favorite team. With one final tug of the rope in the last match against 3/11, the 2/7 team pulled the red flag across the line to victory.

The Combat Center Challenge trophy was presented to 2/7's battalion commander Lt. Col. Donald Tomich by MCAGCC Commanding General, Brig. Gen. George W. Smith Jr.

Proud of the battalion's victory, Tomich lead the unit in shouting the 2/7 motto, "Ready for all, yielding to none!"

Photos and story by Diane Durden



6

[1] Marines from 2/7 work furiously to maintain their ground against a team from 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, during a tug-of-war match. The event was the last of 30 competitive events that made-up the 7th Annual Combat Center Challenge.

[2] A Marine takes aim as he peers around the corner of a building during a paintball match in the Combat Center Challenge at Paintball 29.

[3] Cpl. Jordan Conley, rifleman, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, throws a football through a tire during the Combat Center Challenge at Felix Field May 11.

[4] Lance Cpl. Kevin Baughman (left), motor vehicle operator, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, loses his balance and the match against Lance Cpl. Austin Gouveia, rifleman, 2/7, during a King of the Hill Jousting tournament.

[5] Seaman Parker Bachman, hospital corpsman, 2/7, carries Lance Cpl. Ryan Spencer, rifleman, 2/7, during the fireman carry portion of the Corpsman Race.

[6] The Marines and sailors from 2/7 surround their trophy after winning the Combat Center Challenge.



Combat Center Clubs

A frightfully fresh, delightfully demonic twist on horror movie clichés

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 until June 2
Where: Theatre 29
736377 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
For tickets and information call 316-4151 or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

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.

The Shadow Mountain Band
General admission \$10
When: 9 p.m., Saturday May 19
Where: Pappy and Harriets Pioneertown Palace
53688 Pioneertown Rd., Poinneertown, Calif.
For more information, call 365-5956

Lower Desert

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>.

Carlos Mencia
Night of laughter with famous comedian
When: 8 p.m., Saturday June, 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>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, May 18
6 p.m. – Mirror Mirror, Rated PG
9 p.m. – Wrath of the Titans, Rated PG-13
Midnight – American Reunion, Rated R

Saturday, May 19
Midnight – The Hunger Games, Rated PG-13

Sunday, May 20
12:30 p.m. – Mirror Mirror, Rated PG
3 p.m. – Lockout, Rated PG-13
6 p.m. – Wrath of the Titans 3D, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – The Cabin in the Woods, Rated R

Monday, May 21
7 p.m. – The Hunger Games, Rated PG-13

Tuesday, May 22
7 p.m. – John Carter 3D, Rated PG

Wednesday, May 23
5:30 p.m. – Mirror Mirror, Rated PG-13
8:30 p.m. – The Cabin in the Woods, Rated R

Thursday, May 24
5:30 p.m. – John Carter, Rated PG
8:30 p.m. – 21 Jump St, Rated R



COURTESY PHOTO

Five college students head out for a weekend of fun in a remote bungalow. But things don't go as planned, and it's only a matter of time before blood spurts, heads roll and the bodies begin to pile up.

NEIL POND

“The Cabin in the Woods”

Starring Chris Hemsworth and Kristen Connelly
Directed by Drew Goddard
R, 95 min

If you’ve seen any horror movie in the past three decades, you’re likely familiar with this very familiar scenario, a staple of the so-called “slasher” genre. The “cabin in the woods” setup is so common, in fact, that it’s become a horror-movie cliché, and it’s one of many that this wickedly inventive new movie takes to wildly imaginative heights and beyond. This movie is a difficult one to describe in any degree

of detail, especially without giving its razor-sharp surprises away. Suffice it to say that it takes its title literally: The setting is, indeed, a cabin in the woods. And it’s the destination for a group of college students, five stereo-typical characters (a jock, a stoner, a tramp, a scholar and a “good girl”) who plan to use it for a weekend of partying. But there’s also a labyrinth of underground control rooms, a couple of lab-coat-ed technicians (Richard Jenkins and Bradley Whitford), and a clear suggestion from the movie’s very first scene that there’s more afoot than the graveyard of zombies soon to be on the loose. One of the young stars is

Chris Hemsworth, also onscreen this summer as Thor in “The Avengers.” (And the movie’s co-writer is “Avengers” director Joss Whedon.) Another actor, Jesse Williams, plays Dr. Avery Jackson on TV’s “Grey’s Anatomy.” If you watch afternoon soaps, you may have seen “good girl” Kristen Connelly from her recurring roles several years ago on “Guiding Light” and “As The World Turns.” The movie poster shows a cabin in midair, as if levitated by some supernatural force. But look closely and you’ll see it’s no ordinary lodge of logs; it’s like a Rubik’s Cube, in three sections, each out of alignment from the others. It’s a perfect image for the movie, which takes the idea

of an “ordinary” horror movie, lifts it up, turns it every which way—and finally smashes it to pieces. It’s scary, smart, gory, funny and madly creative, concocting a “Twilight Zone”-ish theory about humanity’s age-old thirst for blood that stirs ancient virgin sacrifices, reality TV, a warehouse full of nightmares, and horror cinema into a mind-blowing cocktail of gods, monsters and mythology. “You think you know the story,” reads the movie’s tagline. “Think again.” You’ll be thinking plenty after watching “The Cabin in the Woods,” a movie that puts a frightfully fresh, delightfully demonic twist on things that go thump in the night.

TOUGH MINDED
OPTIMISM
by Lou Gerhardt

The subject of same sex marriage has been a hot topic in recent days. The entire subject, of course, was settled in my mind many, many years ago. I have officiated at same sex marriages for better than 50 years. Let me remind you again of a local example of success in this extremely sensitive matter.

Jeff Hafler was selected in 2010 as one of two grand marshals for the Annual Pioneer Days parade in Twentynine Palms.

Jeff was selected as a “Pioneer of the Future.” What a great choice! What a great guy!

Jeff owns and operates the Beauty Bubble, a salon located next to the home he shares with his partner Mikel Winn and their adopted son, Cash. The 10 acre property also features a significant beauty equipment museum and a first class bed and breakfast.

In addition to Jeff’s busy daily work schedule he and his brother Jamie often entertain at the 29 Palms Inn. And they are pretty darn good!

In fact, they will be playing along with Jeff’s brother-in-law Caleb Winn, June 12.

I am very proud that I live in a community in which our Chamber of Commerce demonstrated a non-judgmental, intelligent, far-sighted attitude when they made their superior decision.

Jeff and Mikel are wonderful parents and have an exceptionally bright seven year old son, Cash Donovan Hafler, who will be graduating from the first grade at Twentynine Palms Elementary in a few days.

Jeff and Mikel know Cash’s birth mother and were at the hospital in Los Angeles when he was born and he was legally adopted at birth. When Jeff and Mikel were married in the Big Morongo Preserve, Cash was present as a young witness.

This message sponsored by:

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10:40	10:45	11:00
*4:40	*4:45	*5:00
Y.V.T.C.	Palm Springs Airport	11:10
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15	Palm Springs-MCAGCC	Saturday/Sunday*
Palm Springs Airport	Indian Canyon & Andreas (Casino)	Indian Canyon & Tacheva (Hospital)
12:00	12:10	12:15
*6:00	*6:10	*6:15
Y.V.T.C.	MCAGCC	1:35
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