



OBSERVATION POST

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS

Since 1957
www.marines.mil/unit/29palms



June 1, 2012

Vol. 56 Issue 18

1/7 mentors, advises Afghans

Lance Cpl. Mark Garcia
Regional Command Southwest

FORWARD OPERATING BASE JACKSON, Afghanistan — As Marines continue to retrograde from Afghanistan, the shift in focus from combat operations to advising and mentoring the Afghan National Security Forces has become ever increasing.

Marines with Animal Company, 1/7, work to establish an effective Afghan fighting force. While deployed, Animal Company's main focus is to ensure the ANSF in Sangin are capable of providing future security for the local population. To accomplish their mission the Marines conduct partnered patrols. They also conduct classes and training in marksmanship, the use of mine detectors, the employment of counter improvised explosive devices, and in some instances, partnered physical fitness sessions.

"Our mission is to develop the capacities in the ANSF in support of the presidential timeline of withdrawal," said 1st Lt. Brett Howard, the operations officer for Animal Co., 1st Bn., 7th Marines, and an Orlando native. "We are also in charge of the turnover of domestic security in the area to the ANSF and ensuring they have the abilities to take sole responsibility for the security of Sangin."

While there are many advisor teams operating in Afghanistan, Animal Co., is unique to 1/7.

"This is the first time ever that a company has been put together internally to a battalion to do the advisor



LANCE CPL D. J. WU

NOT FORGOTTEN

3rd CEB remembers fallen brothers with ceremony

Lance Cpl. D. J. Wu
Combat Correspondent

Friends and families came out to the Combat Center's Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Wednesday for 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion's Remembrance Ceremony to pay their respects to four Marines who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the battalion's previous deployment to Afghanistan.

Lance Cpls. Jason Barfield and Nickolas Daniels and Cpls. Christopher Singer and Alex Martinez were the Marines honored at the ceremony. All four men died while conducting combat operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The battalion commander, Lt. Col. John Sullivan Jr., spoke a few words on how the fallen Marines will be remembered in the battalion.

"Each of them took great pride in being a United States Marine," said Sullivan. "These young men, because of their courage, their selflessness and the commitment to a cause greater than themselves, stands in contrast to the average American citizen."

Combat Engineers are put in front of infantry patrols,

See **REMEMBRANCE** page A4

"This is the first time ever that a company has been put together internally to a battalion to do the advisor mission."

— 1st Sgt. Christopher Easter

mission," said 1st Sgt. Christopher Easter, company first sergeant for Animal Co., 1/7, and a native of Valley Springs, Calif. "So our Marines underwent training at the Advisor Training Cell and we also sent Marines to San Diego State University to be able to undergo Pashto language classes."

Animal Co. has seven advisor teams: four specifically focused on advising the Afghan National Army; two assigned to the Afghan National Civil Order Police; and one devoted to the Afghan Uniform Police, which also looks after the development of the Afghan Local Police. Dispersing throughout the ANSF has allowed for continued success through the partnership.

"The ANSF have been very receptive," Howard said. "We've made some pretty significant strides in a very short time in terms of developing the operational control center for the district."

Marines along with their ANSF counterparts have also started to develop a maintenance program, which will be sustainable long term through locally sourced programs.

The ANSF have also participated in coalition operations to accomplish the mission at hand.

"The ANSF have completed a couple of coordinated operations, not just with the Marines but with other ANSF units mixed in," Howard said. "The purpose behind this is to achieve a greater end state and accomplish the commanders intent of removing enemy fighters from the battlefield. They've participated in named operations with the battalion and they've done a superb job in wrapping up lethal aid,

See **MENTOR** page A3



LANCE CPL LAUREN KURKIMILIS

[Top] The Barfield family remembers Lance Cpl. Jason Barfield at 3rd Combat Engineers Battalion's Remembrance Ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Wednesday. Barfield was one of four Marines honored at the ceremony.

[Above] Retired Navy Lt. Cmdr. Mary Kay Sherry salutes the colors as they pass during a Memorial Day Ceremony at Twentynine Palms Cemetery Monday.

A holiday for remembrance

Lance Cpl. D. J. Wu
Combat Correspondent

For many, Memorial Day is the unofficial start of the summer and an opportunity to barbeque and enjoy the company of friends and family. However, the significance of the holiday goes much deeper than a day of fun in the sun.

Communities all over the United States visit their local cemeteries and memorials to pay their respects by planting flags, laying wreaths or with prayer.

Local residents honored fallen service members Monday at the Twentynine Palms Cemetery and at the Joshua Tree Memorial Park and Mortuary. Brig. Gen. George W. Smith Jr., commanding general of the Combat Center, was a guest speaker at both events.

Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day after the Civil War. The holiday is a day to remember all who died while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The holiday was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868, by Gen. John Logan the commander of

See **DAY** page A4

MCTOG changes command

Col. Matthew L. Jones (left) receives command of Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group from Col. William F. Mullen (right) during MCTOG's change of command ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Grey Field May 25.

"It's an honor and a privilege to be selected to be MCTOG's commander," Jones said. "I've got to learn a lot about what MCTOG does and how they do it."

MCTOG has been providing advanced and standardized training at the battalion and regimental levels since its official activation in 2008. The unit currently works toward enhancement of training and operational performance of the ground combat element at the Combat Center.



LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

Check out safety tips for



Featured on page B6

This Week in Combat Center History



Reprinted from the Observation Post dated June 1, 1990, Vol. 35, No. 22 2/7 Marines arrive at the Combat Center, eager to rebuild

SGT. TONY SINAGRA

Warriors from 2nd Bn., 7th Marines continue to arrive here from Camp Pendleton, after returning from their six-month unit deployment on Okinawa, Japan. The first Marines from 2/7 began arriving at the Combat Center during mid-May. The remainder of the battalion is scheduled to arrive by Monday.

"We'll be open for business officially next week," said SgtMaj. Paul Brissette. "From then on we're going to be a battalion on the move." The sergeant major pointed out that 2/7 received nearly 200 new Marines in May, fresh out of Camp Pendleton's School of Infantry.

"Right now we'll be concentrating on getting those new Marines assigned to our companies," he said. "It's going to take a little while to get the battalion formed here."

According to Maj. Francis Wysocki, executive officer of 2/7, the battalion will have more than the normal amount of "post deployment adjusting" to do.

"Because of all the new people, along with the unit's move from Camp Pendleton to the Combat Center, hardly anyone--especially in the officers' ranks--will have the same jobs," said Wysocki. "We've got a lot of rebuilding to do that goes beyond the usual unit deployment return."

Coming hand-in-hand with that rebuilding, Wysocki said that 2/7 "will have a full slate of training and operations while stationed here at Twentynine Palms." Included in their schedule are military operations in urban terrain training at Fort Ord, Calif., during September, and cold weather/mountain

warfare operations at Bridgeport, Calif., slated for March 1991.

Many Marines from the battalion are also looking forward to training on the new Infantry Remote Engagement Targets System at Range 107 here.

"The officers and staff NCOs are always eager to use new training tools to sharpen our combat skills," said SSgt. William Bradberry, assistant operations chief for 2/7. "I think that new range will be a hot item."

According to Bradberry, one of the battalion's primary goals, while on Okinawa, was to constantly upgrade and improve their NCO's training and combat readiness. This was done by enrolling many NCOs as possible in courses like the Combat Squadleaders Course and the Basic Combat Skills Course at the Northern Training Area of Okinawa. These newly developed courses stressed essential combat skills like patrolling, small unit maneuvers and operating smoothly in a combat environment as fire teams, squads and platoons.

"When you've got highly trained NCOs, the battle skills of your junior Marines become far more effective as well," said Bradberry.

To further hone their infantry skills, the battalion also participated in several large-scale exercises including "Valiant Usher" and "Team Spirit."

Bradberry concluded that 2/7 will continue to stress the hard-core individual and overall unit training necessary to make them the "Cutting Edge" of the Marine Corps' air-ground team.

"I have no doubt in my mind that it's going to be a busy year here."

Five ways you can prevent deadly skin cancer

SHARI LOPATIN

TRIWEST HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

Yes, it's true—skin cancer is the most common cancer in the U.S.

That means more people get skin cancer than breast cancer, lung cancer and colon cancer. And while not all forms of skin cancer are deadly, they can disfigure your skin and cause much discomfort.

Melanoma: Watch out for it!

Melanoma is the most deadly form of skin cancer. That's because it affects skin cells called melanocytes, which add color to your skin and hair. Melanoma can spread very quickly to other tissues in your body, which is why it's deadly.

A government study published recently showed that while most common cancers are declining, cases of melanoma are

increasing. Experts attribute this rise to the use of tanning beds, which is very dangerous to the skin.

For best results, you need to detect and treat melanoma as early as possible—and avoid tanning beds altogether.

Prevent cancer with these five tips!

Everyone knows to wear sunscreen. But beyond that, leave it to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to offer the best tips for preventing skin cancer!

To keep healthy skin in the summer sunn, seek shade, especially during midday hours, wear clothing to protect exposed skin, sport a hat to shade the face, head, ears and neck, wear sunglasses that block both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays, avoid indoor tanning.

For more healthy living tips, follow TriWest on Facebook or Twitter: Facebook.com/TriWest and Twitter.com/TriWest.

OFF-LIMITS ESTABLISHMENTS

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

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

In 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.
- 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

BATTLE OF THE CLUBS

The Combat Center clubs are facing off in pool tournaments June 6-28 from 6-9 p.m. Sign up for the challenge at your club today. Each club has a different night designated to the tournament. Players must sign up prior to each night's tournament to guarantee their position. The top two players will represent in the Battle of the Clubs finals, June 7. For more information call 830-8429 or visit mccs29palms.com.

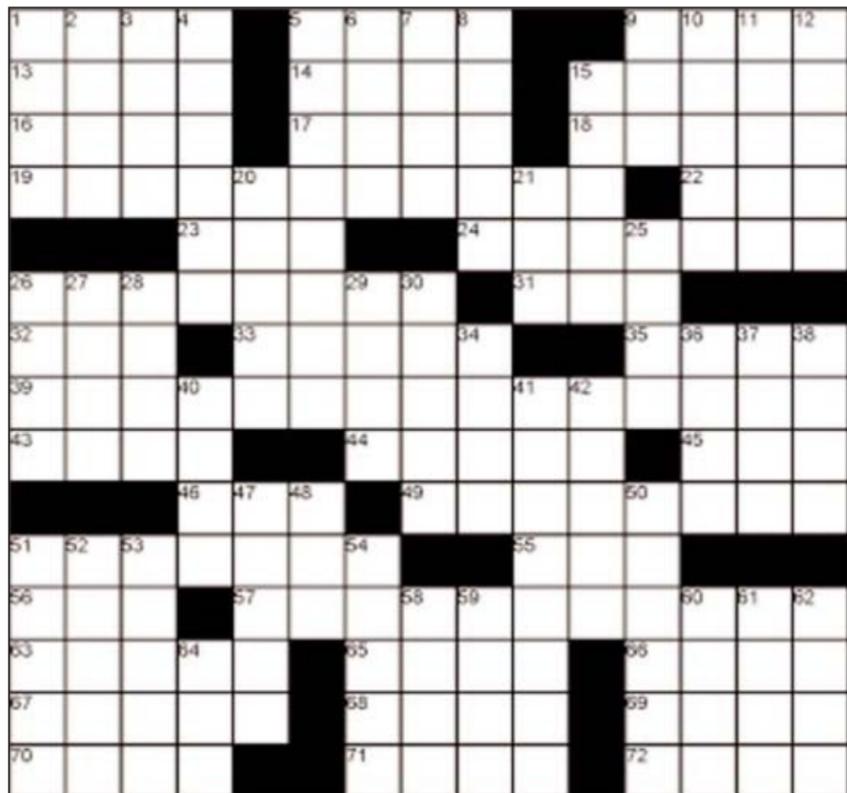
SUDOKU #2556-M

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

PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2011 HOMETOWN CONTENT

LOCK OPENERS

See answers on page A4



ACROSS

- Stick in one's ___
- Gift tag word
- Magi guide
- Sexologist Shere
- Contraption cartoonist Goldberg
- River to the Seine
- Rapper with a cool-sounding name
- Actor Ken or Lena
- "Waste not, want not," e.g.
- Student's lock opener
- Sort
- Social insect
- Prickly plants
- Unselfish one's quality
- "Go, team!"
- Neptune's domain
- Tighten, in a way
- Nave neighbor
- Thief's lock opener
- Actor Morales
- Metro entrance

DOWN

- All the rage
- Role for Edward G.
- "Up and ___"
- Home mixologist's spot
- Crockett's milieu
- Actress Lenska
- Postmortem bio
- "___ Black" (1997 sci-fi flick)
- In a blue funk
- ___ mix (gorp)
- Every conniver has one
- Needs a bath badly
- Devil ray
- Accustom to hardship
- Anthem contraction
- Asian cuisine
- Tennis's Arthur ___ Stadium
- Rural tracts
- Author Janowitz
- Boarding pts.
- Diner freebies

ACROSS

- Cut and paste
- "Hey, over here!"
- County center
- "Blondie" tyke
- Yogi had a hand in it
- Former 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue family
- Sun: Prefix
- Alley-clearing button
- Rorschach test stuff
- Cause of extreme weather
- Helen of Troy's abductor
- Nitrous ___ (laughing gas)
- Extend, in a way
- Not very hot
- Plumb crazy
- MBA subj.
- Have down pat
- Earth Day subj.
- Wags one's tongue
- W-2 ID

Relax with the paper

Wednesdays and Saturdays with the Hi-Desert Star
Thursdays with The Desert Trail
Fridays with The Observation Post

Hi-Desert Publishing Co.
Your community newspapers working to serve you better

OBSERVATION POST

- Commanding General** - Brig. Gen. George W. Smith Jr.
Public Affairs Officer - Capt. Nick Mannweiler
Deputy Public Affairs Officer - 1st Lt. Sin Y. Carrano
Public Affairs Chief - Gunnery Sgt. Leo A. Salinas
Press Chief/Editor - Cpl. Sarah Dietz
Layout, Design - Lance Cpl. Lauren Kurkimilis

- Correspondents**
 Sgt. Heather Golden
 Cpl. William J. Jackson
 Lance Cpl. D. J. Wu
 Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi
 Diane Durden

The Observation Post is published by Hi-Desert Publishing, a private firm in no way connected with the Department of Defense or the United States Marine Corps, under exclusive written contract with the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. This commercial enterprise newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the military services. Contents of the Observation Post are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the United States government, the DOD, or the United States Marine Corps. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts and supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the DOD or Hi-Desert Publishing of the services advertised.

Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation, or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. Editorial content is prepared by the Public Affairs Office, MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif. 92278. All photos, unless otherwise indicated are Official USMC Photos. Questions can be directed to the Public Affairs Office, located in building 1417, during normal working hours at 830-6213 or FAX 830-5474. The Observation Post is made with 60 percent recycled paper.

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

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

THE RESTAURANTEUR

Carl Schuch

DiCarlo's restaurant owner,
Philadelphia, Pa., 74

INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY
LANCE CPL. LAUREN KURKIMILIS

May 30, 2012

> **It's Carl Schuch, pronounced 'shook',** like I'm all shook up.
> **Originally, I'm from Philadelphia.** I'm not a fan of the Eagles though, I'm a Miami fan, I don't know why.
> **My grandmother**

had a restaurant in Philadelphia for about 50 years. It was actually one of the largest seafood restaurants on the west coast. It could seat 295 people.

> **I worked at the restaurant** from the time I was 12 until I was 22. She put me through college until I joined the service.

> **I was in the Army for 10 years.** I became a warrant officer and flew in the 101st Airborne.

> **After I joined, I said I would** never ever get in to the restaurant business. Then after I retired, my wife and I bought an Italian restaurant down in Rancho Mirage. Go figure.

> **We used to drive** out here from Rancho Mirage and feed the Marines coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan. So when this building out here became available, MCCA asked us if we would like to bring a restaurant to the base.

> **Do I like living** out here in 29 Palms? Well, I still live in my house out in Bermuda Palms Country Club, but I also have a house out here. I get the best of both worlds.

> **DiCarlo is not a family name.** My wife actually made it up. Her name is Delia and mine is Carl, so she came up with DiCarlo's. Smart girl huh?

> **She's so smart, the** week after we got married, I got rid of all the encyclopedias in the house because I found out she knew everything.

> **We both came up with the recipes,** and she cooks here most weeknights. She's a great cook.

> **My wife is Cuban** and I'm German, so she has been known to make some really great Cuban and German cuisine also.

> **We've been married** for just a short time. On July 19 it will be 40 years.

> **My favorite dish to cook is baked** mostaccioli. It's our signature item. It's pretty much like a lasagna but with a different noodle.

> **Oh, don't ask** me how to spell mostaccioli.

> **We cut our own veal** and we cut our own chicken here. Just about everything is prepped here and not cooked elsewhere.

> **The difference between the two** restaurants is these guys and girls out here like to eat. I mean, when they come here, they eat a lot of food. So our portions are a little bit bigger out here at this location.

> **I came up with a creamy garlic** salad dressing that we make here and people really seem to like it. I'm working on one right now that's a jalapeno ranch, but I haven't perfected it yet.

> **No, I won't tell you how** to make the perfect cannoli. It's a secret. You'll love it, but I don't tell anyone the recipe.

> **We really get some good singers** on our karaoke nights. You wouldn't believe it. We also get some that are pretty bad, but that's what it's all about, having fun.

> **And yes, I do sing occasionally.** I'll sing Frank Sinatra, Johnny Cash and Jimmy Buffet. I try to pick out songs that everyone likes and sings and then I pass out microphones. Everyone has a great time.

> **I've come in on a Saturday** morning and seen six or seven cars still in the parking lot. If you've been drinking, we will not let you drive home. Even if I have to drop you off myself.

> **What happens at DiCarlo's,** stays at DiCarlo's.

> **I love being** on the Marine base. A lot of people don't realize what Marines do for us, so it just feels good to do something nice for them.



MENTOR, from A1

enemy fighters, identifying cash sites and identifying IED locations.”

Easter noted the ANSF's ability to understand the situation and the need to receive the proper training necessary to accomplish their mission.

“The ANSF have received us with open arms,” Easter said. “We were fortunate enough to come in after 3rd Bn., 7th Marines, which did an excellent job at helping pave a way for us to follow. We just picked up where they left off.”

Easter said the ANSF have been very productive thus far and understand the purpose of Animal Co., and the need for them to be prepared to assume command of their country.



LANCE CPL. MARK GARCIA

A Marine with Animal Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, speaks to Afghan children during an Afghan National Army-led patrol May 27.

The first rule is...

■ Combat Center Marines practice hand-to-hand fighting

[Top, right] Pfc. Levi Hernandez, infantryman, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, performs a figure four variation rear choke technique on Lance Cpl. Brandon Edrington, infantryman, 1/7, while the group practices Marine Corps Martial Arts Program gray belt techniques May 14.

[Right] Pfc. Robert Perez, Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear technician, 1/7, performs a wristlock technique on Lance Cpl. Brandon Edrington, infantryman, 1/7, while the group practices MCMAP gray belt techniques.

[Below, left] Lance Cpl. Shawn Pike, infantryman, 1/7, puts Cpl. Christopher Walton, wrecker operator, 1/7, in an arm bar, while the group practices MCMAP green belt techniques before they test for their next belt.

[Below, right] Cpl. Mark Weimer, motor transport mechanic, 1/7, battles to get himself out of the guard, held by Cpl. Christopher Walton, wrecker operator, 1/7, while the group practices MCMAP green belt techniques before they test for their next belt.



SAM BURKE

EMILY UNGER



SAM BURKE



SAM BURKE

Brothers in Arms

Corpsmen rescue wounded Marine during firefight

Story and photo by Cpl. Kenneth Jasik, Regimental Combat Team 6, Musa Qa'leh District, Afghanistan

When the Marines reached the hilltop, they knew it was going to be a rough day.

They had already taken fire, and they were patrolling in an area that coalition forces had rarely been since the decade-long war began.

At the top of the hill, the Marines took fire from insurgents when one of their brothers was wounded.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Eduardo D. Estrada, hospital corpsman, Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, along with two other hospital corpsmen, helped save the life of 1st Lt. Michael Rhoads, a forward observer, who was shot in the torso, April 15.

The Marine was wounded during Operation Lariat, a mission to cut off insurgent supply routes. The Marines were going to investigate suspicious compounds, but started taking fire when they got near the village.

"Right before they called 'corpsman up,' the insurgents started walking shots on us, and they started impacting about three feet from us," said Estrada, 24, from Tucson, Ariz. "At the time, I was thinking 'I really want to get out of here.'"

Rhoads, who was hit by a bullet ricochet in the shoulder, was under the treatment of two other corpsmen when Estrada reached him. Petty Officer 3rd Class Nathan K. Bracey and Petty Officer 2nd Class Shan Datugan were the first on the scene.

"When they called for the corpsman, I was right there, and we pulled him off the line," said Bracey, 24, from Athens, Texas. "He was in shock already. When I saw the entrance wound, I applied an occlusive dressing (an air-tight bandage) and another one to the exit wound on his back."

The corpsmen applied the bandages with the relentless crack of rounds overhead.

After applying an airtight bandage to Rhoads' damaged chest cavity, the three corpsmen saw his vital signs drop and knew there was more work to do.

"In the second assessment, we saw his skin was pale, cool and clammy," said Estrada. "We stuck him with a needle once, and a small amount of blood came out. That was when we knew he had a hemopneumothorax."

Still under enemy fire, the corpsmen needed to empty Rhoads' chest cavity. Blood and air leaked out of Rhoads' lungs and into his chest, taking up the space his lungs needed to fill with air. They stuck him a second time hoping to cure his hemopneumothorax. They got the same result.

"Then I went ahead and did it a third time," said Estrada. "His vitals went up, including his pulse and breathing rate."

It was a short wait for the medical evacuation helicopter to take Rhoads to safety and a higher level treatment center.

"At that point I was trying to coach him, keep him calm as possible. We asked him questions such as who the president was, and he got all of them right."

Rhoads survived and is now recovering in Southern California.

"Once we got him to the bird, I knew he would make it," said Estrada. "We had done everything we could do, and we rendered the appropriate treatment for his wounds."

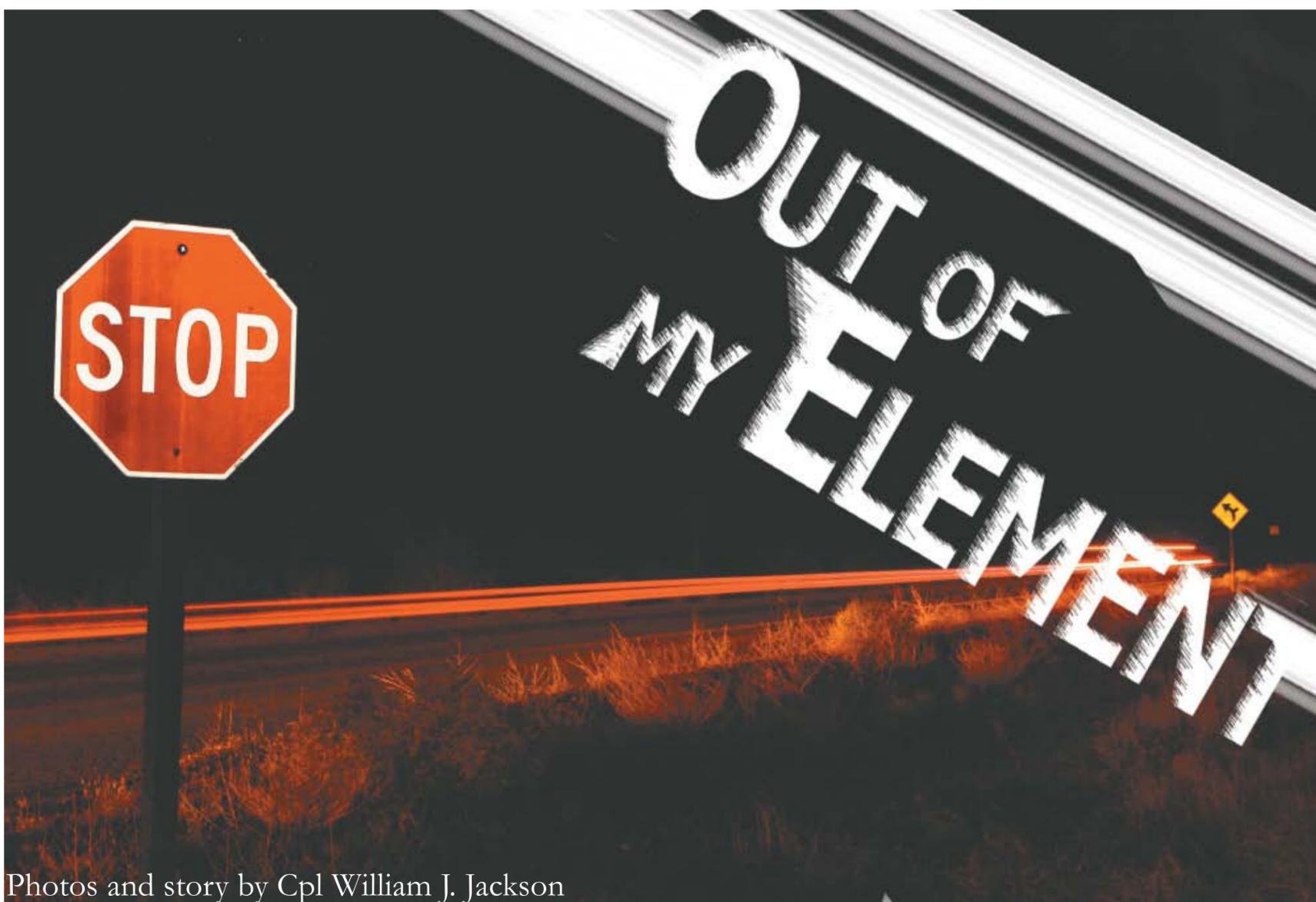
Rhoads is thankful for the corpsmen who helped save his life.

"It's nice to know I helped save his life," said Estrada. "He called and thanked all the corpsmen."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Second Battalion, 5th Marines is a part of Regimental Combat Team 6. RCT-6 falls under 1st Marine Division (Forward), which heads Task Force Leatherneck. The task force serves as the ground combat element of Regional Command (Southwest) and works in partnership with the Afghan National Security Force and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to conduct counterinsurgency operations.



Petty Officer 3rd Class Eduardo D. Estrada, hospital corpsman, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, along with two other hospital corpsmen, helped save the life of 1st Lt. Michael Rhoads, a forward observer, who was shot in the torso, April 15. Estrada, 24, stuck three needles into Rhoads to empty blocked space in his chest cavity, helping to save his life.



Photos and story by Cpl William J. Jackson

2 days, 10 hours, and all I got were these two photos

The moon was bright and it illuminated the desert landscape around us. Cars raced by in the distance as the distinct pop of the camera's flash echoed on the rocks at my back. The cold was setting in and the night had just begun. 'This is going to be harder than I expected' I told myself.

It was ten o'clock and the sun had set in Joshua Tree National Park. It was the first of what turned out to be a two-night photo adventure in Joshua Tree. We didn't really plan anything out. Actually, the only plan was to take photographs of the park at night. Which turned out to be more difficult than I originally thought.

For someone who shoots more video than take photographs I jumped at the chance to go photograph JTNP. I'm an avid hiker, camper and I love the outdoors but I've never brought my camera. I felt overwhelmed and out of my element in a place I would normally call my element. I pushed the feelings aside because we had just pulled up to our first hurdle.

The small group of rocks near Lost Horse Mine was a great place to stop. I had shot this scene before, months ago, just for fun with no tripod, flash or any clue as to what I should be doing. I was lit-

erally just pulling the trigger and seeing what comes out.

That is exactly what it was like Saturday night, except this time I had a tripod.

It wasn't more than a half hour at this spot before we picked up and went. We planned some of our best shots at that spot. Before I knew it, it was 1 a.m. so we headed back home with a few shots that would work.

The park is different at night. It's more serene. Time seems to drift by rather than rush at full speed.

Day two was something else. This time the plan was more grounded, it had some thought behind it. Hike Ryan Mountain and shoot the city lights.

I bummed around all day before the photo shoot. I knew that if I was going to get up that mountain at night with a 30-pound lens, full backpack and a tripod I would need to pretend to be ready.

7 p.m. hit and we set through the park towards the glooming stairs that lead to the trailhead of Ryan Mountain. That was the destination but it wasn't the only stop.

Through the North entrance of the park there were all the amazing rock formations. We stopped on the side and

trekked a good ten minutes into the desert before we hit the boulders.

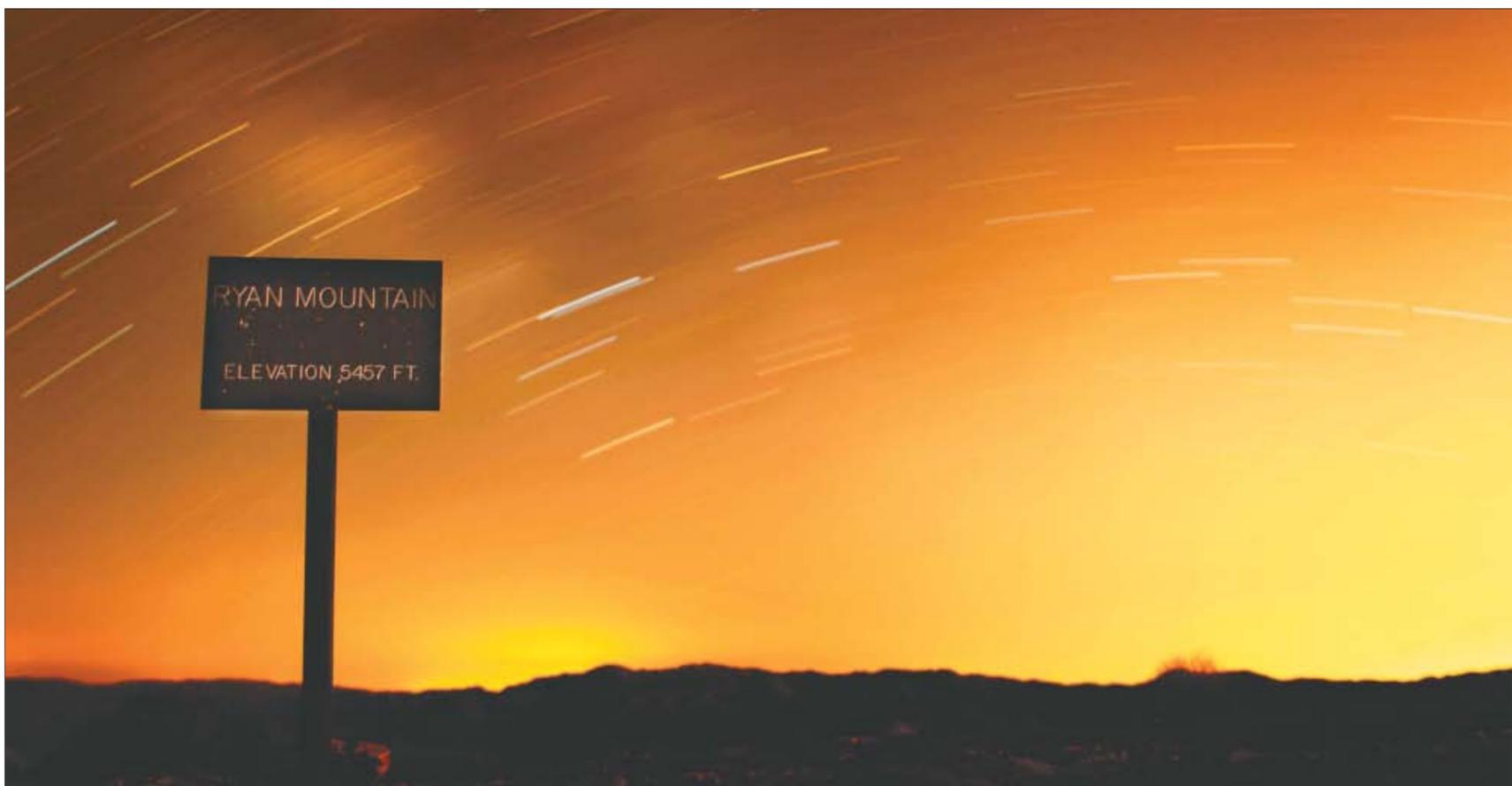
The stop made me realize that I'd rather be hiking and climbing than taking photos. At least I knew how to hike and climb. Again I pushed the thoughts aside because we had hit the parking lot at the base of Ryan Mountain.

I pushed first. The moon was bright again so I turned off my flashlight and climbed with the moonlight. Every now and then a light from my boss's flash surrounded the area.

I walked without a purpose. I was just there taking in everything.

The stars were burnt into the blackness of the night sky and I couldn't look away. The crickets were singing in the distance. My boots were hitting the ground in rhythm with the crickets. The clanking of my camera gear brought me back to reality.

In the end I wasn't really there for work. What really mattered is I found a place to relax. I got away from the burdens of life, so they say, for a few minutes. It took another night that strangely wandered off until 2 a.m., stress and more work than I thought but it reminded me of why I chose to be a journalist.





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.mcsc29palms.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.

Kate-Miller Heidke

Soloist visits pioneer town
When: 8 p.m., Thursday, June 7
Where: Pappy and Harriets Pioneertown Palace
53688 Pioneertown Rd., Poinneertown, Calif.
For more information, call 365-5956

Lower Desert

Credence Clearwater Revisited

Famous artist takes the stage
When: 9 p.m., Friday, June 1
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit
<http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Jon Secada

90s contemporary soloist, latin pop artist
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, June 16
Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit
<http://www.spotlight29.com>.

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.morongocasinosresort.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, June 1

6 p.m. - The Three Stooges, Rated PG
9 p.m. - The Lucky One, Rated PG-13
Midnight - Lockout, Rated PG-13

Saturday, June 2

10:30 a.m. - **Free Matinee** Cars 2, Rated G
12:30 p.m. - The Three Stooges, Rated PG
3 p.m. - The Pirate, Band of Misfits 3D, Rated PG
6 p.m. - The Hunger Games, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. - American Reunion, Rated R
Midnight - Cabin in the Woods, Rated R

Sunday, June 3

12:30 p.m. - The Pirate, Band of Misfits, Rated PG
3 p.m. - The Lucky One, Rated PG-13
6 p.m. - The Pirate, Band of Misfits 3D, Rated PG
9 p.m. - The Five Year Engagement, Rated R

Monday, June 4

7 p.m. - American Reunion, Rated R

Tuesday, June 5

7 p.m. - The Hunger Games, Rated PG-13

Wednesday, June 6

5:30 p.m. - The Lucky One, Rated PG-13
8:30 p.m. - Cabin in the Woods, Rated R

Thursday, June 7

No movies scheduled

Aliens attack in spin-off of classic board game



COURTESY PHOTO

We're under attack from outer space again. And this time it's the U.S. Navy to the rescue in "Battleship," a big-budget blast-o-rama based on the classic Hasbro board game.

NEIL POND

"Battleship"

Starring Liam Neeson, Taylor Kitsch & Brooklyn Decker
Directed by Peter Berg
131 min., PG-13

It's summer, and you know what that means: We're under attack from outer space again! And this time it's the U.S. Navy to the rescue in "Battleship," a big-budget blast-o-rama based on the classic Hasbro board game.

"Based on" is a pretty loose term. Admittedly, it's been a few years since I sat down to a game of Battleship, on my side of the little blue flip-up pegboard with my little plastic missile plugs and little plastic ships. But I don't recall the game having anything to do with a humongous alien spacecraft crash-landing in the Pacific and a mad international sea scam-

ble to save the planet.

In the leap from tabletop to theatre screen, the story also takes on a gruff Navy admiral (Liam Neeson); his daughter, a beautiful physical therapist (Brooklyn Decker); and the cocky young lieutenant who wants to marry her (Taylor Kitsch).

Director Peter Berg, who developed the book "Friday Night Lights" into a successful movie then a hit TV series, stirs a tidal pool of other actors, including pop star Rihanna; Hamish Linklater from "The New Adventures of Old Christine"; Alexander Skarsgård from TV's "True Blood"; and Tadanobu Asano, who's considered Japan's Johnny Depp back in his home country.

Berg himself even pops in front of the camera for a quick cameo as a gunner.

One of the most compelling characters isn't even an

actor, actually. He's a real-life decorated war hero, U.S. Army Lt. Col. Greg Gradsen, who lost both legs at the knees in Iraq in 2007. His debut performance as a wounded vet who helps save the planet leads to one of the movie's most rousing, mano-a-mano alien smackdowns.

The big cast causes some problems, however. There's just not enough for everyone to do. Neeson's admiral misses out on the action entirely, left to snarl on the sidelines. Another star gets killed off early; that's one way to cut down on competition for camera time. Decker gets to drive a Jeep into a thicket of aliens, but otherwise she's mostly around as window dressing and romantic seasoning.

The clutter extends everywhere. So does the clatter, a clangy, anchors-aweight bombast of special-effects whoosh and wallop, ka-booming

explosions and dumb action-movie dialogue. "I've got a bad feeling about this," says Kitch's Lt. Hopper. "An end-of-the-world bad feeling."

The deep-space exterminators, who've traveled light years in a flash, arrive in a vessel that can morph into different shapes, disappear beneath the waves or zip through the air. They can throw up a force field to seal themselves in and everything else out. So why are their most sophisticated weapons only a few notches above medieval catapults?

The aliens score early, and big — Hong Kong takes a major hit, thousands die, the ocean becomes a war zone. Will the Earth survive? I think we all know the answer. The real question is just how long a titanic tub of computer-generated catastrophe like "Battleship" can stay afloat in a long, hot summer with more big movies to come.



The summer season officially begins on June 21 and is rapidly approaching, which brings along an increase in activities such as barbecues, parties, traveling, swimming, boating, cycling, hiking, and camping to name a few. The onset of summer also brings with it the 101 Critical Days of Summer Campaign, which runs from Memorial Day, May 28 to Labor Day, Sept. 30. During the 101 Critical Days of Summer Campaign, units and organizations are asked to provide their Marines and Sailors with the tools and training necessary to help them participate in their summer recreational activities in a safe and responsible manner.

TIPS

For Vehicle Safety

- ★ Never drink and drive
- ★ Start every trip well rested
- ★ Drive during daylight hours
- ★ Schedule breaks every two hours
- ★ Pull over if you get tired, better to be late than not at all
- ★ Use the Travel Risk Planning system (TRIPS) for your travels

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day 2011

31

Marines and sailors across the Marine Corps and Navy were killed

11

Fatalities involved cars and trucks,

13

involved motorcycles

After spiking in 2008, summer fatalities decreased in 2009 and 2010, but unfortunately increased in 2011. **Motorcycle fatalities increased from 6 in 2010 to 13 in 2011** for more than a 100% increase. Let's work together towards a common goal and bring the number back down in 2012.

TRIPS is an easy online survey that helps you recognize and reduce travel risks. Leadership involvement is a key element. TRIPS is available at the USMC Safety Division (SD) website, <http://www.marines.mil/unit/safety/Pages/welcome.aspx>.

All Marines who ride motorcycles must take the Basic Riders Course. All sport bike riders must take the Military Sport-bike Rider Course within 120 days after completing the BRC. All cruiser/other riders must take the Experienced Rider Course within 120 days after completing the BRC and all Marine riders must take a refresher course every three years. All Marines who operate a dirt bike or an all terrain vehicle on or off base must take the appropriate safety training course. Training is available at the base Safety Division.