



# OBSERVATION POST



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## CID cracks down on synthetic drugs

**Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi**  
Combat Correspondent

The Combat Center's Criminal Investigation Division is cracking down on the use, purchase and sales of synthetic drugs such as bath salts and spice.

The CID is responsible for investigating all criminal violations and instances that the Department of Defense has a vested interest. One of the most pressing concerns is narcotic-related offenses.

As part of their crack down on the problem, the division has implemented narcotic interdiction operations to help fight crime before it actually happens.

"We try to be as proactive as possible," said Michael A. Bonilla, investigations officer, Criminal Investigation Division. "As part of our mission we recognize that spice and bath salts are a problem among active duty personnel and our number one goal is deterrence."

These operations include a surveillance program targeting all of the off-limit establishments in the Morongo Basin area. These establishments, mainly smoke shops, are identified by the Combat Center Armed Forces Disciplinary Review Board and the CID as known sellers of synthetic drugs and derivatives banned by the DOD and the Marine Corps.

Agents monitor the establishments. Service members violating the off-limits order and caught with possession of the banned substances are detained and processed in accordance with DOD directives and federal law.

Violations of the off-limits order result in a minor offense report, which is left up to the

See **CID** page A11

# FINALLY Home

■ Company A returns from successful seven-month deployment

**Lance Cpl. Lauren A. Kurkimilis**  
Combat Correspondent

Marines and sailors from Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, arrived at the Combat Center Sunday after a seven-month-long deployment to Helmand province, Afghanistan.

Family, friends and fellow service members of 1st Tanks anxiously waited in the rising desert heat to welcome their loved ones home.

"That's all you really can do," said Larry Romine, father of Cpl. Orin Romine, mechanic, Co. A, 1st Tanks. "We're just looking forward to getting him home and enjoying him being around. We are so proud of him."

The deployment, while typical in duration, was extraordinary in terms of accomplishments.

"We went out on more than 400 combat missions and conducted 14 major named operations," said Capt. Gary S. Slater, company commander, Co. A, 1st Tanks. "The most important thing, however, is that we came home safely."

Co. A supported more than seven units to include 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment; 2nd Bn., 5th Marine Regiment; 1st Bn., 7th Marine Regiment; 1st Bn., 8th Marine Regiment; 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Bn.; two Georgian infantry battalions and several special operation forces.

"Our success can be attributed to the hard work and determination the men displayed while deployed and the skills developed here aboard the Combat Center during pre-deployment training," Slater said. "Expert

See **TANKS** page A11

Gunnery Sgt. Eliesel Rivera, platoon sergeant, 1st platoon, Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, is welcomed home by his wife, Marian Rivera, July 29, during a homecoming celebration at the Combat Center.



LANCE CPL. LAUREN A. KURKIMILIS



# LIVE FIRE

## 'War Dogs' take on Range 400 in EMV

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

The Marines of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, took on Range 400 in a company-sized mission in a live fire venue July 29, as part of their Enhanced Mojave Viper training.

Company F practiced fire and maneuver techniques with integrated assets like artillery and mortars supporting their infantrymen.

The company attack was on an enemy fortified position. The Marines made their way in and out of trenches using support by fire and coordination between the platoons.

"It was a big challenge for us," said 1st

Lt. Alexander Navia, platoon commander, 2nd platoon, Co. F, 2/7. "We had to contend with all of the attachments and manage between all the cross talk between the units."

Each platoon had its own objective to accomplish during the attack. Communication was a key factor in making sure the platoons were on the same page.

"Individual actions are important regardless of the size of the operation. That's what it boils down to."

- 1st Lt. Alexander Navia

"My platoon's role was to establish support by fire for both the main and secondary efforts going into the trench systems," Navia said.

An exercise of this size and complexity doesn't always go through without some difficulties.

"I think things went pretty smoothly," said Cpl. William Noonan, rifleman, 1st platoon, Co. F, 2/7. "We got tied down a few times and the only problem we were having was ammo consumption. We were burning through rounds pretty quickly."

Even with a company-sized assault, the unit stressed how important it was for individual Marines to do their part in the operation.

"Individual actions are important regardless of the size of the operation. That's what it boils down to," Navia said. "If that (private first class) or lance corporal doesn't effectively engage their targets, they don't go down, the enemy doesn't go down. The individual action

See **WAR DOGS** page A11



A Tactical Training Exercise Control Group evaluator raises his notebook to signal other members of the evaluation team July 29 during an exercise with Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment at Range 400 during Enhanced Mojave Viper.

## African allies train at MCCES

**Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi**  
Combat Correspondent

Fourteen military members from seven different African partner nations completed their final exercise in a week-long course at the Marine Corps Communications-Electronic School July 26 as part of a U. S. African Command Exchange training program.

"We've been teaching them how we operate, what we teach our students," said Staff Sgt. Christopher J. Gebo, instructor, MCCES.

Two communications officers



LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

Lt. John M. Baluo, communications officer, 2nd Signal Squadron, Ghana Army, sets up a radio antenna during the final exercise of a week-long training course, July 27 while Gunnery Sgt. Ronald A. Slone, instructor, Marine Corps Communication-Electronic School assesses.

were selected from the defense ministries of Benin, Burkina, Faso, Chad, Ghana, Mauritania, Senegal and Togo. Their course provided hands-on experience with Marine equipment and techniques.

Only two of 14 soldiers knew English well enough to communicate on their own. For the rest of the group, a translator stood by to reiterate the lessons taught by the instructors in French, a language

See **AFRICOM** page A11

# Getting into gear

## Save your skin with proper riding attire

**Frank Santiago**  
Base Safety Office

Oddly, I find that riders have a difficult time knowing what gear they should be in while they are riding. And no, I'm not talking about the gear shift lever either.

I'm talking about the appropriate personal protective equipment for riding a motorcycle. I will never understand why this is such a sore subject for riders. Some riders excel in bending the regulations and do their very best to meet the Department of Defense's minimum standards when it comes to PPE.

It's sad that some riders invest more time and money into the protection of their motorcycle than in their own safety. I've seen some outrageous, and most likely extremely expensive, frame and cage sliders installed on motorcycles while the rider rode past looking like he was on his way to a beach cookout. This happens both on and off base.

Let us examine some trends. Have we gotten so lazy that we can't even take five seconds to fasten a "D" ring helmet? I almost always receive the same excuse when I ask riders why they didn't secure their helmets. They reply, "I was only going a couple blocks away." First, I wonder why they just didn't walk if it was that close, and then I remind them that a close-by destination is statistically the most important time to fasten helmets. I learned as a teenager in driver's education that the majority of accidents occur within a few miles of a destination. I'm sure we all did.

Some riders' definitions of "long-sleeved garment" is another one I chuckle at. Sure, a long-sleeved cotton shirt is

technically within the guidelines as set forth in Marine Corps and DOD orders. But, have you ever slid across the asphalt with a cotton shirt? I haven't, but I have slid across the street with a leather jacket on, and it still didn't feel good. I couldn't imagine how much worse it would have felt without. Of course the argument is always "But it's too hot out." OK, I can agree with that. It is hot outside. But, keep in mind, road rash is still more painful than even 110-degree weather while wearing appropriate PPE.

Riders also complain about not being able to feel the controls when they ride with proper protective gloves. This may be true at first. But after time, you become proficient with them on. No matter how much practice you need before you're comfortable riding with gloves, I will guarantee one thing, you will have total feel of the ground if you slide across it without those gloves.

And to my favorite topic — proper footwear. Let's avoid trying to translate the order into technicalities and get back to basics. Use your common sense, stop trying to fight the system and put some boots on. The order is designed to protect riders, not hinder them. You can have the most high-speed riding leathers on, but it won't save your feet or ankles from being deformed after a wreck if you aren't wearing good, solid boots.

We ride motorcycles because it's fun, and we look cool doing it. Quite frankly, part of looking cool on the bike is in how good of gear you wear.

My best advice is to dress for the crash, not the ride.

# Why your referral matters

**Brian P. Smith**  
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

You went to your primary care manager and she suggested you go see a specialist. Maybe it's for an evaluation; maybe it's for a specific treatment. You just know you need to make another appointment, and you want to make it quickly.

Whether this is your first referral or your fiftieth, having all your information before making the appointment can save you time and money. Quickly start managing your referral information when you register on TriWest.com.

### What's a referral?

When you need care that your primary doctor can't provide, you will get a referral to see someone else. The request for a referral goes to TriWest Healthcare Alliance and TriWest processes the referral and matches your needed care with a local network specialist (when available). If you live near a military installation with a medical clinic, and that medical clinic offers the specialty care, you may be assigned to the military clinic for care.

### When your referral request is authorized, TriWest will let you know:

- The name and contact information of your network specialist.
- The expiration date of your referral (if you don't make your appointment within the time allowed, you may have to go back to your primary doctor for a new referral).

You contact the network specialist and make your appointment. Network providers

will submit claims to TriWest and send any results back to your primary doctor.

TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra plans don't require referrals or primary care managers. There are, however, higher out-of-pocket costs for care under those plans.

### How do I get my specialist's information?

Register for a TriWest.com account, and you will receive an email when your referral is processed — usually within a day or two of your primary doctor submitting the request. Then, you can log into your TriWest.com account to view your specialist. Go to TriWest.com/Register.

You can also choose to get a letter with your specialist information, but that could arrive 10 days after the request is made.

### Why is it important to know my assigned specialist?

If you don't go to a TRICARE network specialist (or the military clinic if you're assigned to go there), you could end up paying out-of-pocket for your care.

If you're wondering if there are network specialists near you, you can use TriWest's Provider Directory. Find providers by specialty, location or name. When you're at your desktop or laptop, go to <http://www.TriWest.com/ProviderDirectory>. When you're on the go, bookmark [m.TriWest.com](http://m.TriWest.com) in your mobile device to use the interactive provider directory.



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# 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 Shop, 5865A Adobe Rd.

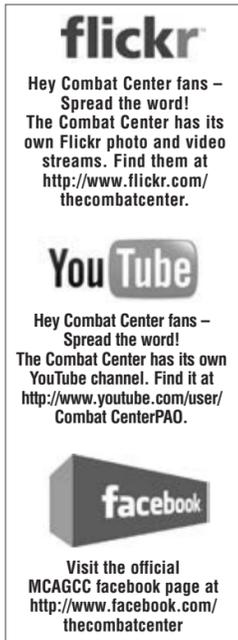
### In Yucca Valley:

- 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>



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## BEASTLY PHRASES

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### ACROSS

1. Farm prefix
5. Smoke-filled room
9. Port of Iraq
14. Serb or Croat
15. Jillions
16. Menachem's 1978 co-Nobel
17. Carroll's "slithy" thing
18. Paddy product
19. Donald Duck's girl
20. Something certain
23. Rwy. stop
24. Bobs, butches, and buzzes
25. Captain Kangaroo player Bob
27. Heartthrob of Archie
32. Part of TNT
33. Suffix with ethyl or methyl
34. Rec room game
36. Main idea
40. Obstructive sort
44. Elude
45. Clean kind of energy
46. Bard's before
47. Serpentine swimmer
50. Invoice component
52. Clutter collector
56. \_\_\_ New York minute
57. Significant time
58. Gullible one's purchase, perhaps
64. Stadium toppers
66. "You \_\_\_" (butler's line)
67. Goody-goody
68. Get a smile out of
69. Word on Irish stamps
70. Be suspended
71. Kind of printer
72. Chef's direction
73. Discontinued GM line

### DOWN

1. Nick and Nora's dog
2. Amorphous hunk
3. Sitarist Shankar
4. Take too far
5. Like the mob that stormed the Bastille
6. "Polish Wedding" star Lena
7. Ness or Lomond
8. The "turf" in surf and turf
9. Better, in street lingo
10. Santa \_\_\_ winds
11. Sound of a perfect basketball shot
12. Haile Selassie worshiper
13. Indo-\_\_\_ languages
21. Comics' orphan-boy
22. Web suffix
26. "What's your \_\_\_?"
27. Oso buco, e.g.
28. Ecto-\_\_\_ opposite
29. Vintage cars
30. Obsolete PC screens
31. A Musketeer
35. Ward of "Once and Again"
37. "\_\_\_ it!" (response to a joke)
38. Shot fluids
39. "Jurassic Park" beast, for short
41. Societal oddball
42. Avoid work
43. Pug's workplace
48. Artgum, e.g.
49. 440 yards, to a track runner
51. Poet born on Lesbos
52. Gas or clutch
53. Coffee allure
54. "The Stranger" author
55. Things to rotate
59. Trot or canter
60. Cross inscription
61. Like the Sabin vaccine
62. Warm-hearted
63. Prankster's pre-Halloween buy
65. Computer add-on



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

## WHAT I'VE LEARNED

## THE GAME CHANGER

- > **I went to preschool** and kindergarten here on base, but I grew up everywhere. My dad was a Marine.
- > **I remember being terrified** the coyotes were going to get me and that the earthquakes were going to be everywhere.
- > **My husband is a company gunny** for 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. They're out in Afghanistan right now.
- > **We met at Quantico when I was** living with my dad right when I finished college. We met at a bar. I was 28. We've been married for six months now.
- > **It's funny because growing up I** was like, "I'm never going to marry a Marine; that's crazy!" Then the first Marine I ever dated, I married.
- > **Back in 2007, I woke up** and got on a scale and realized I had gained quite a bit of weight. So I spent three or four years working out with a personal trainer. I lost a substantial amount of weight; 78 pounds, to date.
- > **I realized** the career I was heading toward was not necessarily what I wanted to do the rest of my life.
- > **Originally I wanted to be a dentist**, but then decided I didn't particularly enjoy being in people's mouths.
- > **I want to change people's lives.** My trainer helped me change my life, and I want to do that for other people.

## Jennifer Kinner

Recreation attendant  
30, Bethesda, Maryland

INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY  
**LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI**

July 31, 2012



- > **I'm currently studying to become a** trainer. I just need to finish studying and hopefully take the test in September.
- > **The best part is** the people. You get to chat with people. "How is your workout going?" Then I can start helping people instead of just making sure they're not too sweaty.
- > **It is nice to work at a gym.** On your lunch break or after work, you can just change your shirt and start working out.
- > **Sometimes after being at work all day**, the last thing you want to do is stay at work longer and work out.
- > **I'm training for** a half-marathon, hopefully one day a full marathon.
- > **It's not necessarily about when you finish**, just that you finish. That's my quote of the day.
- > **I'm a really big fan of** Real House Wives of - all of them.
- > **When he is home, he has control of** the remote. He's a two-channel-watcher, so he'll watch two movies, flipping between them on commercials. It drives me crazy.
- > **So, while he's away I** watch all my shows, like the Bachelorette. Pretty much anything reality I love.
- > **I do play video games.** I'm kind of a nerd. I like first-person shooter games like Call of Duty Modern Warfare 3. There's a new one coming out in November.
- > **I play online.** My gamertag is "vampiress1190." I have Xbox and Play Station 3, but I mostly play PS3.
- > **My husband is actually who got** me into video games. When we started dating, I would be over and he'd be playing. I'd just sit there and watch him. Eventually he started showing me how to play.
- > **At first, I started trying** to learn the buttons, my guy just spun around in circles and my husband was like, "Oh my god, you're terrible."
- > **He bought me a PS3 for Christmas one year**, and I practiced behind the scenes, because I wanted to go over there and make him super proud that I was awesome. Now it's kind of an obsession with us.
- > **I absolutely learned for him.** He says it's probably the best thing that's happened to our relationship.
- > **All of my girlfriends are like**, "MW3 is coming out, so I'm not going to have my husband for a week." I tell them to try and play. It's actually a lot of fun and super fun to play with your husband. They'll be proud like, "My woman is better than you are."
- > **We spend weekends together all the time**, but sometime we won't see each other very much because he'll be in one room and I'll play in another room. We can hear each other and say, "Yeah babe, that was awesome!"
- > **Usually we'll play online with my brother**, who is on the east coast. Me and my brother are 1,000 times closer now that we have MW3 in our lives.
- > **The day the new map comes out** we get to explore it together. God, I sound like such a nerd.
- > **It'd be awesome to** play with him while he's deployed. Like forget Skype. I don't want to Skype with you. Let's just play. I'll have to ask him if it's a possibility.

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# Sandwiches to go

Combat Center Marines offered more chow-time options

Photos and story by  
**Diane Durden**

Combat Center Marines and sailors work hard and deserve a good meal. When scheduled maintenance temporarily closed Phelps Hall dining facility last week, Sodexo Government Services and Combat Center food service provided customers with an additional lunchtime option with the use of Sodexo's Mobile Kitchen Unit.

"This is the perfect opportunity to showcase some of our other capabilities," said David Bowser, projects director, Sodexo Government Services. "It's an asset we have and additional support we can provide."

The MKU has three components, one each for prepara-

tion, cooking and serving. The device is designed to provide hot meals in a field environment, but Phelps Hall personnel used the serving trailer to prepare and distribute sub-sandwiches for lunch during the mess hall's closure.

This was the first time the Combat Center's food service personnel used the unit. A quick learning curve allowed food preparers the ability to provide high quality food.

"I love the subs," said Cpl. Reymundo Arreola, cannon crewman, Company I, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment. "They're delicious."

Arreola was one of the first customers served from the unit.

Customers had their choice of several made-to-order sandwiches. Meals include lettuce and tomato, chips, fruit and a drink.

The MKU has other capabil-

ities aside from making and serving sandwiches. When all three components are used together, the food service team can prepare and serve hot meals complete with entrees, sides and dessert.

Getting familiar with the equipment is just the first step toward Sodexo personnel being able to serve the Combat Center with use of the entire unit, Bowers said.

The unit can be deployed rapidly and is designed for long-term use.

Sodexo has used other MKUs to prepare and serve meals to firefighters in the field while fighting recent California wildfires.

"We were able to provide thousands of hot meals to firefighters in the field," Bowers said. "We want to be able to provide the same kind of support to the Combat Center."



**[Above]** A Marine signs the meal card roster, July 23 at the Mobile Kitchen Unit outside Phelps Hall. To-go lunches consisting of made-to-order sub-sandwiches, fruit, chips and a drink, were made available to the mess hall's customers during its closure last week.

**[Left]** June Richardson, area operations manager, Sodexo Government Services, assists Combat Center food service personnel with preparing lunches in the Mobile Kitchen Unit. The MKU's serving trailer was set up outside Phelps Hall to serve lunches to Marines and sailors while the mess hall was closed this week.

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# A NEW LOOK FOR AN OLD FRIEND

Thanks to a few good volunteers armed with shovels, pitch forks and rakes, the 25- by 800-foot green space area surrounding the iconic desert tortoise sculpture that has greeted visitors to downtown Joshua Tree for 42 years is ready for transformation into a garden that will showcase native, water-wise plants.

Twelve Marines from Headquarters Company, 7th Marine Regiment, and 15 civilian volunteers led by Joshua Tree Chamber of Commerce member Thomas Fjallstam worked their way from one end of Turtle Island to the other July 27. The site is adjacent to a frontage road on the south side of Twentynine Palms Highway between Sunset and Hillview Roads.

Fueled by breakfast donated by Natural Sisters Café and hydrated by water and Gatorade donated by Hospice of the Morongo Basin Thrift Shop, it took the group less than two hours to fill bags with trash, weeds and non-native vegetation, move rocks and rake sand.

The volunteers also spent another hour and a half removing weeds and picking up trash next to the businesses on the other side of the parking lot.

"This is actually two root systems," Lance Cpl. John Hansen of Eau Claire, Wis., said to Pfc. William Marin of Tracy, Calif., as they strategized a plan to remove two tree trunks connected by one stubborn main root.

About 10 minutes and one wooden shovel casualty later, the pair achieved their goal and quickly removed the trunks.

"It's really satisfying to see an obstacle and get around it," Hansen said before taking out some weeds. "I was really happy when I heard we were going to be doing landscaping and yard work."

Further west, Lance Cpl. Brandon Wayne of Gallatin, Mo.,

spoke as he cleared vegetation around Myrtle, a sculpture of a desert tortoise created by area pioneer Willis Keys in the 1950s and rebuilt by renowned Joshua Tree artist Howard Pierce before it was installed in the center of Turtle Island in 1971.

"Growing up, we always did service projects with my church, so when the Marine Corps offers them I like to do them," he said.

Like Wayne and the other Marines working at the site, Lance Cpl. Poli Baltazar of Chicago is no stranger to community service projects. He's volunteered for several Armed Services YMCA projects aboard the Combat Center, but the cleanup was his first off base.

"I just like getting out there," he said of why he volunteers. "At the end of the day, it feels good knowing that you helped."

As the group representing Joshua Tree, Landers, Twentynine Palms and Yucca Valley prepared to take a photo with Myrtle, Fjallstam lauded the Marines for their contribution to the project.

"The Marines are a big part of the community. It's really exciting to see them involved," he said as he surveyed the cleanup results. "This is super-beautiful. It already looks a hundred times better."

Over the next few months, contractors and chamber volunteers will install concrete curbs, place boulders, and plant native bushes and trees at the site, chamber president Eva Soltes said.

The boulders and many of the plants used in the project, funded through a \$50,000 grant from San Bernardino County 3rd District Supervisor Neil Derry's office, have been donated.

Designed to capture the essence of nearby Joshua Tree National Park, the garden will mirror a similar one created by Joshua Basin Water District, Soltes said, noting that a dedication ceremony is tentatively planned for mid-October.

Soltes said she wasn't sure if Myrtle will get a much-needed facelift as part of the project or if it will be saved for a later date.

Myrtle the Turtle never had it so good...

**Story and Photo by**

Kelly O'Sullivan



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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>

# 'First Team' trains Afghan police

**Photos and story by Cpl. Mark Garcia**  
Regimental Combat Team 6

FORWARD OPERATING BASE JACKSON, Afghanistan — As Afghans assume more security responsibilities in southern Afghanistan, Marines are focused on training Afghans who want to protect their districts and villages.

In the Sangin district of Helmand province, Marines from Police Advisor Team 2, Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6, are training new Afghan police officers by creating and facilitating an Afghan Local Police academy.

The academy is located at Kashty Lara, an Afghan Uniformed Police compound near Forward Operating Base Jackson.

During the three-week course, future police officers train in the basics

of patrolling, vehicle and personnel searches, checkpoints, escalation of force, detainee procedures, marksmanship and Afghan law. After completing training, the new ALP are stationed at patrol bases in their hometowns.

"I have learned a lot during this course, and I appreciate the Marines helping us," said Hasti Mohammed, ALP trainee, from Kajaki district. "I wanted to become a police officer because I want to be able to provide peace and security for my people and for myself."

Even though the training schedule is compressed because of time restraints, 1st Lt. Jeff Schuele, officer-in-charge, PAT 2, from Troy, Mich., said he has noticed a difference in the Afghans from when they first arrive at the academy to when they graduate.

"You see improvement in their discipline from when they first get here," Schuele said. "The biggest

change though is in their knowledge. We all do some practical exercises, and they actually know what they're doing without us having to really tell them anything."

Schuele also said the success of the ALP rests on individual Afghans receiving the training.

"The most important thing is their desire to keep their village safe. If they want it, then they'll listen and they'll learn," Schuele said. "We give them tests throughout the course, and they've done well on the tests. So they have been retaining the knowledge, which is good to see."

Mohammed sees his service with the ALP as his duty, saying Afghans need to work together to reclaim their country.

"Every man must stand hand-in-hand and shoulder-to-shoulder in order to make our country better and provide peace and security for our people."



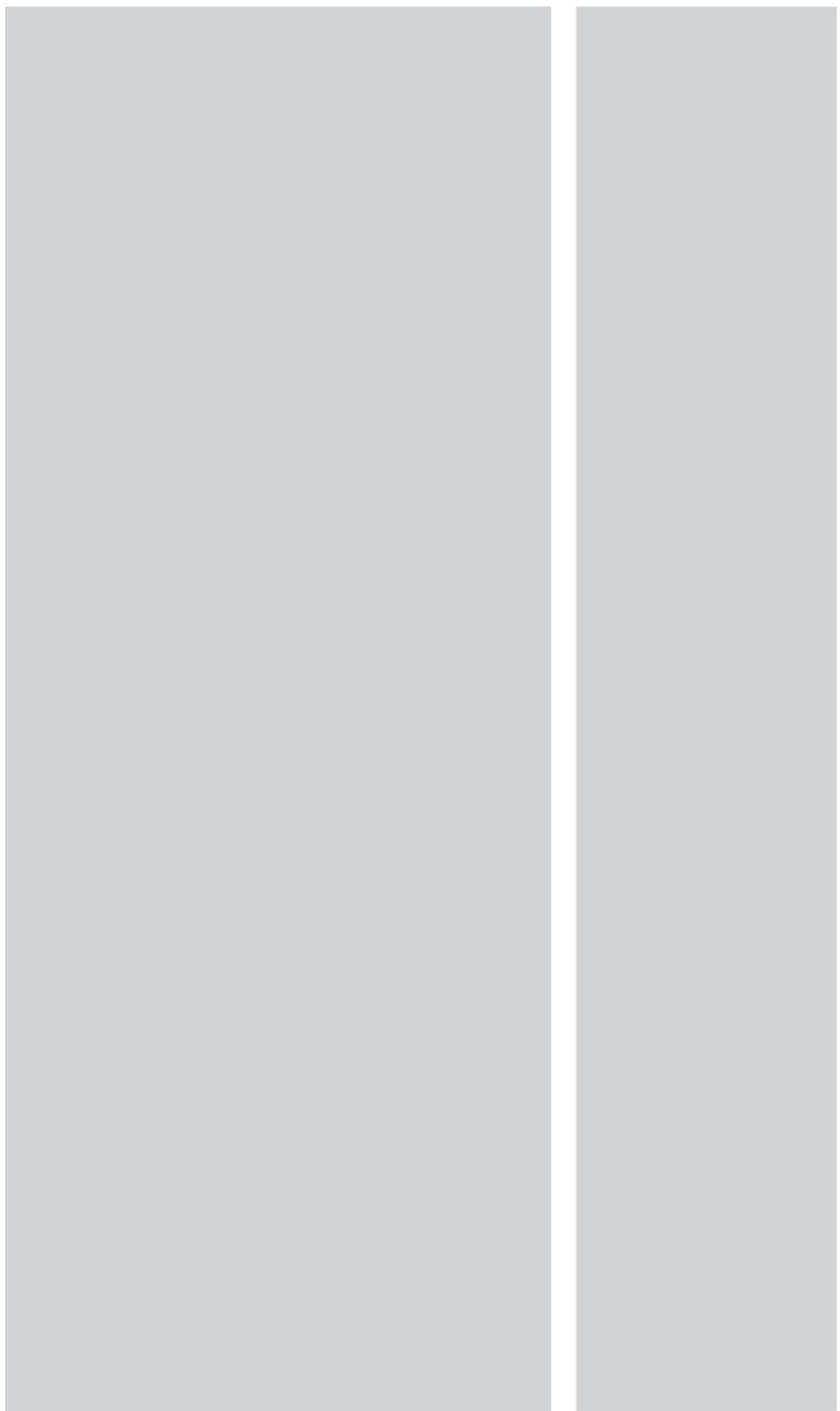
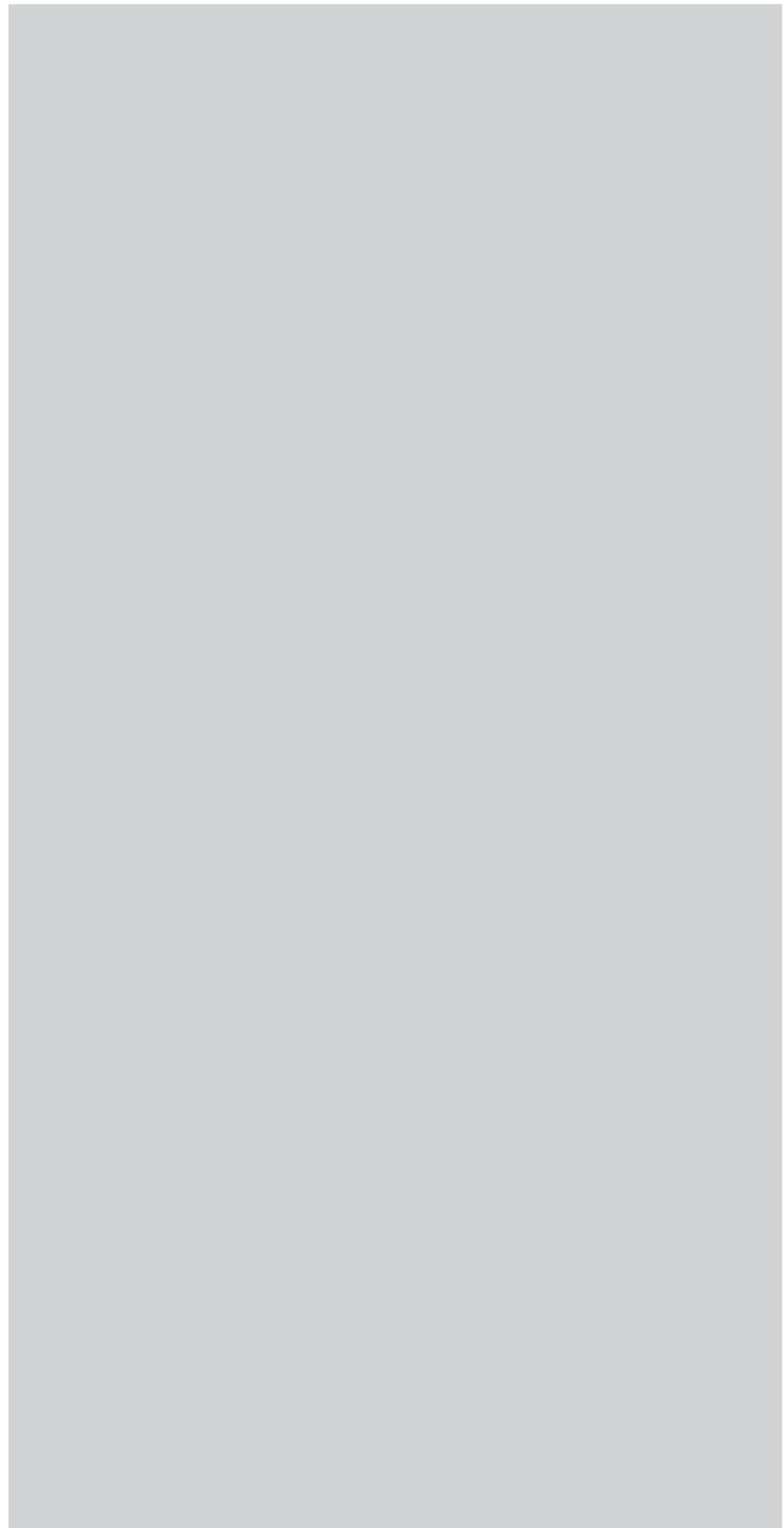
**[Top]** Afghans training to become Afghan Local Police conduct a partnered patrol with Marines with Police Advisor Team 2, Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6, in the Sangin district of Helmand province as their final exercise before graduation July 16.

**[Left]** Hasti Mohammed, ALP trainee, talks to local Afghan children in the Sangin district of Helmand province during a partnered patrol with Marines as part of a final exercise before graduation July 16.

**[Above, right]** Afghans training to become ALP stand by during roll call before starting training July 3 in the Sangin district of Helmand province, July 3.



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**TANKS, from A1**

coordination with the units we supported allowed us to be superior on the battlefield. The Corps' greatest asset against the enemy is the Marine-tank infantry team."

"Alpha Co. has done absolutely phenomenal work in Afghanistan," said Lt. Col. Gregory T. Poland, commanding officer, 1st Tank Battalion. "Capt. Slater and his Marines definitely set the standard over there and met the expectations that our leadership needs from tankers in a combat zone. They absolutely have reinforced the importance of the tank-infantry team."

Co. A swept through several towns and cities in Musa Qaleh, Kajaki, Washir, Now Zad, Sangin, Reg-e Khan Neshin, Dishu and NAGR-e Saraj districts.

"We really put a hurt on the Taliban," Slater said. "I could not be prouder or more humbled by the performance of the Marines in this company. They made the most of the opportunities they had out there. Throughout Helmand province, the few Taliban insurgents that have survived contact with a Marine tank company have a painful awareness that there is nothing more lethal than an M1A1 Main Battle Tank crewed by Marines from 1st Tank Battalion."



CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Friends and family of Company A, 1st Tank Battalion cheer as the buses holding their loved ones pull up July 29, at a homecoming event held at the Combat Center.

**WAR DOGS, from A1**

of the Marine doesn't go away just because we have big guns. Big guns only help the mission, they don't take care of the whole mission for you."

The Marines of Co. F are halfway through their pre-deployment training at EMV. They will look back on Range 400 and see what they can do to improve themselves for the rest of the training ahead.

"We're two weeks into EMV now. The Marines are a little tired and we're getting back today for a little break," Navia said. "We'll be back out in a couple of days and finish out the second half of EMV and then go to the big show."

**AFRICOM, from A1**

common across their nations.

"I've been in contact with all of them through their interpreter," Gebo said. "Other than that there hasn't been too much of a language barrier."

The officers United States visit started with a stop at Fort Gordon, Ga, where they took a similar week-long communications course. After a week with U.S. Army soldiers, they traveled to the Combat Center.

Their course with the Marines was more hands-on, incorporating a greater amount of practical application than they had received at Fort Gordon, said Gebo.

The foreign service members were afforded the opportunity to set up and use radio communications on their own using Marine Corps equipment.

"I think it's important to get this training," said Ghana Army Lt. John M. Baluo, com-

munications officer, 2nd Signal Squadron. "It really gives us great exposure to have access to this technology."

The main points of the course taught them to establish, operate, sustain and maintain communications in a combat environment.

"They're very inquisitive," Gebo said. "They want to learn everything. They want to know everything."

Prior to the course, the officers were familiar with High Frequency radios but lacked experience with Very High Frequency and Ultra High Frequency systems. Towards the end of the course, all that was changed.

"I've been exposed to new networks of communications and the possibilities with satellite communication," Baluo continued. "It has helped broaden my horizon in general."

Between their time learning about the radio systems and how to set up antennas,

the officers spent time with Marines, getting in some physical training and getting to know each other better. In the midst of conversation, a Marine and two of the officers learned they were from the same country and spoke the same language.

Pfc. Folly Kangnigan, student, MCCES, was originally born in Togo, moving to the U.S. when he was 12 years old.

"He asked what's my name, and I said 'Folly Kangnigan.' He's like 'Oh, that's from this part,'" said Kangnigan.

Kangnigan and the officers went from speaking English, to French and finally to Ewe.

"I was afraid to talk to them at first, but after I did I regretted not doing it earlier," Kangnigan said.

After a week with Combat Center Marines, the officers returned home July 27, better prepared to operate alongside their Marine partners in future coalition missions.

**CID, from A1**

command of the service member for disciplinary action. Those caught with synthetic drugs will face severe consequences following a criminal investigation.

In the five months the surveillance program has been in effect, it has resulted in approximately 50 minor offense reports issued, more than a dozen criminal investigations and 14 to 16 suspects being charged with Articles 92 or 112(a) of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

"It's definitely been very successful," Bonilla said. "We are very pleased with our agents out on the streets making the apprehensions."

Following their detention, a criminal investigation is ensued, which can lead to further problems for violators.

"Usually when a criminal investigation

is initiated it's not a single violation. It usually becomes multiple violations under the UCMJ," Bonilla said. "We've caught people with stolen property in addition to possession of spice, and that just adds on to their legal problems."

It is a common practice that Marines caught in possession of banned substances are processed for administrative separation from the Corps, Bonilla continued. Once a criminal investigation is initiated, it also creates a criminal report on their record which follow them into the civilian world.

In some cases, those caught with large quantities of spice or bath salts have served considerable jail time.

"Marines need to know they are being watched," Bonilla said. "If they are engaged in any type of illegal activity, they are going to get caught sooner or later."

**SUDOKU SOLUTIONS**

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8	4	9	7	1	5	3	2	6
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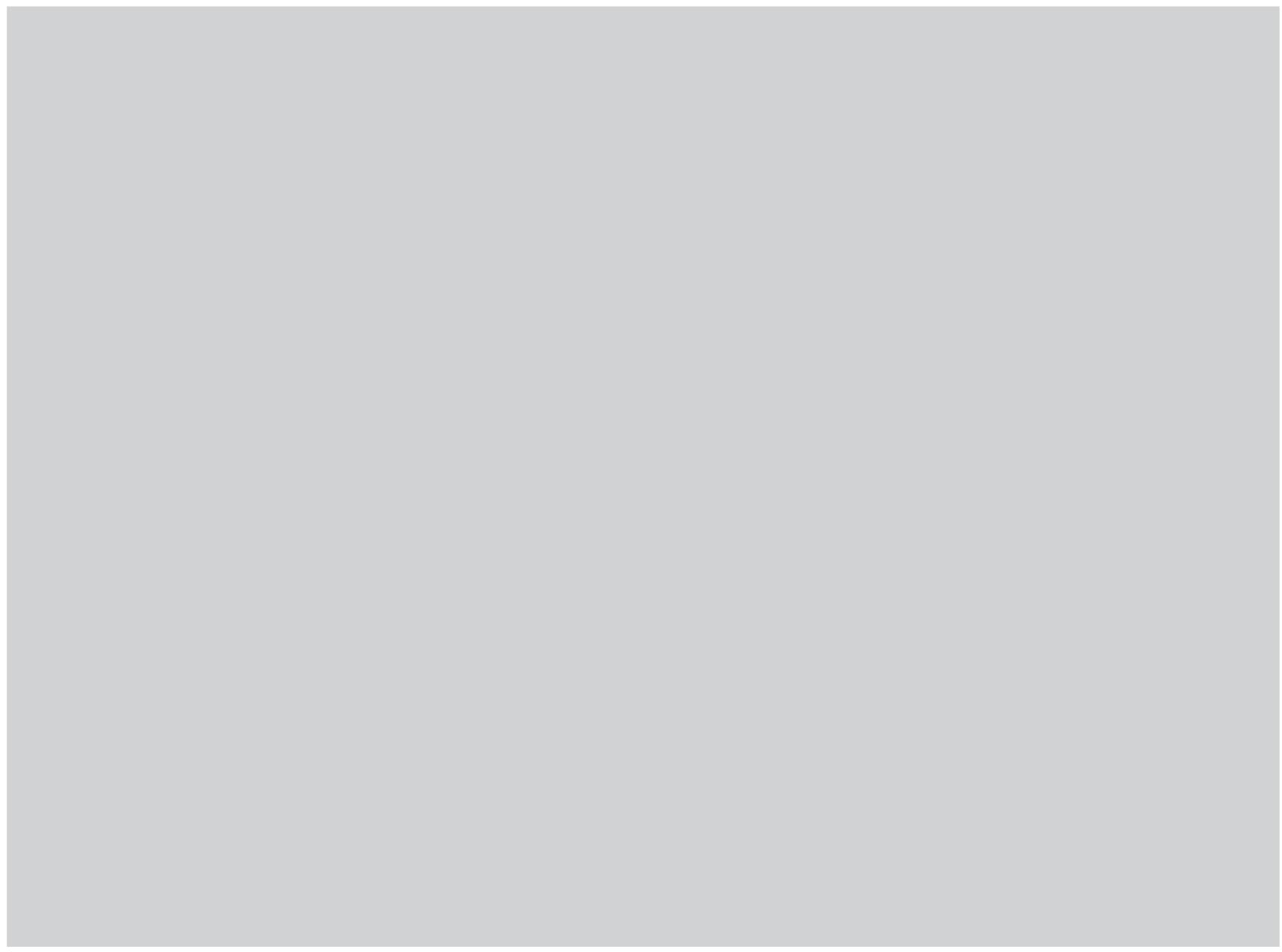
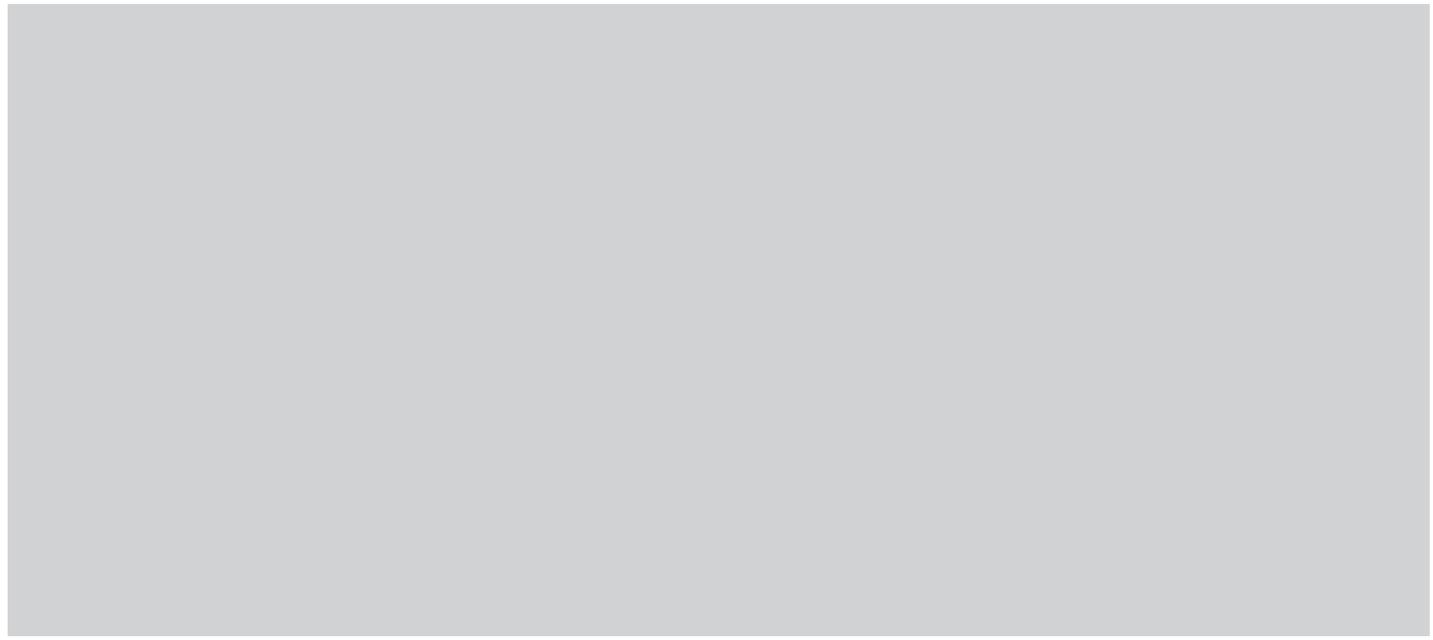
**CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS**

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# Marines turn to training tank for **MARSOC** prep



BACK TO OUR ROOTS

CPL. SARAH DIETZ

[Above] 1st Lt. Nathan Jones prepares for training at Marine Special Operations Command at the Combat Center's Training Tank, July 24.

[Right, top] 1st Lt. Nathan Jones performs swimming endurance drills at the Combat Center's Training Tank, July 24.

[Right, bottom] Gunnery Sgt. Michael Moynagh, 1st Lt. Enyinnaya Mojibujah and 1st Lt. Nathan Jones lift a diving brick while treading water at the Combat Center's Training Tank, July 24.



CPL. SARAH DIETZ



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

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# BathSalts

## Dangers of the new dead end drug

By Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi

Recent news coverage of radical behavior such as assault, self-mutilation and even cannibalism have raised nationwide awareness of the dangers of synthetic drugs.

The Department of Defense is now cracking down on their zero tolerance policy with synthetic drugs like spice, and attention is now turned to a new synthetic drug emerging on the streets — bath salts.

People under the influence of bath salts have been compared to many of the fictional zombies popularized in movies or on TV shows. Videos of their attempts to break down doors, bite at other people and their relentless, seemingly unfazed movements after being tased or shot by authorities, have rapidly spread throughout the internet. Hype over the substance has led to its nickname as the “zombie drug.”

Contrary to its common name, it is not something used in the bathtub. The product is marketed and labeled “not fit for human consumption,” making it more difficult for anti-drug agencies to get it put on the Drug Enforcement Agency’s controlled substances list and banned from sales. Although some of the chemical compounds in bath salts have been made illegal, the constant change of its composition creates a problem getting all emerging varieties banned.

The Department of Defense banned the synthetic substance in 2010, the same year a group of Marines were admitted into a psychiatric ward after developing a psychosis thought to be directly related to bath salts usage.

Although it remains semi-legal for purchase in the civilian community, the Marine Corps views bath salts under the same light as the drug spice. Marines are prohibited from the purchase or use of either drug, no matter the name or variants. Possessing, providing or using bath salts violates the Corps’ zero-tolerance drug policy and is dealt with in the same manner as any other illegal substance abuse.

Bath salts are sold under a variety of names such as Ivory Wave, Purple Wave, Red

Dove, Blue Silk, Zoom, Bloom, Cloud Nine Ocean Snow, Lunar Wave, Vanilla Sky, White Lightning, Scarface and Hurricane Charlie.

These substances contain the active ingredient methylenedioxypyrovalerone, MDPV which targets the central nervous system. The stimulant causes highs similar to cocaine or methamphetamines, according to DEA fact sheets.

Ingesting bath salts through snorting specifically has been linked to a few of the worst case scenarios reported.

A “bad high” while under the influence of bath salts results in violent episodes and excited delirium, causing the users to attack other people or even inanimate objects with no caution or regard for their personal health or consequences, according to public access emergency room and police reports.

The drug’s effects on the user after the high has worn off are of equal concern. Bath salts can cause permanent changes in the chemical composition of the brain, leaving users with feelings of agitation or paranoia, hallucinations, chest pain or suicidal tendencies long after usage has ceased.

There have been hundreds of reported incidences called into poison control centers throughout the United States linked to bath salts.

**Possessing, providing or using bath salts violates the Corps’ zero-tolerance drug policy and is dealt with in the same manner as any other illegal substance abuse.**

Although the drug and incidences related to it are still being investigated by the DEA and other researchers, knowledge of the short and long-term effects are limited.

Research continues, and even with its legalized status in the civilian world, Marines are warned to keep their distance from the “zombie drug.”

For more information about bath salts, call your unit’s substance abuse prevention office.

**The DOD banned the synthetic substance in 2010, the same year a group of Marines were admitted into a psychiatric ward after developing a psychosis thought to be directly relate to bath salt usage.**



## 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

### Actress

When: Every Friday, Saturday & Sunday, Aug. 3 - Aug. 12  
Where: Theatre 29  
73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.  
For tickets and information call 316-4151  
or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

### Mike and the Moonpies

Rock and country band performs old-school bar room blues  
When: 8 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 3  
Where: Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace  
53688 Pioneertown Rd., Pioneertown, Calif.  
For more information, call 365-5956.

### 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

### Heart

Dynamic classic-rock female duo performs  
When: 9 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 10  
Where: Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa  
32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage  
For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit  
<http://hotwatercasino.com>.

### ESPN 2 Friday Night Fights

Darley Perez vs. Michael Katsidis  
When: 5:30 p.m., Friday, Aug. 10  
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa  
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.  
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit  
<http://www.morongocasinosort.com>.

### Diana Krall

Grammy Award winning jazz pianist and singer performs  
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 11  
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino  
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio  
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit  
<http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

### Anjelah Johnson

NFL cheerleader, actress and comedian performs  
When: 8 p.m., Saturday Aug. 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>.

## Sunset Cinema

### Friday, August 3

6 p.m. - Snow White and the Huntsman, Rated PG-13  
9 p.m. - Rock of Ages, Rated PG-13  
Midnight - That's My Boy, Rated R

### Saturday, August 4

10:30 a.m. - Free Matinee Despicable me, Rated PG  
12:30 p.m. - Madagascar 3, Rated PG  
3 p.m. - Madagascar 3 3D, Rated PG  
6 p.m. - The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, Rated PG-13  
9 p.m. - Prometheus 3D, Rated R  
Midnight - Ted, Rated R

### Sunday, August 5

12:30 p.m. - Brave, Rated PG  
3 p.m. - Snow White and the Huntsman, Rated PG-13  
6 p.m. - Brave 3D, Rated R  
9 p.m. - Ted, Rated R

### Monday, August 6

9 p.m. - Ted, Rated R

### Tuesday, August 7

7 p.m. - Prometheus, Rated R

### Wednesday, August 8

2 p.m. - Brave 3D, Rated R  
6 p.m. - That's My Boy, Rated R

### Thursday, August 9

5:30 p.m. - The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, Rated PG-13  
8:30 p.m. - Snow White and the Huntsman, Rated PG-13

# Supercharged superhero saga ends grand Batman trilogy



COURTESY PHOTO

The concluding chapter of the Batman trilogy is like a superhero Shakespeare, woven with conversations about living, dying, hope and despair, and built around a social-strata morality play resonating with contemporary relevance about the gap between those who have so little and those who "live so large and leave so little for the rest."

### NEIL POND

#### "The Dark Knight Rises"

Christian Bale, Anne Hathaway & Michael Caine  
Directed by Christopher Nolan  
164 min., PG-13  
Released June 29, 2012

It opens with a funeral, ends with a burial, and fills the nearly three hours in between ramping up to an apocalyptic nightmare.

Yep, "The Dark Knight Rises" is dark, all right.

The final installment of director Christopher Nolan's grand Bat-trilogy of three films finds billionaire Bruce Wayne/Batman (Christian Bale) bent and broken in body and spirit eight years after the tragic turn of events of the previous movie demonized the caped crusader and drove him into seclusion. All those nights of jumping off buildings, slamming into brick walls and trading blows with bad guys have taken their toll, making Wayne (and everyone

else) question whether or not his secretive crime-fighting alter-ego even exists anymore.

Ironically, things have never been better for Gotham City. The prisons are full, the public is comfortable, the politicians and policemen are smug. But there's a revolution brewing underneath the streets — literally — led by a muscle-bound madman known only as Bane (Tom Hardy). And when a sexy jewel thief, the Catwoman (Anne Hathaway), unknowingly ignites the fuse that leads to an explosive collision of all three of their worlds, Wayne must break the old Bat-cloak out of storage and confront Gotham's grim day of reckoning.

Nolan doesn't seem content to stage simply the summer's most grandiose, most grown-up, most operatic superhero movie, one that makes others look, in comparison, like kids playing around in action-figure pajamas.

So this one is like a superhero Shakespeare, woven with

conversations about living, dying, hope and despair, and built around a social-strata morality play resonating with contemporary relevance about the gap between those who have so little and those who "live so large and leave so little for the rest."

There are certainly big expectations from fans for Nolan's wrap-up of his Dark Knight narrative, and this is a big movie. In addition to Bale and Hathaway, there are other big stars: Michael Caine, Morgan Freeman, Gary Oldman, Liam Neeson.

Matthew Modine plays a cop who wants to bag Batman, unconvinced they're on the same side. Joseph Gordon-Levitt is introduced as a zealous young police detective with a surprising link to Bruce Wayne.

There are big — whopping big — action sequences, including an amazing high-altitude airplane heist, an NFL football field that implodes underneath the players, and rollicking downtown chase scenes with the

super-cool Bat-cycle and Bat-copter. And Nolan works on an enormous canvas, shooting some scenes with the biggest equipment possible, large-format IMAX cameras. The movie looks terrific, often spectacular. See it on a full-size IMAX screen if you can; it's well worth it.

Everything looks so good, in fact, it almost makes you forget how confusing the plot becomes, and forgive its many Bat-holes. It's often difficult to know who's doing what, to whom, and why. Hardy's villain, Bane, wears a claw-like mask that makes much of his dialogue come out muffled mush.

But in the end, Nolan sweeps it all up into to a big, dramatic, grandly orchestrated, epic-appropriate finale that works on both superhero and human levels, concluding one of pop culture's most sensational superhero sagas — at least for the time being — with one of the summer's biggest waves of pure movie energy.

# Week **IN** Photos

Global Bonds

Photos by  
Cpl. Reece Lodder



**[Top]** Two CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463 prepare to take off after delivering Marines and Canadian soldiers during a noncombatant evacuation training operation during Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2012 at Marine Corps Training Area Bellows, Hawaii, July 26.

**[Above, left]** Two CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters with HMH-463 prepare to land and deliver Marines and Canadian soldiers during Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2012 at MCTAB, Hawaii, July 26.

**[Above, right]** Two CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters with HMH-463 take off after delivering Marines and Canadian soldiers during Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2012 at MCTAB, Hawaii, July 26.

**[Right]** A Marine with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, disembarks a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter during Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2012 at MCTAB, Hawaii, July 26.

