

One of our own

Love in war



When you've practically lost yourself to a wartime attack, been set on fire, clawed yourself free of wreckage without all your limbs intact, your face, arms, legs, even your eyelids are burned away, and you have no idea how you lived through all this, you can't just come home. This was what retired Cpl. Anthony Villarreal's life is going to be like after a hidden pressure plate in Helmand province, Afghanistan, blew apart his vehicle June 20, 2008, with him still inside it. At the time, Anthony was deployed with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. Normalcy doesn't mean what it once did. But luckily for Anthony Villarreal, normalcy does still mean coming home to a loving wife, one who stayed despite the trials she knew they'd face. It's been four years since the attack that almost cost him his life. This is his story. As told by her.

Story by
Sgt. Heather Golden

Last month Jessica Villarreal stood quietly, leaning on the wall to the side of the room, her hands folded in front of her. She wore frayed jeans, a white and gray shirt and black ballet flats. No bright colors. No jewelry stands out. She was a wallflower.

Anthony sat in a red leather chair tucked in the corner. He was wearing shorts, and the scars from his more than 70 operations and skin grafts were clearly visible on his face, up his legs and one remaining arm. A Texas Tech University baseball cap was on the table next to him. Texas Tech is a big deal for the couple. They are from the school's hometown of Lubbock, Texas.

His right arm is missing from the elbow down. His left hand is there, but fingerless. This makes for potentially awkward situations when people instinctively reach out for handshakes. It is a fumble that happens all the time. It isn't something that bothers him anymore. He chuckles about it, more closely resembling a big kid with a secret joke than a man with a serious disability.

Seven years ago Jessica's first experience with the Corps wasn't as a military wife. It was as a recruit at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. She began to talk about the injury that caused her to pre-

turely end her Marine Corps career, then changed her mind and offered up an abbreviated version instead.

"Technically I healed before I left, so I have an honorable discharge. To make a long story short, the Marine Corps just wasn't for me, I suppose. Everything happens for a reason."

It isn't really a chapter in her and Anthony's life together, but it is because of this experience that Jessica said she was in the right time, right place, to meet him. She more than once referred to him as "the love of her life" during the interview.

Anthony was really easy to talk to and he made me laugh. We could be goofy together. He turned out to be my best friend."

— Jessica Villarreal

Jessica enlisted out of her hometown recruiting station in Lubbock, and Anthony was also there. The same day he was fresh from his own boot camp graduation and was serving time on recruiters' assistance at the station.

The couple is the same age. They have almost the same birthday, even. At the time, they were 18 years old.

"Anthony was really easy to talk to and he made me laugh. We could be goofy together. He turned out to be my best friend."

Describing her first encounter with him, she said she

See **LOVE** page A4

Hiring Heroes

■ Program unites veterans, employers

Story and photo by
Kelly O'Sullivan

Jason Dickson spent 15 years in uniform serving his country, first as a Marine then as a law enforcement officer. Now, he's hoping to put his leadership skills to use in the business world.

The Twentynine Palms veteran was among 157 men and women who attended the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Chamber Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes Job Fair on Aug. 16 at the Fantasy Springs Special Events Center in Indio.

A business management student since leaving his job as a civilian police officer aboard the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center last year, Dickson visited 56 of the 57 employer booths at the job fair.

"I didn't think I'd look good in a pink Cadillac," he joked about why he bypassed the Mary Kay cosmetics booth.

On a serious note, "There wasn't one booth that I didn't find interesting or could-



Jason Dickson, former Marine and former law enforcement officer, shakes hands with Chuck McDaniel of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 440 in Riverside after a discussion about jobs in the industry on Aug. 16, at the Hiring Our Heroes Job Fair in Indio, Calif.

n't see myself working with that company," Dickson said. He left his resume at several booths and submitted multiple applications in hopes of getting hired at a firm event before he graduates from National University next September.

Hiring Our Heroes is a nationwide program launched in March 2011 to pair military veterans and their spouses looking for work with potential employers through job fairs like the one held in Indio.

Dick Castner, executive director of the U.S. Chamber's Western Regional Office in Woodland Hills, said the organization partners with national and local veterans organizations and business groups, like the Palm Desert Area Chamber of Commerce, which co-sponsored the hiring fair in Indio.

"The business community turns out the employers and veterans' groups bring out our veterans," he said. "Since the program began, we have more than 10,000

See **HIRE** page A4

New leaders

1/4 takes on the Combat Center

Photo and Story by
Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi

Approximately 150 Marines with 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, arrived at the Combat Center to use the unique desert environment and training areas for their Tactical Small Unit Leaders Course Aug. 10 to Aug. 18.

The battalion, stationed at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., returned from deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit in June.

Following their deployment, 1/4 began preparations for TSULC. The goal is to train and develop their next group of Marines to be small unit



Lance Cpl. Thomas Overzet, rifleman, 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, conducts buddy rushes on Range 105, Aug. 14.

leaders. The "China Marines" first sent a few Marines ahead of the rest of the group to become instructors for the course, allowing the experience of 1/4's seasoned Marines to be passed down to their future leaders. The students who attended

The ultimate goal is building a very cohesive team and that will progress into the squad, platoon and company actions later on during deployment."

— Capt. Jonathan Joannides

TSULC were Marines identified by the command and potential to become small unit leaders.

"The ultimate goal is building a

very cohesive team and that will progress into the squad, platoon and company actions later on during deployment," said Capt. Jonathan Joannides, infantry officer, Headquarters and Service Company. "When they rejoin the battalion they're now set in full motion to start training their Marines on the skill sets we're doing out here."

The course developed the Marines into teachers, resetting some of their tactical and technical skills and teaching them how to evaluate the Marines they will

soon be leading. They were reinforced in their basic fire team tactics and the tactical use of weapons

See **TSULC** page A4

When it's OVER

Officers offered early out program

Story by
Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi

Following the July announcement of an early out program for enlisted Marines, Headquarters Marine Corps initiated a parallel program for the commissioned side, the Officer Voluntary Early Release Program.

The cost-saving initiative commenced Sunday and continues until Sept. 30, 2014, giving eligible officers the option for an early out with an honorable discharge.

Officers with an end of active service date between fiscal year 2012 and 2014 can separate up to 180 days early and will be considered to have served their full active service according to MarAdmin 441/12.

Marines can apply for

the program through their chain of command, said 1st Lt. Emily King, adjutant, Headquarters Battalion.

Applicants must have fewer than six years of commissioned service and must be eligible for either an honorable or general, under honorable conditions, discharge.

Commissioned Marines are not eligible if they are stabilized for deployment at the requested time of early release, have accepted a career designation, if they are on terminal leave or are being released under another Headquarters Marine Corps directed early out program.

Those who are undergoing post deployment health evaluation and management due to a manifestation of

See **EARLY OUT** page A4

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

THE FREE SPIRIT

SARIAH SALCIDO

Student at Twentynine Palms Elementary, Age 6, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

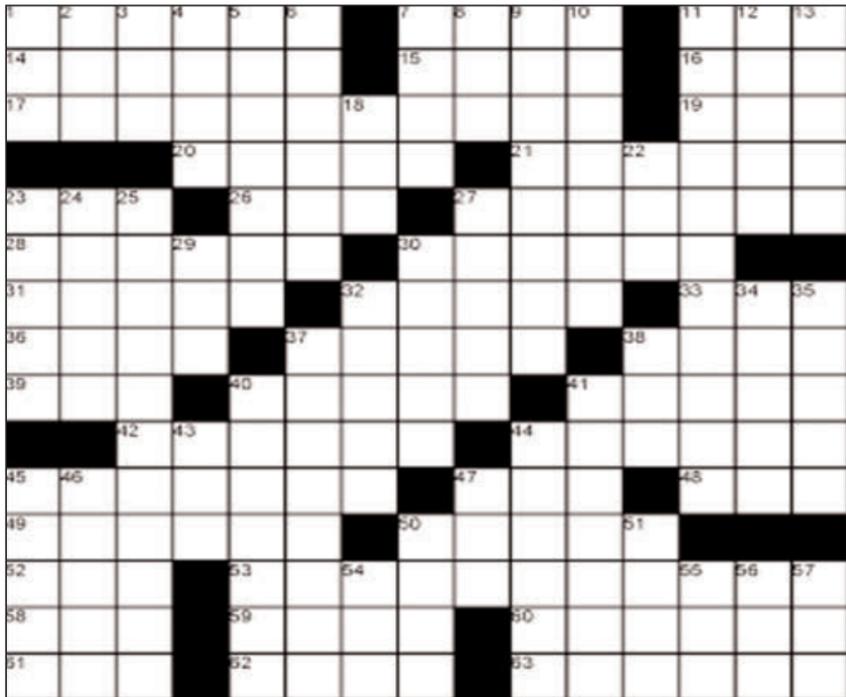
INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY
SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN
August 21, 2012

> **I'm 7.** Well, no I'm 6. But I'm going to be 7 in November.
> **I have** an imagination.
> **I always ask** questions.



> **I love this** interview. I can talk for an hour and a half. I talk every minute.
> **I love mac and cheese** with ketchup. I love mac and cheese with pudding. It's so good. Corn is good with ketchup, too.
> **I love, love bowtie pasta** with Ragu sauce. I love spaghetti. I love pizza. I love Olive Garden. I love what I'm eating right now. I love salad. I love dessert. I love to eat.
> **I took soccer,** hip-hop, tumbling, cheerleading and tee ball. Those are all the stuff I did last year. Maybe last month, I think.
> **Yeah, I have** a lot going on.
> **We start school on Monday.** I'm going to go into 2nd grade. I'm not really excited. I'm really nervous. I think everything is going to be hard.
> **I thought 1st grade was** going to be hard but then I learned all my stuff, and I just got it.
> **I love math.** I love to learn addition and subtraction. I love when we write. I love when we get homework. I love to learn stuff. We're going to learn multiplication.
> **I like to read.** I like chapter books. I don't really read those, but I do want to start.
> **I'm not a TV person.** It's not good for your brain, my mom says. And I believe her.
> **At recess,** I don't really play. I do sometimes. I just walk around I guess.
> **I do have all of my new** clothes that I'm going to have. We got a backpack in Tucson. My Tia Marie got me a Justin Bieber lunchbox. I love, love, love Justin Bieber.
> **Me and my cousin like Justin Bieber,** Salena Gomez and Lady Gaga. Yeah, we're Lady Gaga fans. But my mom won't let me go to her concert because sometimes she says bad words.
> **Me and my dad always** make faces. Dad is the funniest one. But he's not a kid.
> **I'm not ready to grow up.** I want to be a kid forever.
> **When you're a kid,** you get to have play dates, and you can't do that as an adult.
> **When you're 14,** you get to have sleepovers.
> **I love to do the jobs when** you get to scan stuff, like at a register.
> **I want to be a gymnast,** but I can't do all that stuff yet.
> **I'm in** tumbling, which is a start. If I go through level one, two, three and four, then I'll be a gymnastics person.
> **I do flips and handstands** without the wall. I like to do cartwheels, but I'm not good at those yet. I do know how to do front rolls. I need practice with back rolls.
> **Did you know** if you hit your spine, you can be paralyzed?
> **I love the challenging stuff.** It's not my favorite because it's hard. But I like to try.

RIGHT ON THE KISSER



See answers on page A5

ACROSS

1. Ill will
7. "Ed Wood" star Johnny
11. Second-stringer
14. Fix, as a chair
15. Melville tale
16. Beehive State tribesman
17. Gun with a flaring muzzle
19. Rickey need
20. Overly sentimental
21. Istanbul's region
23. Special __ (movie enhancers)
26. President pro __
27. Arboreal rodent
28. Made secure
30. Gives a leg up to
31. Felt sore
32. Mr. Chips player Robert
33. Stylish, in the '60s
36. Go sour
37. Blew it
38. Aesopian also ran

DOWN

1. Certain Wall
3. Post OR place
4. Assigns workers to
5. Not listing year of creation
6. Flowed slowly
7. Larry, the first black American Leaguer
8. Cassowary cousin
9. Mail carrier's route, once
10. Most swanky
11. Sweet cereal renamed in the '80s
12. City near Syracuse, NY
13. "John Brown's Body" poet
18. Turntable letters
22. Emeritus: Abbr.
23. Make jubilant
24. Adjust the lenses
25. Sex determinant
27. Shadings

29. Slugger Griffey Jr.
30. Hole-making bug
32. Like prunes or raisins
34. Stackable cookies
35. Cubicle fillers
37. Light and delicate
38. Sot's sound
40. Church topper
41. Amplifier effect
43. MLB playoffs mo.
44. Calvin's tiger
45. __-Bismol
46. __' to go (eager)
47. Krypton or radon
50. Terrier type
51. Yemeni port
54. DJ's assortment
55. Bikini piece
56. Toronto's prov.
57. Thumbs-up vote

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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>

This Week in
Combat Center History



Reprinted from the Observation Post dated Aug. 25, 2000, Vol. 46, Issue No. 34

Well-baby doctor visits

■ Why they're so important for your child and you

Shari Lopatin
 TriWest Healthcare Alliance

You've missed your baby's scheduled well-baby doctor exam; should you be concerned? Your baby isn't sick, so it's not that important...is it?

Because babies grow so quickly, regular well-baby doctor visits help keep them happy and healthy. Your son or daughter should have six well-child doctor visits during their first 15 months of life. These regular doctor visits allow the pediatrician to check your baby's growth and development. They also give you — as the parent — important information about what to expect as your child grows up.

During a well-baby visit, your child will also receive any vaccinations that are due. Vaccinations are a big part of protecting your child from disease. If your baby isn't vaccinated, these diseases could make your child very sick, or even cause death.

Make the most during your regular well-child doctor visit. Write down any questions or concerns you may have about your child's development and bring them with you. This way you won't forget to ask the pediatrician during the exam.

Well-baby doctor visits are a TRICARE-covered benefit with no authorizations, cost-shares, co-payments, or deductibles for those eligible.

For more information on well-child doctor visits, visit <http://www.TriWest.com/parenting>.

Birds of steel bring air support to CAX 10-00

**LANCE CPL.
 ZACHARY A. CRAWFORD**

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The platoon had been hammering the enemy continuously with mortars and small arms fire for the past two hours. As the troops held the enemy at bay, they could clearly see the bright impacts of 500-pound bombs on the enemy objective before they heard the eardrum-shattering howl of F-18s as they flew close overhead.

In battle, the air combat units play a vital role in the overall scheme of things. At Combined Arms Exercises, they are one of the most important elements of training.

With Marines from Marine Air Groups 31, 29 and 14, the Air Combat Element here at CAX uses various units and squadrons from all over the Marine Corps map. Units participating include ones from the air stations in New River, Beaufort, and Cherry Point with support from such units as Marine Air Logistic Squadron 31, Marine Air Control Group

28, Marine Wing Support Squadron 273 and Marine Tactical Air Command Squadron 28.

“Our job in the MTACS is to keep track of the air and ground assets for the MAGTF,” said Cpl. Brendan J. Gerardo, air support operations operator for MTACS out of MCAS Cherry Point. “We are basically the coordinators of the scheme of maneuver for the MAGTF.”

The squadrons involved in the actual in-flight training scenarios of CAX 9 include Light Attack Helicopter Squadron-269, which includes AH-1A Super Cobras and UH-1N Hueys, CH-46s comprise Medium Marine Helicopter Squadron-365 while CH-53s are supported by Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 464, and last but not least, the fast-moving fixed wing jets from VMFA-115.

“We are here primarily to provide close air support for the Marine Air Ground Task Force's ground units,” said Lt. Col. Alan R. Lewis, executive officer, Marine Air Group 31 at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, and commanding

officer, ACE, for CAXs 9 and 10. “The ACE is designed to put aircraft in the right place in the war fighting scheme, according to the commander's intent.”

The training evolutions for the ACE are designed to give air support to ground units by using aircraft for various missions. The helicopters will be used for attacks, troop insertion and extraction and medical evacuations. Fixed wing aircraft will be supplying ground elements with close air support, intelligence and imagery.

“CAX is a good chance for us to work in these types of conditions, where hot weather and harsh terrain is involved,” said PFC Bradley J. Ross, flightline mechanic, Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron-269 out of MCAS New River. “We have enough time out here to train more than we normally would.”

The ACE will be used to its fullest extent throughout the CAX evolutions to include the Final Exercise held at the end of each CAX and training missions prior to them.

LOVE, from A1

immediately liked his face. It's the one she still sees when she looks at him now. Comparing old photographs to the Anthony now, the only thing recognizable are his eyes.

At first, Jessica said, they were just friends. They did what "just friends" did — hung out at the mall, went out to eat and spent time with friends. But bowling was their thing, and still is.

"Bowling was a place we could have fun and scream from excitement. My mother had an influence as well. She worked two jobs, so she wanted the house nice and quiet so she could sleep."

Anthony eventually had to return to his home base of Twentynine Palms, but not before inviting Jessica out for an extended visit in the near future.

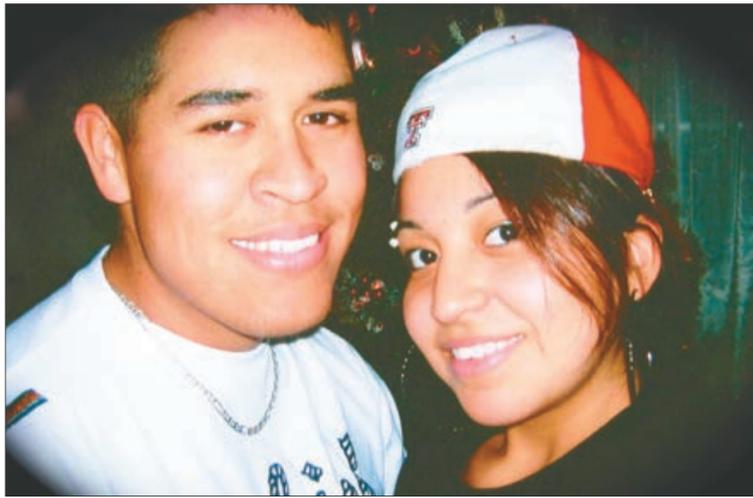
When they officially began dating, Anthony gave Jessica a promise ring with her birthstone in it.

Five years ago Jessica accepted Anthony's invitation to visit him in Twentynine Palms. She said most of their relationship prior to this had largely been long distance. This was the first time she'd seen what would soon be her new home.

"It was nighttime when I first arrived in

California. The illusion of dark clouds turned out to be hills, and that is the first thing I saw, coming from the Great Plains.

She also experienced an odd flashback



COURTESY PHOTO

the first time she saw the Combat Center.

"The base gate entrance actually brought back memorizing the acronym for 'MCAGCC' in our (boot camp) knowledge. I laughed when I saw it."

Jessica was here for five months as

Anthony's guest. It was long enough that Jessica held down two jobs, at the Big 5 Sporting Goods store in Yucca Valley, and at the Twentynine Palms franchise of Las

Palmas Mexican Restaurante.

She didn't know she was actually rehearsing for her future life as Mrs. Villarreal.

Once back home in Lubbock, a routine trip that took the pair past the Lubbock County Court House turned into a not-so-

routine wedding. "Just one day we were running errands downtown, and we passed the courthouse and he said, 'Let's get married. Will you marry me, Jess?'" I was speechless. I smiled at him as he reached for my hand and said, 'OK.'"

They went from "dating to hitched," as Jessica put it, in 18 months. A spontaneous proposal might have been romantic, but the wedding itself was not exactly what every little girl dreams of when they are young.

"While growing up, I was filled with perfect fairytale endings, from books and movies. Realistically, unless you are the exception, you never get anything like that."

She was referring to the wedding, but she could have been talking everything the Villarreal family has had to keep pushing on during their five-year marriage.

Jessica's answer to why they chose a courthouse wedding instead of a traditional wedding was a solemn one.

"We always thought we'd have time to plan after."

Editor's Note: This is the first in a three-part series about a wounded veteran and his wife. Check back each week in the *Observation Post* for the next installment of Anthony and Jessica's story.

TSULC, from A1

systems and explosives.

The students conducted multiple dry-fire and live-fire exercises with the use of M-67 Fragmentation Grenades, AT-4 Missile Launchers, and M-203 Grenade Launchers in addition to the use of their personal weapons, such as the M-16 A4 or M-4 Service Rifle and the M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon.

"They've been outstanding," Joannides said. "They've been responding to the challenge that's been issued to them."

Students gained better proficiency with the weapons as well as understanding of how to train and evaluate proper technique.

"We get a better understanding and have a chance to re-learn some of the stuff we may

away from all the distractions and gives them a feel of what they would encounter going to Afghanistan," said Cpl. Alex Wilkinson, assaultman, 1/4, and TSULC instructor. "They get all the heat and glorious misery. It gives them more of a real world take on it."

All their work throughout the week led up to their final exercise Saturday. The culmination of the skills they had practiced was evaluated in a live-fire attack of a bunker on Range 105.

Collaborating the use of their personal weapons as well as rocket and grenade launchers, with dummy or tracer rounds, simulated grenades and mechanical targets, the Marines worked together to take down the bunker as efficiently as possible.

"This is probably the best day I've seen," said Cpl. Zachery Lum, range instructor, 1/4. "There have been some real improvements."



LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

[Above] Lance Cpl. Joseph Swope, antitank missileman, Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, shoots rounds down range Aug. 18 during the culminating exercise of his unit's Tactical Small Unit Leaders Course at Range 105. The Marines arrived at the Combat Center more than a week ago and learned how to become effective team leaders. After finishing their final exercise, the unit packed up to return to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., where they will take their positions as small unit leaders.

[Right] Lance Cpl. Cosmo Peters, machine gunner, 1/4, and his fire team prepare to rush over the berm and take down a bunker approximately 100 meters down Range 105, Aug. 18.



LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

have forgotten in order to be more efficient when we train our Marines," said Lance Cpl. John Maschino, machine gunner, 1/4, and student of the course.

Once the individual work with the weapons was complete, Marines began incorporating the human factor.

The Marines moved toward their objective using buddy rushes, tactically using the terrain to move toward and take down the simulated enemy.

"The terrain and enemy really dictate (the Marines' forward movement)," Joannides said.

The unit took full advantage of the Combat Center's ranges; the open spaces, heat and desert landscape resemble the terrain in Afghanistan.

"It's a good area to train in. It keeps them

Lum had a front row seat to the training the TSULC students had conducted throughout the week, seeing first hand their advancements through the course.

"It's something else, seeing them take a whole bunch of individual skills and putting them together," Lum continued. "They can work together and look pretty good doing it."

With the completion of their test, the Marines began packing up to set out for their home base. Upon their return, the TSULC graduates will become responsible for Marines whom they will train as a tactically efficient team, as 1/4's newest enlisted leaders.

"I look forward to teaching the New Marines exactly what I've learned here," said Lance Cpl. Jacob Blair, machine gunner, 1/4.

EARLY OUT, from A1

post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury, in the middle of a court-martial or other adverse punishment or are in debt to the government to include advance and excess leave are still eligible as long as these issues are resolved prior to the early release date.

Packages for the OVER program must be turned in 30 days prior to the requested early date of separation and all criteria, including pre-separation counseling and medical qualifications, must be met prior to release.

Marines on a temporary duty assignment must submit the request through their parent command.

For more information on the OVER program refer to MarAdmin 441/12.

HIRE, from A1

known hires."

The Indio job fair is one of 385 conducted or in the works across the country through the first quarter of 2013, Castner said.

The events center was bustling during the three-hour event as people moved from booth to booth, picking up information and applications, and chatting with representatives of potential employers ranging from casinos to utility companies, law enforcement agencies to retailers and hoteliers to financial planners.

Barbara deBoom, president and CEO of the Palm Desert Area Chamber of Commerce, said Coachella Valley businesses were joined by those from Los Angeles, Riverside and as far away as Bakersfield.

"It was a pretty big reach," she said.

Though the turnout was slightly less than the anticipated 200-plus, deBoom said local organizers were thrilled at the results.

"One guy walked out and he was skipping and saying, 'I got a job! I got a job,'" she said.

Thomas Cole, regional recruiting director

for Airstreams Renewable Inc., a company that certifies people to work in the wind industry, came to the events center to find people to fill five open seats at the Tehachapi, Calif.-based vocational school.

"With the (wind) turbines, we need guys who can climb and who are not afraid of heights," Cole said, noting that companies in the field also like to hire veterans "because of their safety-first attitude."

It took the former Navy corpsman just 45 minutes to fill the openings.

The five are set to begin a five-week training program Aug. 27. Cole said once they're certified, three are slated to work as instructors at Airstreams and the other two likely will go to work for Siemens, a global company that operates in the industrial, energy and health care sectors.

Dickson, who almost passed on the job fair because he'd never attended one and wasn't sure if employers would have openings that fit his skill set, was excited afterward.

"I never realized that there are so many types of jobs out there, and the fact that these companies were giving us the opportu-

nity first because they thought of us as heroes was amazing to me," Dickson said. "I never thought of myself as a hero, just a man that served his country proudly."

Going booth to booth paid off for Dickson; he landed an interview with TransAmerica Financial Advisors Inc., and was looking forward to exploring job opportunities with more potential employers.

Future job fairs

Upcoming Hiring Our Heroes job fairs in Southern California are scheduled for Aug. 22 in Modesto, Calif., Aug. 28 and Oct. 4 in Los Angeles, Sept. 6 and Dec. 13 in San Diego, Sept. 20 and Dec. 21 at Camp Pendleton and Nov. 14 in Huntington Beach, Calif. Online career fairs co-sponsored by Monster and Military.com are scheduled for Aug. 22 and 23. Visit www.uschamber.com/hiringourheroes for more information on the program, to register for a job fair or to find career-related resources. For more photos visit <http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>.

Dental WORK

Combat Center corpsmen help local vet

Photos by
Diane Durden



[Top, left] Petty Officer 3rd Class Nino Dizon (left), and Seaman Thien Nguyen, both dental technicians, 23rd Dental Company, clean out one of several flower beds Aug. 18 at a local Marine veteran's house in Twentynine Palms, Calif. The sailors volunteered their time to clean-up the yard of retired Sgt. Maj. Jim Shelton.

[Bottom, left] Linda Glover, front desk manager, 23rd Dental Company, cuts down an overgrown bougainvillea plant Aug. 18.

[Top, right] Petty Officer 3rd Class Jerwin Sacalamitao (left) dental technician and Petty Officer 1st Class Alex Escobal, administration lead petty officer, 23rd Dental Company, pull down a decaying trellis in the yard of retired Sgt. Maj. Jim Shelton.

[Bottom, right] Kaito Edwards, 4-year-old son of Senior Chief Petty Officer Desmond Edwards, senior enlisted leader, 23rd Dental Company, cuts dead vines from a trellis. "I just want to help," said Kaito, who has volunteered with the 23rd Dental Clinic on five yard clean-up projects this year.



Hey Combat Center fans – Spread the word! The Combat Center has its own Flickr photo and video streams. Find them at <http://www.flickr.com/thecombatcenter>.



Hey Combat Center fans – Spread the word! The Combat Center has its own YouTube channel. Find it at <http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>.



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



Back to school

Federal Impact Aid

What is it?

Federal Impact Aid is a program designed to provide funding to school districts with a significant portion of federally connected students in their school system. These payments are meant to be reimbursements for revenue lost due to federally owned, and therefore tax exempt, property (i.e. military bases and Indian reservations).

How does the Federal Impact Aid Program affect my child?

The Federal Impact Aid Program provides funding for schools in five categories:

- Basic Support Payments
- Payments for Property
- Disability Payments
- School Construction Payments
- Department of Defense Supplemental Impact Aid Payments

Basic Support Payments are distributed based on the number of federally connected students enrolled in the school districts. Federally connected students include those who: have a parent in the U.S. Military, are Native American, live on federal property or have a parent who works on federal property.

Some of the other payments provide funding for Special Education programming and facility improvements.

To receive the Basic Support Payments, the school district must have at least 400 of their students or 3 percent of their enrollment federally connected. To receive the supplemental funding from DOD, the district must have 20 percent of their student population federally connected.

What can I do?

It's simple! Every year in early October your child will receive a Federal survey card that requests information regarding their federal connection. It is imperative that we have 100 percent of surveys completed.

For more information about impact aid visit <http://www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=9000>

Please note that the Private School Affidavit (for families choosing this method of home schooling) is due between Oct. 1 and 15.

School starts Aug. 27

Useful Contacts:

Exceptional Family Member Program	830-7740
Housing Office	830-1706
Child Development Center	830-3227
ASYMCA	830-7481
Youth Sports	830-8421
Naval Hospital	830-2190

California Department of Education changes age for entering school

In 2012 California Department of Education changed the cut off age for children entering kindergarten and 1st grade.

- Children entering kindergarten must reach 5 years of age on or before cutoff date.
- 1st graders must be 6 years of age on or before cutoff date. However, those who have already successfully completed kindergarten program can enter first grade.

Cut Off

The new cut off dates for kindergarten and 1st grade

November 1

for the 2012-13 school year

October 1

for the 2013-14 school year

September 1

for the 2014-15 school year



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>

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 newspaper working to serve you better

School Liaison Program

The Morongo Basin Unified School District:

<http://www.morongok12.ca.us> 367-9191

The Morongo Unified School District is comprised of 11 elementary schools, 2 middle schools and 2 high schools.

Additionally offered are 1 continuation high school, two state preschools and a special education preschool. MUSD provides a well-rounded education to approximately 9,630 students in SoCal Mojave High Desert in San Bernardino County, and offers programs including athletics, advanced placement and GATE courses.

Elementary Schools:

Condor Elementary	367-0750
Friendly Hills Elementary	366-3812
Joshua Tree Elementary	366-8459
Landers Elementary	364-2382
Morong Valley Elementary	363-6216
Oasis Elementary	367-3595
Onaga Elementary	369-6333
Palm Vista Elementary	367-7538
Twentynine Palms Elementary	367-3545
Yucca Mesa Elementary	228-1777
Yucca Valley Elementary	365-3381

Middle schools:

La Contenta Middle	228-1802
Twentynine Palms Junior High	367-9507

High schools:

Twentynine Palms High School	367-9591
Yucca Valley High School	365-3391
Sky High Continuation High School	369-6310

What can the School Liaison Program do for me?

Before you arrive at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center...

- Support during the transition of schools.
- Provide specific academic, location and registration information about MCAGCC
- Decipher high school student credit transfers and varying school-to-school academic curriculum and schedules as well as varying graduation requirements.

Once you're here...

- Communicate between you and your child's new school.
- Increase academic success and school involvement with your child.
- Facilitate college and career planning for your high school students.
- Consult with school personnel regarding family concerns.

When you leave...

- Supply information on how to make another smooth transition.
- Provide information on future School Liaison programs

Who is the MCAGCC School Liaison?

School liaisons provide a thread of continuity between different duty stations. If you're expecting orders, the school liaison at your next assignment can provide information on local schools and area services.

The goal of the school liaison is to help parents navigate local area schooling choices. We are not specifically for the public system—although that is a major function of the office. The school liaison is committed to the military child's education by providing and maintaining the relationship between the installation and the school district.

Marie Hernandez is the school liaison for the Combat Center. She coordinates support services to help maximize educational opportunities for your children.

For residents of Twentynine Palms, Joshua Tree and Yucca Valley, your children will attend Morongo Unified School District.

How do I meet with the School Liaison?

Walk-ins are welcome at the School Liaison's office in Building 1417 or you can make an appointment by calling 830-1574.

Visit our website

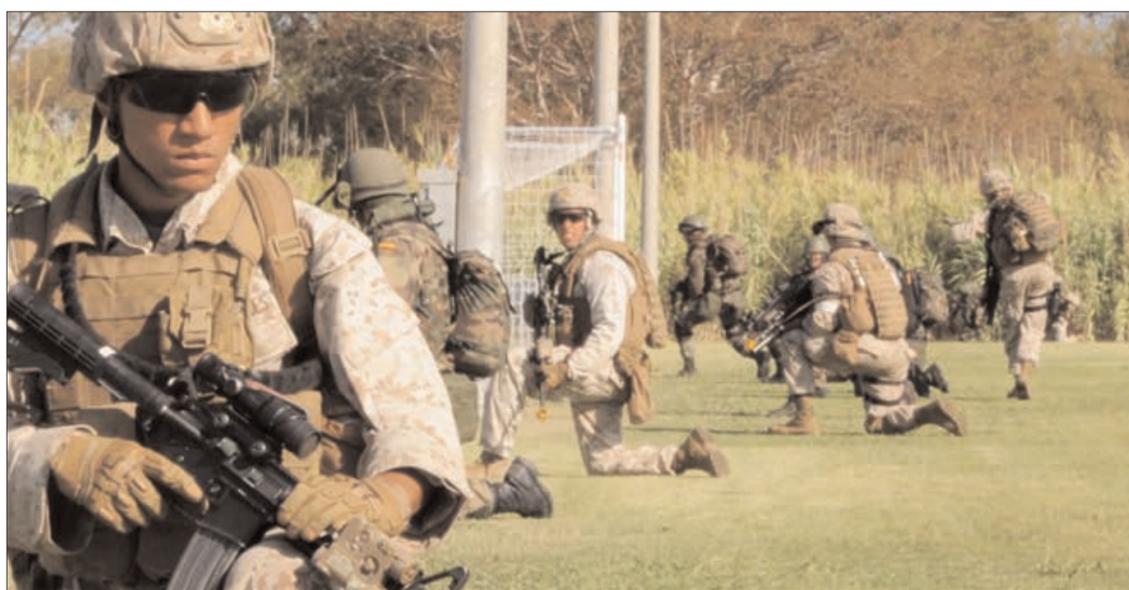
<http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/g5/sl/>

<http://www.facebook.com/combatcenterschoolliaison>

- Links to homework help.
- Information about local schools
- A calendar of local events for kids.
- A timeline on college prep for high school students.
- Our monthly School Liaison newsletter.
- A list of websites focused on assisting military families.
- Information on the Exceptional Family Member Program.

WeekINPhotos

Global Bonds



Photos by
Petty Officer 2nd Class Travis Alston

[Left] Lance Cpl. Ebin Peters, Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team Company, Europe, provides security during a medical evacuation exercise Aug. 20, in Rota, Spain.

[Right] Marines from Fast Company, Europe and Spanish Marines from Tercio del Sur, Brigada de Infanteria de Marina, establish a perimeter during medical evacuation exercise Aug. 20, in Rota, Spain.



123

SESAME STREET

Show tour teaches kids how to handle military moves



Story and photos by

123

SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

Not even a rainstorm and unexpected power outage could stop the Sesame Street / USO Experience for Military Families tour from bringing their message of hope and friendship to Combat Center kids Wednesday and Thursday.

The free-of-charge show, which is the USO's longest running live show, features many of the beloved characters from the hit children's TV show and focuses on issues that directly impact military kids.

"Sesame Street knows kids; the USO knows military families," said Lonnie Cooper, tour producer, USO. "It's a fantastic partnership."

As of last year, there is one very special new friend on the show, named Katie. Katie is a military kid worried about an upcoming move when her family gets orders to another base.

"One out of every three military families is going to move this year," Cooper said. "This is a resource for families to help deal with one of the biggest challenges of military life."

The other Sesame Street stars help Katie discover how to turn this potentially scary experience into an adventure during several song-and-dance routines. She learns how to make the move more fun, how to keep in touch with friends she's leaving behind and how to make new friends when she gets to her new home.

"The age group we target is the age when kids start learning to make

friends," Cooper said. "We want them to know that they are not alone. The cool thing about the military is you get to live all over the planet and have friends everywhere."

Katie's story is one every military kid experiences, and she was the crowd favorite as the curtain drew on the end of the show.

"Walking in, the favorite is almost universally Elmo," Cooper said. "Walking out, so many kids say Katie is their favorite because they know exactly who she is and what she's going through. They live it."

Cooper's thoughts were echoed by more than one exiting audience member. "I loved it," said Jacqueline Kumer, age 6.

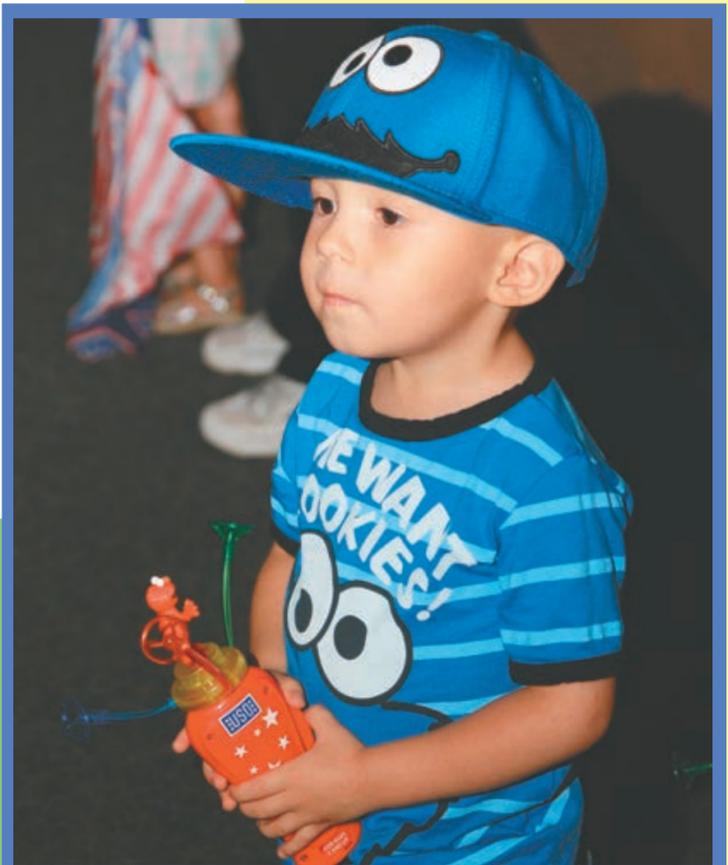
"Every time she gets somewhere, she has to move again. I understand it because we do it a whole bunch of times."

The tour began in 2008 and has reached more than 248,000 military families on 131 bases in 33 states and 11 countries since then. It is scheduled to visit 68 bases during this year's April-to-November touring season. The group averages two-to-four shows per base, and is expecting to perform more than 200 shows total this year. The Combat Center was the first stop during the 2008 tour, and the cast members said they were excited to be back.

For more information on the Sesame Street / USO Experience for Military Families tour or for tips on how to help your child through the difficulties of frequent moves, visit <http://www.uso.org/sesame/>.

Everytime she gets somewhere she has to move again. I understand because we do it a whole bunch of times.

— Jacqueline Kumer



[Top] A kid-packed audience dances along to a song during the Sesame Street / USO Experience for Military Families show Aug. 22

[Middle] A decked-out Cookie Monster fan, 3-year-old Nathan Nasty, keeps his eyes riveted on his favorite Sesame Street star Aug. 22.

[Bottom] Staff Sgt. Anthony Richmond and his 1-year-old son Coleton applaud at the end of a song-and-dance routine Aug. 22.



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

Monday: Margarita Mondays
Thursday: Thirsty Thursday, 7 - 10 p.m.
Friday: Karaoke Night 6 - 9 p.m.

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Friday: Steak night, 4:30 - 8 p.m.
Monday-Friday: All-hands lunch
Monday: All-hands steak night, 4:30 - 8 p.m.
Thursday Aug. 30: Right hand man night 4:30 - 9 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

Anne of Green Gables

When: Aug. 24 - Sept. 22
Where: Theatre 29
73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
For tickets and information call 316-4151 or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

Zapf Dingbats

Musical melting-pot sensation performs
When: 8 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 7
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

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>.

Kung Fu String Girls

Group combines martial arts and string instruments in performance
When: 6 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 6
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

B.B. King

King of Blues performs
When: 8:00 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 8
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinosort.com>.

Ian Anderson

Professional flutist plays
When: 9 p.m., Friday, Oct. 19
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>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, August 24

6 p.m. - Brave, Rated PG
9 p.m. - Ted, Rated R
Midnight - Magic Mike, Rated R

Saturday, August 25

No movies until 6 p.m. due to power outage
6 p.m. - Amazing Spider Man, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. - People Like Us, Rated PG-13
Midnight - Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter, Rated R

Sunday, August 26

12:30 p.m. - Brave, Rated PG
3 p.m. - Madeas Witness Protection, Rated PG-13
6 p.m. - Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter, 3D, Rated R
9 p.m. - Seeking a Friend for the End of the World, Rated R

Monday, August 27

9 p.m. - Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter, Rated R

Tuesday, August 28

7 p.m. - Brave, 3D Rated PG

Wednesday, August 29

5:30 p.m. - People Like Us, Rated PG-13
8:30 p.m. - Magic Mike, Rated R

Thursday, August 30

5:30 p.m. - Brave, Rated PG
8:30 p.m. - Ted, Rated R

Liberty Call

Jeremy Renner steps into starring role for fourth installment of spy-thriller franchise

NEIL POND

"The Bourne Legacy"

Starring Jeremy Renner & Rachel Weisz
Directed by Tony Gilroy
PG-13, 135 min.

The fourth movie based on the espionage-thriller novels of Robert Ludlum comes to the screen with its name brand intact and its dark, dangerous, cloak-and-dagger world as treacherous as ever, but with its familiar leading man in hiding.

Matt Damon, who played tormented, always-on-the-run assassin Jason Bourne in the three previous movies, opted not to return. Into the breach, however, steps Jeremy Renner as a new character, Aaron Cross, who is introduced as another cog in the same ruthless, government-controlled, über-spook machine that turned Bourne into a hunted, haunted killer.

This time around, a major news story is about to break about the deep-cover operation, which specializes — as one character puts it — in the “morally indefensible and absolutely necessary” tasks that have to be done to take out the world’s trash.

The secret program’s agitated officials, worried about the disastrous consequences of such exposure, decide to shut everything down and erase the evidence of its dirty work, particularly the viral re-engineering program that makes its operatives stronger, smarter and less sensitive to pain. It’s the super-spy equivalent of steroids, with a hard-

wired DNA twist.

Shutting down the program also means the elimination of all their highly trained operatives who have now become liabilities — like Cross, who suddenly finds himself on a hit list and cut off from the “meds” his brain and body have been conditioned to need to keep functioning.

Rachel Weisz plays a sympathetic scientist who holds

If you haven’t seen any of the previous “Bourne” movies, you’ll probably find yourself grasping to hang on to the plot, which refers frequently to things that happened in the earlier Damon dynasty. But Renner is a capable action star, doing many of his own stunts, and Tony Gilroy, slipping into the director’s chair for the first time after screenwriting for the three other three films,

which there’s quite a bit. However, we do get to see Cross outwit a drone bomber with a rather ingenious ploy involving a tree-sling noose trap and a wolf that he later tells, half apologetically, “You’re gonna be sorry you messed with me.”

Another scene finds Cross crafting a lethal weapon out of a compressed air tank and a nail, part of his one-man lay-waste campaign to an entire house full of hit men (and one hit woman). And later, half the world away, he and Weisz’s character are involved in a romping, stomping 15-minute chase that begins on the rooftops of Manila, then rolls onto streets below, where it continues as a wild ride on motorcycles.

It’s undoubtedly one of the best chase sequences of any movie this year, a real gem of cinematography, stunt work and editing. It probably took several days, if not weeks, to rehearse, arrange and shoot. But after it’s over, the movie seems stumped for how to wrap things up.

So it just kind of slams into an ending that doesn’t really feel like an ending at all, with all sorts of things unresolved, open and unchanged. “Bourne” fans may leave with a glimmer of hope that Renner’s character and Damon’s character — who’s apparently also still alive — will intersect in the next movie.

But other viewers will probably feel like this “Legacy” leaves them adrift, quite literally, in a sea of unanswered spy questions.



COURTESY PHOTO

Jeremy Renner steps in as a new character, Aaron Cross, who is introduced as another cog in the same ruthless, government-controlled, über-spook machine that turned Bourne into a hunted, haunted killer.

the key to Cross’ survival. Edward Norton and Stacy Keach are the retired military bureaucrats calling the control-room shots as they track Cross in a deadly game of global cat-and-mouse.

keeps things “real” with slam-bang action that relies on practically no computer-generated special effects.

The movie could use a little more of that action, however, and a bit less talk, of