



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 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.

(Part 3)

Story by
Sgt. Heather Golden

Four years ago, June 2008

Jessica was with her father in San Antonio, Texas, when she got the call that changed her life, the one telling her Anthony was injured and on his way home.

Military officials reached Jessica's mother first, and passed on a number for her to call. Her mother insisted on talking to her father instead, which is when Jessica knew something was wrong.

"My mother couldn't even talk to me," Jessica said. "As I followed him toward the living area, I was trying to eavesdrop. All I heard was, '...got burned...' My first thought was my sister's kids burned themselves with the iron or the oven. My dad buzzed me away with his hand, so I went back to my room to finish folding my clothes. Soon after, my dad walks in my room and said, 'Anthony is hurt. He was burned. Your mother gave me this number. You need to call it immediately.'"

The number connected Jessica to someone in Quantico, Va.

"I stated my name, told her Anthony Villarreal is my husband, and will you please tell me what is going on."

The woman on the other end of the line told Jessica that Anthony had been injured two days prior, but she did not know how badly. She asked Jessica to call back in a few hours, and she could tell her exactly where he was being transferred to.

Anthony was scheduled to arrive at the Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, right up the street from where Jessica was staying. Her father drove her to the base that same day.

"My eyes wandered around, doing my best to memo-

rise buildings and street signs, so if I had to make the trip myself, I would know where I was going," she said. "I was in a daze. I had to make myself as prepared as possible."

The nurses walked Jessica through to the area where Anthony would be. Jessica said she walked that route repeatedly so it would become instinctual.

"Once he was there, I knew my mind would go blank. I wanted to memorize the place."

Four years ago: Midnight, June 23, 2008

A little more than a day and a half later, Jessica arrived back at the hospital and was taken to Anthony's room.

The doctors guided her in, and first needed her to ID him as her husband. He was completely wrapped in dressings, still in a medically-induced coma. He stayed in this coma for three months.

"The first two things I saw were his eyes and lips. And I said, 'Yeah, that's him.' That's all I could see. He looked like a mummy."

"The room felt like a sauna. His dressings needed to be moist at all times. I had to wear a full germ-blocking apron, hair net, mask, gloves and shoe booties to prevent any outside germs. Anthony was exposed, as they put it."

Although Anthony was still in a coma during these early months, Jessica wasn't alone. The hospital staff, a base chaplain and the Marines attached to the base's Marine detachment all added themselves to Jessica's support system.

The nurses made sure Jessica was just as well taken care of as if she was a patient herself.

"They instinctively took me under their wing and even

See **LOVE**, page A5

"The first two things I saw were his eyes and lips. And I said, 'Yeah, that's him.' That's all I could see."

— Jessica Villarreal

MCLOG's first graduation

Lance Cpl. D. J. Wu
Combat Correspondent

The newly-established Marine Corps Logistics Operations Group graduated its first class of the Intermediate Marine Air Ground Task Force Logistics Operations Course Aug. 31 at the Combat Center's Officers' Club.

The IMLOC class advances the knowledge, skill and capabilities of the Marines serving as the operations officers and chiefs at the battalion or regimental level within the logistics combat element.



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Maj. Gen. Michael Dana, Assistant Deputy Commandant, Installations and Logistics, shakes the hand of Gysgt. Anthony Dunaway, student, Intermediate MAGTF Logistics Operations Course, after giving him his completion certificate Aug. 31. Dunaway was a student in the first course taught by the Marine Corps Logistics Operation Group.

"The class is designed to prepare combat logistics operations officers and chiefs to be able to take the role of the S-3 officer or chief," said Capt. Scott Beatty, student, IMLOC 4-12. "Overall, the class was a great experience."

MCLOG's mission is to provide standardized, advanced individual training in MAGTF logistics operations and unit readiness planning at the battalion and regimental levels. It also conducts battle staff training, facilitates logistics education and manages doctrine, training standards, tactics and institutional training programs.

The first graduating class is MCLOG's first step in standardizing the Marine Corps logistics field.

Maj. Gen. Michael G. Dana, Assistant Deputy Commandant, Installations and Logistics, was the guest of honor at the graduation and had kind words for the students.

"I want all the students to stand up. Put your right hand in the air. Pat yourself

See **MCLOG**, page A4

3rd CEB Marine earns Bronze Star

Lance Cpl. D. J. Wu
Combat Correspondent

Capt. Anthony Bariletti, ground combat element academic officer, Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group, received a Bronze Star Medal with combat distinguishing device during a ceremony at the MCTOG compound Aug. 31.

Bariletti earned the medal while serving as the commanding officer of Company C, 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, during the company's deployment to Afghanistan from Oct. 7, 2011, to April 25, 2012.

"I'm truly humbled and honored to receive an award that so many people sacrificed and truly worked

hard for," Bariletti said.

Bariletti trained, deployed and led his route clearance company to an unmatched 78 percent success rate in Improvised Explosive Devices detection, according to his award citation.

Bariletti credits the award to the Marines of the company for their hard work.

"My magnificent Marines went out there every day to find IEDs, not to try to avoid them, but to find them before somebody else did," Bariletti said. "They went out there looking, and

See **MEDAL**, page A4



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Capt. Anthony Bariletti, ground combat element academic officer, Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group, receives a Bronze Star Medal with combat distinguishing device at the MCTOG compound Aug. 31.

Education, career fair opens doors

Lance Cpl. D. J. Wu
Combat Correspondent

The Combat Center's upcoming Education and Career Fair will give Marines, sailors and their families a chance to learn about local education opportunities, explore other career options and perhaps even find a new job.

"We offer the fair semi-annually," said Jeff Fourier, branch head, Lifelong Learning. "It gives service members, their family members and civilians, a chance to network, explore job opportunities and gather information."

More than 50 vendors will be present at the event. It's important for attendees to know what

they need to be prepared for the fair.

"The best things they can do to prepare is have a list of questions to ask vendors, knowing about themselves and what they want, and what motivates them," Fourier said. "They should have a resume, a positive attitude, a professional demeanor and be ready to show what they bring to the table in terms of talents and skills."

Attendees intending to speak with prospective employers are also encouraged to dress in appropriate business attire, as if

See **FAIR**, page A4

This Week in Combat Center History



Reprinted from the Observation Post dated Sept. 6, 1991 Vol. 36 Issue No. 33

New government housing slated for Twentynine Palms

By SGT. TONY SINAGRA

Congress has authorized a multi-million dollar development package in the city of Twentynine Palms that will provide government housing for 600 Combat Center NCOs and their families by August 1993.

The 600 two- and three-bedroom units will be located on two separate sites.

A 70-acre, 400-unit site will be located on the south side of Two Miles Road a few blocks off Adobe Road. A smaller 30-acre site will be built on nearby Utah Trail, just south of Luckie Park. Both locations are about seven miles from the Combat Center's main gate.

The contractors have yet to design the final plans for the project. Anderson stressed the final plans must meet with both government and city approval. "They've got to please us and the city of Twentynine Palms as well," she said.

While details of the construction aren't set, certain amenities have been agreed on.

The units will be "four-plex" design, with plenty of play areas for children and some basketball courts. All units will feature covered parking, a stove, refrigerator, dishwasher, garbage disposal and hook-ups for a washer and dryer. All areas in each unit will be carpeted, except the kitchen, bathrooms and laundry

"The construction of these new units for NCOs will free up additional housing units on base for personnel of other ranks. It'll also mean quite a boost for businesses in town. I can tell you the city of Twentynine Palms is very pleased with the idea of this project."

- Becky Anderson

Construction of the development, known as "Project 801" (the housing areas will be officially named later), is expected to begin within the next few months, according to Becky Anderson, director of family housing here.

"We've had estimates of the construction starting in between 60 days and six months," said Anderson.

Regardless of when construction begins, Anderson said the contract awarded Aug. 23 requires all work to be completed August 1993.

"We could have people moving in as soon as a year from now," she said.

Despite the 1,811 government housing units available on base, a housing market analysis conducted last spring by a private consulting firm showed a shortage of 2,100 units needed for the area.

"There just isn't enough affordable housing in town right now, especially for E-4s and E-5s," Anderson said. "There's a real need for this new project."

The Project 801 contractors were selected and recommended through open bidding process. Anderson and Al Tickell of the Family Housing Office and Joe Voncida of the Public Works Office here, served on a technical evaluation board to evaluate numerous development proposals.

Lieutenant Commander Michael Oakes, also of the Public Works Office, also made his recommendations while working on a source selections and Congress authorized the project.

"The government will lease the completed sites from the developers for 20 years," explained Anderson. "After that, we have the option to renegotiate the contract buy the property or turn it back over to the developers."

rooms. Every unit will have a fire sprinkler system.

The units will range in size from 900 square feet for two-bedroom quarters to 1,100 square feet for three-bedrooms units.

"I'm sure they'll be quite a bit larger than most comparable places in town," Anderson added.

Although the new units will not be located on base, Anderson said all the procedures for acquiring housing, policies, rules and regulations will be the same as they are for on-base housing. This includes military personnels' forfeiture of their Basic Allowance for Quarters (BAQ) and Variable Housing Allowance (VHA).

"Everything will be handled just as it is with housing located on the base now," she said. "E-4s and E-5s will be assigned to those quarters from a waiting list. All utilities and trash collections will still be paid by the government. The only things they'll have to pay for are phones and cable TV."

Anderson said once a family is assigned to their new quarters, they will not be moved on-base later.

In addition to the obvious benefit of providing much-needed housing for 600 more Marine Corps and Navy families here, Anderson sees other advantages.

"The construction of these new units for NCOs will free up additional housing units on base for personnel of other ranks," she said. "It'll also mean quite a boost for businesses in town. I can tell you the city of Twentynine Palms is very pleased with the idea of this project."

Project 801 should indeed be welcome news to those hundreds of Marines and sailors waiting for government housing and local merchants as well.

OFF-LIMITS ESTABLISHMENTS

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

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

In Oceanside:

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

In San Diego:

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

In National City:

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

In Twentynine Palms:

- Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Rd.
- STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.
- K Smoke 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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See answers on page A5

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ACROSS

- Guy, informally
- Rights gp.
- Midpoint: Abbr.
- Israel's Sharon
- Votes against
- Hightail it
- Homebuyer's expense
- Inner Hebrides island
- Jellyfish dangler
- In need of body work
- ___ Tome
- Ashen
- Showy flower
- One of a bevy
- Sam Houston was its president
- Fling the horsehide
- Toss in one's hand
- Assayers assay them
- Talk big
- Role for Ronny
- Shed one's skin
- It may be all around you
- "I could care less!"
- ___ naked
- Potato sack material
- Barbecue feature
- Wall St. figure
- Baby-sitter's handful
- Acts the cutup
- Moffo or Pavlova
- Assembly-line output, perhaps
- Rabbit dish
- Walk like a tosspot
- Take care of
- Ltr. addenda
- Partner of Peter and Paul
- Ancient moralist

DOWN

- Almanac tidbit
- Perry and Della's creator
- Simba or Nala
- "___ we forget ..."
- Made-up monikers
- ___Saxon
- Spot for espresso
- Caustic stuff
- No longer mint
- Heparin prevents them
- Basic principle
- Word to a marksman
- 17-Down tenders
- 'March Madness' hoops org
- Prefix with glottis
- Energy source
- Goose egg
- Ice skater's leap
- Backbreaker
- Elementary particle
- Bear in the air
- Cockpit dial abbr.
- Little-hand indication
- Autobahn auto
- City founded by Pizarro
- Like a basso's voice
- Call to Bo Peep
- In secret
- Afternoon gathering
- Harris's ___ Rabbit
- Heparin prevents them
- Pipsqueaks
- Moorehead of "Bewitched"
- "Try for a job
- Kind of life insurance
- Baltic feeder
- "Zip-___Doo-Dah" Abbr.
- Opposite of endo-
- Pull the plug on
- Teachers' org.

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 Find them at <http://www.flickr.com/thecombatcenter>.

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

THE DESERT DWELLER

Dan Claire

Manager, Marine Corps Exchange
Age 40, Palm Springs, Ca.

INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY
LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI
September 3, 2012

- > **I was born in Palm Springs;** a life-time desert resident.
- > **I spent a little time in the 90s** in Los Angeles. I discovered I was a small town boy. I didn't like it there, so I came back.
- > **I like the desert** environment. It's a tight-knit community, and there are a lot of faith-based organizations. It's not the crazy-

ness and fast pace you have in the city.

- > **While I was in L.A.,** I was working as a retailer for Target at night and a recording studio in the day.
- > **We did folly work;** just about everything that happens in a film from shuffling papers to walking down the street is reproduced.
- > **Music is my** first passion. My father was a musician. I picked up playing guitar from him.
- > **One time when I** was living out, not only in Twentynine Palms, but out in the middle of nowhere it was just me and my guitar.
- > **There was an age between 16 and 21** where I couldn't put the thing down. I would take it to the bathroom with me.
- > **I learned everything by ear.** I have the chords memorized, so I don't read music.
- > **I only practice** two-to-three hours a day now. I had a metal band when I was younger. We did the whole Hollywood thing.
- > **Originally I did have ambitions** to get out of here, but I didn't know I didn't get along with the city, with the fast pace life-style and the freeways. It seems you're always in traffic in Los Angeles.
- > **While I was there the Rodney King riots occurred,** and that was pretty shocking for a small town boy to see. There were people driving on the sidewalks. I came into work one day and there was yellow tape and chalk lining around a body.
- > **It wasn't long before I came back.** About two weeks after the riots, I was gone.
- > **In Twentynine Palms, there really isn't** much to do. After about a week here, you can experience everything here. When your options are limited you can focus a little more on things.
- > **Here you are two hours away** from anything you could want to do, from Vegas to snowboarding in Big Bear or hitting the beach.
- > **Right in our back door we have** Joshua Tree National Park. You can spend months out there. It's an international destination for hiking and climbing.
- > **This friend of mine was** leading on this climb, going straight up. He had been drinking all night. He threw up, and I had to climb through that. That pretty much ruined rock climbing for me.
- > **I would really like to travel,** but I don't know if it's in my immediate future.



Relax with the paper



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LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Capt. Anthony Bariletti, ground combat element academic officer, Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group, smiles with his wife, Capt. Christine Bariletti and daughter, Viviana, 3, after receiving a Bronze Star Medal with combat distinguishing device Aug. 31.

MEDAL, from A1

when they found devices, they handled them professionally. (When they gained contact, they engaged them with unprecedented accuracy and lethality. It was an awe to watch. It really made my job easy.”

Part of the award citation focused on a firefight Bariletti was involved in, when he commanded a joint engineer task force on a raid into Deh Baba, Helmand province, Afghanistan.

“We were the lead element in the assault and we were kind of proving that route clearance can be used as a lead element in an assault,” Bariletti said. “That was the most effec-

tive way we could get dismounted infantry on the objective site.”

The task force in Deh Baba was engaged by the enemy with a heavy volume of small arms, machine gun and rocket-propelled grenade fire.

Bariletti’s citation read, “His bold actions and swift decisions defeated the enemy ambush, secured the objective and destroyed over 1,000 pounds of homemade explosives.”

“I’ve truly been blessed with 100 of the most magnificent Marines I’ve ever seen,” Bariletti said. “I’m honored and humble to wear this award. The combat distinguishing device is definitely something to

be proud of. I’m truly humble because the company did exact what I asked them to do and more. That’s the real reason that I’m here today to receive the award.”

Bariletti was presented the award by Col. Matthew Jones, commanding officer, MCTOG. Bariletti’s wife, Christine and daughter, Viviana were at the ceremony to see him receive the award.

“It’s great to see colleagues and members of 1st Tank Battalion and 3rd CEB in the ceremony,” Bariletti said. “But to see my wife and kids all together as a family meant a lot. I couldn’t have done any of it without the support at home.”

FAIR, from A1

they were going into a job interview. They can also wear their uniform of the day.

Even Marines and sailors not on their way out of the service have a lot to gain from the fair. Taking a look around is a good way to find out what opportunities are out there when they are ready to transition out.

“I think it’s important for Marines and sailors to get out there and see what they can do,” said Lance Cpl. Joseph Oord, postal clerk, Headquarters Battalion. “I know I want to see what kind of stuff they have in the medical field because that’s what I’m interested in. I want to see what is new in the medical field. I’ve done medical things in the past and I want to see if they carry over.”

The Education and Career Fair is slated for Sept. 19 at the West Gym and Fitness Center from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. For more information, call the Career Resource Center at 830-7225 or visit them in Building 1438.

MCLOG, from A1

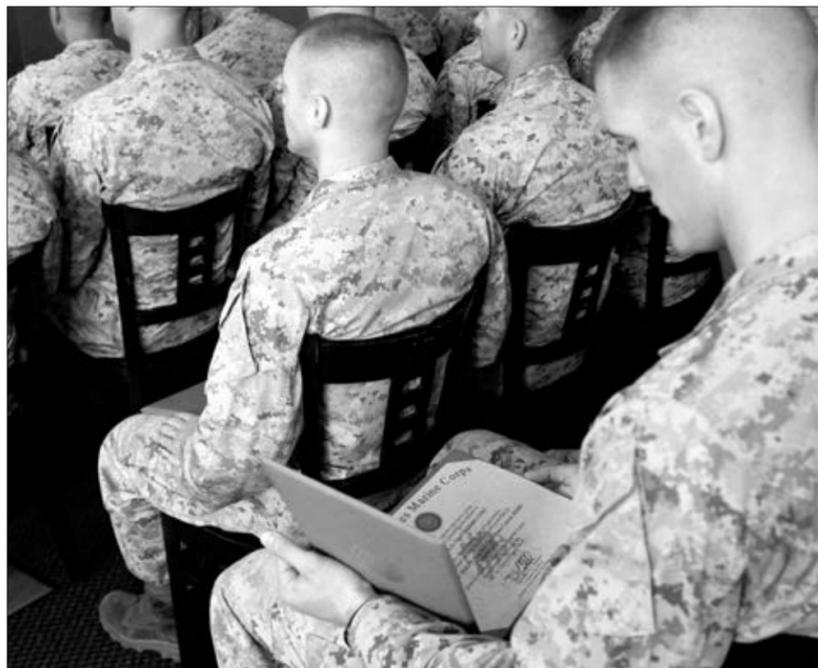
on the back,” Dana said. “You guys are great. It’s nice to know that the training here has come light years from when I was a young officer.”

The course plays on the diversity of the logistics field in the Marine Corps for a structured and well-rounded course.

“The great thing about a course like this is you get to pull in expertise from

all across the Marine Corps,” Beatty said. “We have students that range from the division side, (air combat element) and (Marine Expeditionary Units.) It’s not just from the officer side, but the senior enlisted ranks. It pulls in on all this expertise, knowledge and wealth of experience, and it’s a great opportunity to learn from.”

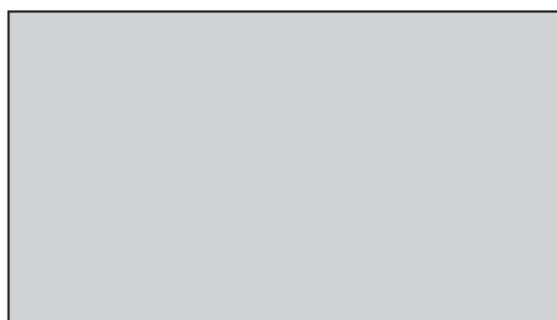
MCLOG was activated June 19 and is the Combat Center’s newest unit.



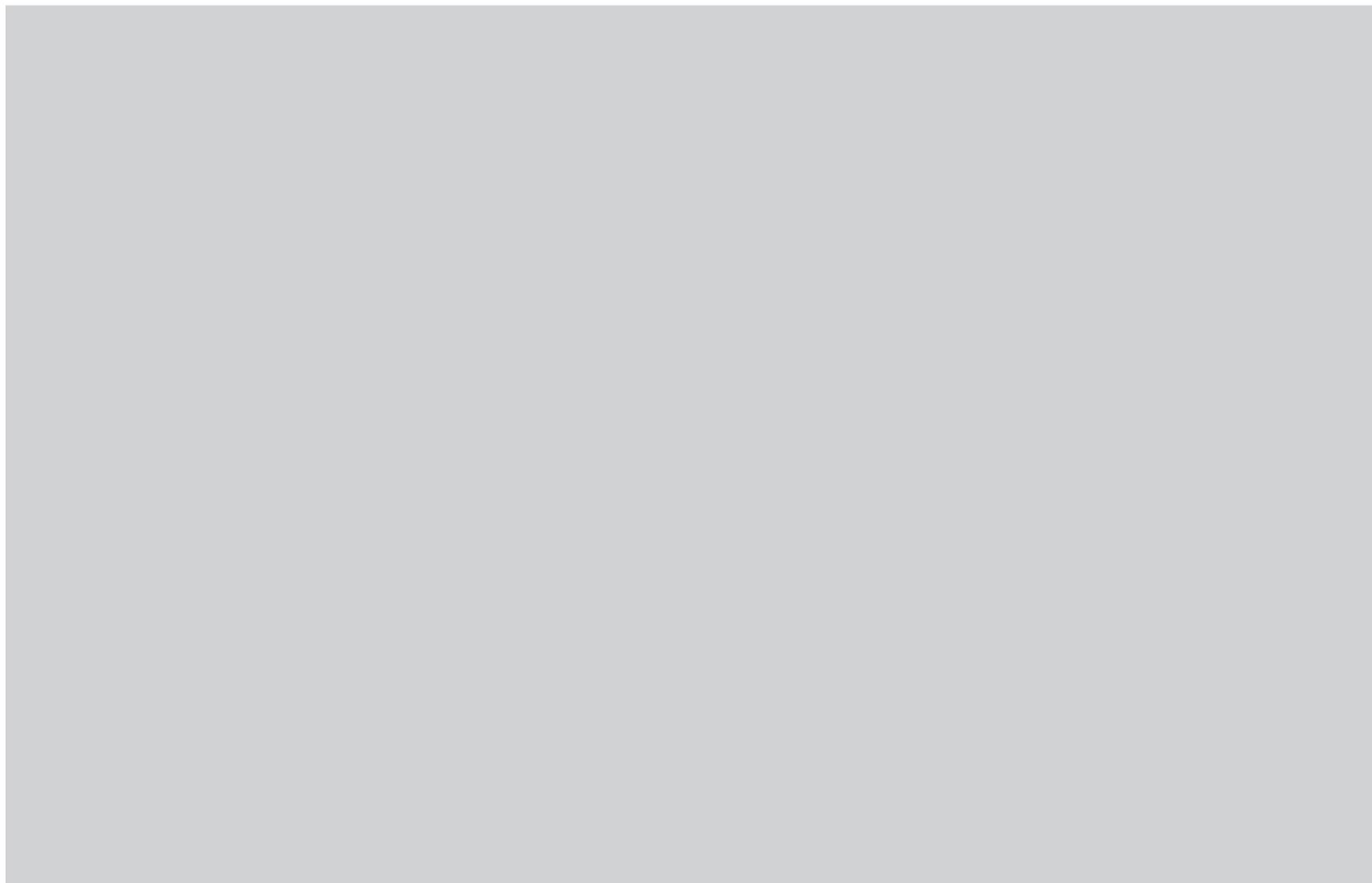
LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Capt. Kyle Opel, student, Intermediate Marine Air Ground Task Force Logistics Operations Course 4-12, looks at his completion certificate during the class’ graduation ceremony at the Combat Centers’ Officer’s Club Aug 31.

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COURTESY PHOTO

LOVE, from A1

went so far as telling me to go eat.”

The chaplain, Chaplain Vandress, gave Jessica a book to read to help her cope. Jessica started reading it aloud while she visited Anthony so he could hear her voice.

The detachment Marines tracked Jessica down at the hospital within hours, and gave her a folder full of information about the base and hospital. Their office was soon her safe haven.

“The Marine detachment was always there if I ever needed anybody to talk to. I went to their offices whenever it was not visiting hours.”

Jessica said she took these months one day at a time.

“I did not even think about future events I couldn’t control,” she said. “The hardest part was having to sign for the amputation of his left fingers and right hand. The doctors gave me time to think about it. I asked many questions and prayed I would make the correct decision.”

Jessica was at the hospital every day, 30 minutes prior to visiting hours at 6 a.m.

She started learning how to take care of Anthony while he slowly learned how to walk again.

“I saw the nurses apply the bandages quite often. The nurses had to undo his dressing, bathe him, which involved painful scrubbing, and then reapply his dressings. Sometimes the bandages would come loose, and in the attempt to fix it properly, I started asking questions. The nurses taught me how. After that, I wouldn’t let anybody else do it.”

The practice turned out to be helpful even after Anthony’s stay at the hospital was over.

“It did not dawn on me that Anthony would need it after he got out,” she said. “Anthony needed to have clean bandages every day. So we

had to get up early and take care of him. I was going to protect him.”

Jessica said this ordeal has built their marriage up to beyond where they had imagined it could.

“We know now how to take care of each other,” she said. “You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have. My choice was simple. I was not going to give up.”

The pair soon discovered their marriage, and Jessica’s determination to push through everything, was a minority attitude. Other wives were not handling the recovery process as well.

“With that kind of pressure, it does not take long for someone to show their true colors,” Jessica said. “I was acquainted with a wife (who) took a completely different path. Just being around her for a small amount of time was so negative. She was set on leaving.

“You are who you surround yourself with, and I was not going to let myself get dragged down.”

Anthony heard the same stories during group therapy sessions. He started to worry, but not for long.

“Doubt crossed his thoughts about if this could happen to him,” she said. “I assured him that I loved him, and that I wasn’t going to leave. It never crossed my mind.”

Anthony was released from inpatient care in October 2008, just a few months after the attack. The doctors and nurses joked, saying, “Marines heal faster.” His therapy lasted another two years after that.

In December 2008, after more than 70 surgeries, Anthony was well enough to travel back to California for his unit’s return from Afghanistan and for their memorial ceremony.

3 years ago

Jessica started going back to

school when Anthony’s medical appointments slowed to every other day. She scheduled classes for days when Anthony didn’t have therapy, and she only scheduled a few at a time.

“I was worried to leave him at home, and have a meal pass by.”

Going to school gave Jessica an idea, one to help Anthony build his confidence and independence.

“It took some work to get Anthony in school again. I made him go with me to schedule my classes at South Plains College. My counselor convinced him to take a couple classes; one with me, one without at similar times, so we could be close by.”

Thanks to the school’s disabled program, volunteers were available to help him fill in his Scantron answer sheets for tests.

1 year ago

With therapy and surgeries out of the way, Jessica and Anthony started focusing on normal, everyday worries, like housing and finances. Neither situation was good. The pair considered moving in with one of their parents.

All that changed when they were invited to a luncheon held by Operation Finally Home, a program that provides mortgage-free homes to wounded veterans. They thought they were going just to learn about the program and meet organizers. They had no idea they had already

been chosen as the first Lubbock recipients of a new, fully-furnished home.

The organization, in partnership with the Texas Home Builders Association and various donors, started on a 3-bedroom, 2.5-bath home with customizations that allow Anthony to open doors and get around unassisted.

“I met with designers and decorators and furniture folks,” Jessica said. “I had never picked out furniture before, nor dishes or vanity appliances, or color schemes.”

The home meant more to the couple than simply having a house. For them, it meant independence and security. For Anthony, it meant being a “regular, responsible adult.”

They were the first to

move in on their street. Since then, the neighborhood has grown.

“It’s normal, I suppose,” Jessica said. “Friends come over often. We invite them to swim, and we make dinner. We all pitch in. It’s a good time.”

Present Day

Jessica and Anthony are still students. This year is the first semester Anthony has a schedule that doesn’t include Jessica as a classmate.

“This is a big deal for him because he has been taking care of himself while he is at school. We got him an iPad to write notes on, a tape recorder, anything and everything we could to make his note taking easier.”

They also work with the Wounded Warrior Project, and Anthony is on the board for the West Texas Home Builders Association. He acts as something like a veteran representative.

He’s also learned how to be himself again.

“Anthony can do many things on his own,” Jessica said. “He can drive. I recently taught him how to drive standard. With every obstacle, we have somehow come up with how to adapt and overcome any little thing to help him be independent.”

One of those obstacles the pair still faces together is reactions to his appearance.

“At the beginning, I think it broke his heart a little when children did

hide,” Jessica said. “This was the stage when he was still getting used to his new reflection.

“I used to be very protective of him. Now I just smile. People are curious. Some ask, some do not. Anthony has a natural way of decreasing awkwardness. He is a natural with the kiddos. He would lean down and say hello, make that kid smile.”

Jessica said there are no more plans for any future surgeries, although they have had plenty of options for nose reconstruction. Anthony said he did not want to risk any further complications. Jessica said she does not feel he needs to change.

“Anthony looks handsome the way he is.”

Life has calmed down considerably since the attack. They live a quiet life, spending time with each other, their friends, and their three dogs, April, Chewy and Mongo. It is a change the Villarreals welcome.

“Life’s definitely slowed down,” Jessica said. “I believe we have settled wonderfully. Our unique and blessed situation is about as normal as it is going to get.”

The day of the attack changed both their lives, and almost cost them each other.

But it didn’t in the end.

And Jessica said that is the very best part of their story.



COURTESY PHOTO

[Above] Retired Cpl. Anthony Villarreal uses a prosthetic arm to help him mow his lawn in Lubbock, Texas. Anthony does what he can to keep living life like he used to before the attack that cost him most of his skin, an arm and all his fingers. He said his doctors consider mowing the lawn part of a continuous therapy program.

[Top, left] Retired Cpl. Anthony Villarreal and his wife, Jessica, relax outside a house in their hometown of Lubbock, Texas, donated to them through two different Texas organizations.

You Tube

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

LEAN & MEAN

Story and photos by
Sgt. Derek Cotton
Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay

New mortar system extends expeditious effects

POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii - Marines of 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, conducted live fire with the Expeditionary Fire Support System M327 120mm mortar for the first time Aug. 23.

The EFSS was employed in training by 3rd Marine Division artillery units for the first time during Exercise Spartan Fury 12.2. This weapons system seeks to improve the overall capability of Marine expeditionary warfare in indirect fire with the EFSS.

“We purchased this weapon so we have a light enough system to do amphibious operations and expeditionary operation,” said Maj. Philip Stauffacher, team leader, fielding and operations support. “We can transport this system internal with the MV-22, the CH-53E, the Army’s CH-47, and the AAVP7A1.”

This weapons system completes short-range and high-mobility section of the “Triad of Fires,” as opposed to the longer ranged systems that include rockets and larger artillery, Stauffacher said. These weapons system classes compliment each other to provide a full battle-field capability in artillery, that none could do on its own, he said.

Before the EFSS can be successfully employed in future Marine Corps combat

situations, Marines must first train to master it. Stauffacher, along with the New Equipment Training team from Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., were on site to assist with the assimilation of this new weapon.

Stauffacher and Capt. Jason Grim, battery commander, both said the new semi-fixed ammunition, sights and employment style presented a situation where Marines have to turn to their artillery roots to employ this slick artillery. The Marines carry a smaller gun, smaller

gear load, and use smaller Internally Transportable Vehicles, which are a fraction of the size of a Humvee, but retains much of the Humvee’s capability characteristics for transporting the French-derived EFSS, they said.

The Marines conducted numerous training events in prior weeks with Reconnaissance Selection Occupation Position training that took them through a dry-fire regiment of emplacing, prepping and displacing the EFSS numerous times, until their live-fire

shoot Aug. 23.

“It’s a new system with a lot of unknowns for us, and that’s where this training is answering those questions,” said Grim, native of York, Penn. The Marines were excited, and the firing of the EFSS was successful in preparing these Marines for “72 hours of shoot, move and communicate,” he said in reference to a relatively short time frame of the EFSS employment.

The EFSS was well received by the sections that employed it here. In addition to the reduction in the size of the EFSS system hardware, the weapons system requires less manpower to employ it effectively.

“It’s lighter and faster in its iron sights, and it takes less men,” said Sgt. Albert Camacho, section chief. “It takes a minimum of three Marines to be fire-capable, as opposed to seven Marines for the (M)777 (Howitzer).”

Grim said the standard for a section on the EFSS is five Marines; one section chief, one gunner and three cannoneers. They are mobile on two ITVs and fit the role of the Marine expeditionary units nicely, he said.

“You don’t have to do a six-gun movement,” Camacho said. “You can employ a section on its own. It gives us the ability to move freely, to get in those tight gaps that we didn’t have before.”



[Above] Lance Cpl. Cameron McAllister, cannoneer, 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, fires the Expeditionary Fire Support System M327 120mm mortar during Spartan Fury 12.2 Aug. 23.

[Left] Marines from 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, travel in their new Internally Transportable Vehicles Aug. 23. Charlie Battery fired Expeditionary Fire Support System M327 120mm mortars during 12th Marines’ Spartan Fury 12.2 training evolution.



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1ST TANKS FIELD MEET

Story and
 photos by
 Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi



Marines with 1st Tank Battalion competed against each other in a field meet held at Del Valle Field Aug. 31.

The Marines split up into teams, dividing seven different companies and sections.

"It's a lot of fun," said Lance Cpl. Derak Waldrop, tank crewman, Company C., 1st Tanks. "It brings everyone together and builds better unit cohesion as you get to know everybody."

The battalion was pulled away from its daily training for a day of competition and fun.

"We spend so much time out here in the desert, it's a good chance to have a little team work and competition," said Lt. Col. Greg Poland, battalion commander, 1st Tanks. "It lets them blow off some steam, compete a little bit and talk a little trash to each other."

The first event, a pull-up competition, had Marines sweating, as they lined up in front of the pull-up bars. In order to win, a team had to reach a combined sum of 1,000 pull-ups. Supply and Communications Company came

out ahead, hitting their mark at 18 minutes and 38 seconds.

The next event was the Tank Bar Toss, followed by the Humvee pull.

The bar toss is a traditional field event among the tankers.

"I think it's one of the more famous ones that I remember from my days being a captain," Poland said.

What sounded like an easy task, proved to be much more difficult than what Marines had expected.

"A lot of the younger guys come up here thinking it's going to be easy, only to be surprised by how heavy it actually is," Poland continued.

Every member from each team tossed the 42-pound bar as far as possible. Distance was measured after striking the ground ahead of them, and Co. A walked away with

the win.

Following the bar toss, the pace of the competition changed with the Humvee pull. Marines raced through the muddy track on the field to try to get the best time through the 100 meters. Grabbing the rope attached to the heavy vehicle. Service and Communications earned another victory, with a time just under 18 seconds.

Next, the Tanks Marines crowded around an inflated arena where the Officer Joust took place. Marines cheered as they watched the commissioned officers of 1st Tanks pummel each other off the platform with the padded pugle sticks.

"The joust was my favorite," said Waldrop. "It was fun to watch. Then again, my commander is big and we won."

After the joust came one of the most competitive events of the

day, the Tricycle Race. Two Marines on tricycles lapped around the track, the first to finish three laps was named the winner.

The competition for the race was heated. There were crashes and there was falling. Marines were prepared to do whatever it took to win. Some chose to use the tricycle as a scooter to move faster while others simply picked up their three-wheeled vehicle and ran around with it on their backs.

The test of speed transitioned to a test of strength with the Tug-of-War, the final event.

Fifteen Marines lay face down on both ends of the rope. At the signal, they jumped to their feet to tug their way to victory.

At the end of the meet, the points from each event were tallied up, naming the defending champions, Motor T, as the day's victors.

"I saw a lot of smiling faces, a lot of sweat and a lot of mud out here today," Poland said. "It reminds, these guys, they are part of something bigger, called the 1st Tank Battalion family."

"We spend so much time out here in the desert, it's a good chance to have a little team work and competition."

- Lt. Col. Greg Poland



[Top] Cpl. Joshua Pacheco, motor transport operator, 1st Tank Battalion, helps the Motor T Team in the pull-ups portion of 1st Tanks' field meet at Del Valle Field Aug. 31. The Motor T team went on to win the meet for the second time in a row.

[Above] Cpl. John Stewie, mechanic, 1st Tanks, throws the 42-pound Tank Bar in the Tank Bar Toss during the unit's field meet at Del Valle Field Aug. 31.

[Right] 1st Lt. MarkAnthony Villanueva, platoon commander, 1st Tanks, takes the center position in the tug of war during the unit's field meet at Del Valle Field Aug. 31





Liberty Call

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.

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

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.morongocasinoresort.com>.

Olivia Newton John

Timeless singer performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 15
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Joe Walsh

Former Eagles guitarist performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday Sept. 29
Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit <http://www.spotlight29.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, September 7

6:30 p.m. - **Marines Got Talent** Open to all hands
Midnight - **Batman: Dark Knight Rises**, Rated PG-13

Saturday, September 8

10:30 a.m. - **Free Matinee** Ice Age 3, Rated PG
12:30 p.m. - Ice Age 4, Rated PG
3 p.m. - Ice Age 4 3D, Rated PG
6 p.m. - People Like Us, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. - Madea's Witness Protection, Rated PG-13
Midnight - Seeking a Friend for the End of the World, Rated R

Sunday, September 9

12:30 p.m. - Ice Age 4, Rated PG
3 p.m. - Moonrise Kingdom, Rated PG-13
6 p.m. - Ice Age 4 3D, Rated PG
9 p.m. - Savages, Rated R

Monday, September 10

7 p.m. - Batman: Dark Knight Rises, Rated PG-13

Tuesday, September 11

7 p.m. - Ice Age 4 3D, Rated PG

Wednesday, September 12

5:30 p.m. - People Like Us, Rated PG-13
8:30 p.m. - Madea's Witness Protection, Rated PG-13

Thursday, September 13

5:30 p.m. - Magic Mike, Rated R
8:30 p.m. - Savages, Rated R

Routine message delivery run becomes deadly pursuit



COURTESY PHOTO

An everyday routine turns deadly during "Premium Rush" when a corrupt cop tries to intercept an envelope that's been handed over to a bicycle delivery courier.

NEIL POND

"Premium Rush"

Starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt & Michael Shannon
Directed by David Koepp
Rated PG-13, 91 min.

"Premium Rush," an everyday routine turns deadly when a corrupt cop tries to intercept an envelope that's been handed over to a bicycle delivery courier.

It's not your typical Hollywood cops 'n' robbers setup, that's for sure.

"I'm chasin' a bicycle," the cop (Michael Shannon) seethes in disbelief, as his sedan struggles to keep up with the zigs and zags of the cyclist (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) through congested New York City traffic.

What's in that envelope? Be patient. It takes a little while for the audience, and the characters, to find out. And even then, it takes a while longer to connect the mysterious piece of paper inside to a bigger story.

Part of the rush of

"Premium Rush" is the feeling that you're solving the puzzle along with the characters.

The audience naturally roots for Gordon-Levitt as Wilee, the pursued courier. He's a plucky young college dropout who loves his steel-framed bike, can't ever imagine himself in a gig that would require wearing a suit and tie, and takes so many chances—like speeding along without brakes—that his fellow-messenger girlfriend (Dania Ramirez) thinks he's nuts.

But the real scene-stealer is Michael Shannon as the crooked cop, who's obviously got some problems he's been able to conceal from his fellow officers—and who'll do whatever necessary to get what's inside that envelope.

And once Wilee understands why that piece of paper is so valuable, he'll do whatever he can to keep the cop from getting his dirty hands on it.

There are several other supporting characters necessary to the story, but none of them becomes more of an

audience favorite than the unsuspecting good-guy NYPD bicycle cop who repeatedly gets scuffed up in his vigorous chases after Wilee. You really feel sorry for the guy, played by professional movie stuntman Christopher Place (who's taken the fall for stars in numerous other movies, including "The Dark Knight Rises," "Tower Heist," "Captain America" and "21 Jump Street").

Director-writer David Koepp uses a variety of innovative techniques, including flashbacks that peel the story away one tantalizing layer at a time, sweeping zoom-ins and zoom-outs of a 3D map of Manhattan, and alternative routes through dangerous traffic situations as seen through Wilee's point of view as he processes several scenarios in slow-mo to find the one that won't injure or kill him.

A lot of movies have been filmed on location in New York, but you've got to give some special props to a "Premium Rush" in that department. Staging its bicy-

cle chase scenes throughout various bustling New York locations had to require some formidable logistics—not to mention a good deal of peril—for cast and crew.

Stick around for the credits and you'll see just how real and perilous the filming could be. A brief bit of docu-footage shows Gordon-Levitt, his bloody forearm and the smashed rear window of the taxicab into which he smashed—when the cab stopped and he didn't—while shooting a scene.

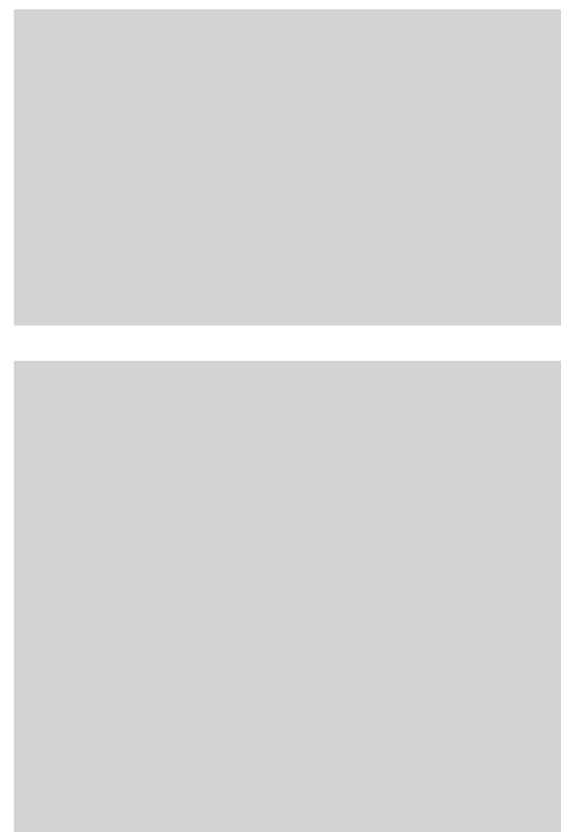
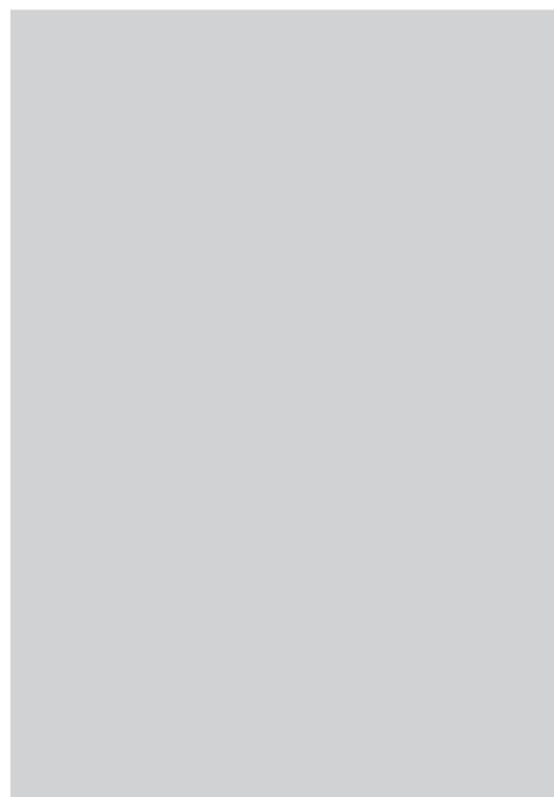
"Premium Rush" won't win any awards, but it's a well-made "little" movie that whisks along briskly, doesn't waste much time on side trips, and gives viewers a gritty crash course in what it's like to be a bike messenger in New York City—on a day when a normally fast-paced job abruptly shifts into dangerous hyper-speed.

And maybe it was just my imagination, but I could swear I walked out of the theater feeling like my own legs had turned to rubber after 90 minutes of vicarious peddling all over the Big Apple.



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

367-3577 For Advertising



WeekINPhotos

26th Marine Expeditionary Unit

Photos by
Cpl. Cody A. Fodale



[Top, left] Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett, 17th and current Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, presents a memorial flag to the family of retired Sgt. Maj. Henry H. Black, the 7th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, during the military funeral for Black at Quantico National Cemetery, Triangle, Va., Aug. 29.
[Top, right] Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett, oversees the folding of a memorial flag during retired Sgt. Maj. Henry Black's military funeral.
[Bottom, left] Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett, salutes the casket of retired Sgt. Maj. Henry H. Black.
[Bottom, right] Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett, retired Sgt. Maj. Carlton W. Kent, retired Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada and retired Sgt. Maj. Alford L. McMichael, lead the funeral procession for retired Sgt. Maj. Henry H. Black.



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