



Mountain Survival

3/7 learns mountain warfare in Bridgeport

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi

Lance Cpl. Jonathan Hill, rifleman, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, provides security during the battalion's final exercise at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif., Oct. 15.

Marines with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, arrived at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif., on Sept. 23, to learn the ins and outs of Marine Corps mountain operations and survival.

Unlike any other training center in the Marine Corps, the MCMWTC's unique venue provided 3/7 Marines with miles of arduous mountain terrain for training.

"The training here is different from Twentynine Palms," said Gunnery Sgt. Joseph Adcox, acting company first sergeant, Company L, 3/7. "The main aspect is the terrain. Going from a low elevation, flat desert environment to a mountainous somewhat populated with vegetation, we are not accustomed."

The unit's first week at the training center was spent acclimatizing and taking classes in a classroom and put on the mountain. Their days of lessons on ropes, knots and

pre-environmental training came in handy when their basic mobility training began the following week.

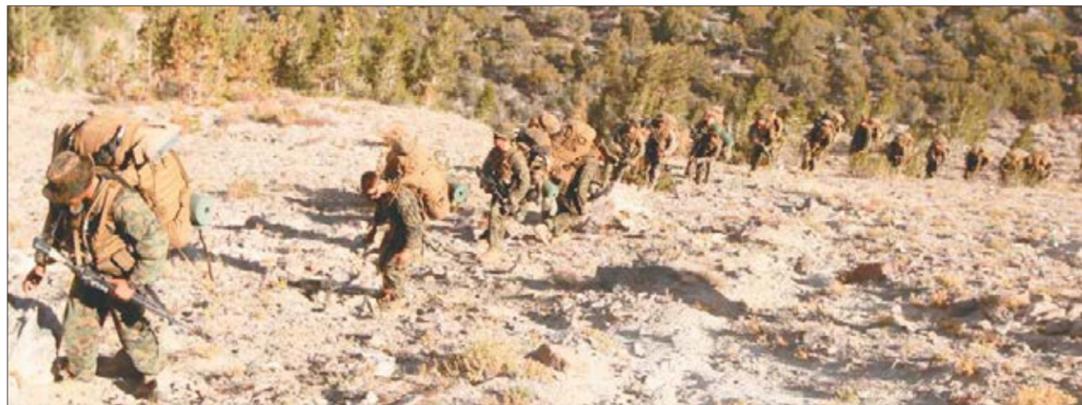
Throughout basic mobility, 3/7 Marines hiked through the mountainside. The Marines made long range movements across the mountains as they received survival and casualty training and learned to traverse different types of terrain.

Their survival training taught them how to properly use their gear as well as how to build weapons, tools and purify water.

"We learned various techniques that enabled us to come up here with a three day supply on our backs and with that, utilizing the mules, to get that one resupply over a four day period," Adcox said.

A group of 3/7 Marines were chosen by their command to take the Animal Packers Course. These Marines were

See **CUTTING EDGE** page A4



Marines with 3/7 conduct mountain operations during their final exercise at the MCMWTC Oct. 15.

HigherGround

'America's Battalion' takes on Sierra Nevada Mountains

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi
 Combat Correspondent

The Marine Corps offers an expansive number of training areas located all around the world. They then take Marines away from their home stations and set them under new and extreme conditions they have not been exposed to before.

Marines with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, stationed at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, were taken out of the tropic island beaches and delivered to the Sierra Nevada Mountains of the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif.

"Mountainous terrain takes up a lot of the environment on the earth as well as areas where we can possibly be engaged in a decisive fight in the future," said Sgt. Warren Sparks, team leader, Mountain Leaders Unit Training Group, MCMWTC. "We should be ready to fight in any climate and place."



Marines with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, patrol through the Sierra Nevada Mountains during their training at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif., Oct. 13.

The MCMWTC provides a venue for Marines to learn to operate in a mountainous environment. But the terrain and altitude here can make any task monumental.

"I think it was an exposure to them of the different parts of the Marine Corps has to offer for training," Sparks said. "It was a slap in the face when they first came here, as far as elevation, coming from sea level to 7,000 ft. at base camp to start training."

Hawaii's training areas feature high-altitude mountainous terrain and other rough landscape, but nothing like what they met at MCMWTC.

"Hawaii offers an array of training areas. We have the Kahuku training area, which is mostly jungle, somewhat mountainous but not as high elevation as here," said 1st Lt. Richard Aronson, executive officer, Company L, 3/3. "The Pohakuloa training area is at high altitude but you don't have as severe terrain. This is definitely a great opportunity to get out of our comfort zone and come up here and train to the mountain standards."

Many Marines from 3/3 traveled from the Hawaiian

See **3/3** page A6

G-6 learns tower climbing, keep power on, people safe

Lance Cpl. D. J. Wu
 Combat Correspondent

Members of the Combat Center's G-6 staff conducted a class on basic tower climbing techniques at Bearmat Hill Oct.29.

This was the first course taught internally by the G-6. They focused on basic climbing safety so the staff can fix antennas and communication systems on the tower.

"We were taught by private contractors at first," said Joe Becker, electronics technician and G-6 instructor. "But now we can come back to our unit and show them how to do it ourselves."

Safety is stressed in the course. The towers at the Combat Center can go up hundreds of feet, so the technicians need to know how all their climbing gears works and how to save themselves and each other if they get stuck during a climb.

"This course really gives us confidence in ourselves and the gear," said Cpl. Tylun Sherod, ground radio operator, G-6. "I just practiced a descent where I had to rescue myself from being stuck."

The internal G-6 instruction allows the Marines to be more comfortable with the people that are teaching them how to climb the towers.

"They trust us and we trust them," Becker said. "We work with these guys so they know who we are. We're just trying to get them acclimated to the height."

Many of the Marines in the course were first-

See **TOWER** page A6



LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

Laura William, wife of Capt. Eric William, operations officer, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment straps on a flak jacket during the unit's Family Fire Exercise Oct. 26. Family members fired their choice of service rifles and were afforded the rare opportunity to see a M-777 Howitzer in action.

Cannoneers show family how to shoot

Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi
 Combat Correspondent

More than 50 family members of Marines with 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, stepped into their Marines' boots for a day during the unit's Family Fire Exercise Oct. 26.

The event allowed the families to experience a small part of their Marines' everyday life on the range. Unlike a Jane Wayne Day, the event was open to more than just the spouses.

"Our audience was the entire family. We wanted this to be all inclusive for all the family, not just spouses," said Debra Lopez, family readiness officer, 3/11. "That's kind of been our focus. How we can expand the family readiness program beyond just the spouses. The program is about the Marines, and who is important to that Marine."

Families showed up to the Combat Center's Sunset Cinema early Friday morning for a brief on their day. While some dressed in

civilian attire, others borrowed their Marines' desert camouflage blouse to fit the role they'd be playing the rest of the day.

"It's pretty cool," said Ashley M. Bryan, wife Sgt. Christopher Bryan, motor transport operator, 3/11. "The spouses get to know what's going on and don't have to harass them at home to find out."

After their brief, everyone loaded up into several 7-Ton trucks and made the trip to Range 113, where 3/11 Marines had set up several events for the families.

The families were given a class on weapons safety and then were put on the firing line with M16 or M4 service rifles and a magazine filled with 30 rounds. They unloaded their magazines down range, round by round.

"It was fun, a good experience," said Regina Aleman, wife of Sgt. Christopher Aleman, ordnance chief, 3/11. "I got to shoot an M16 and it was actually really heavy."

For many of them, it was their

See **FAMILY** page A4



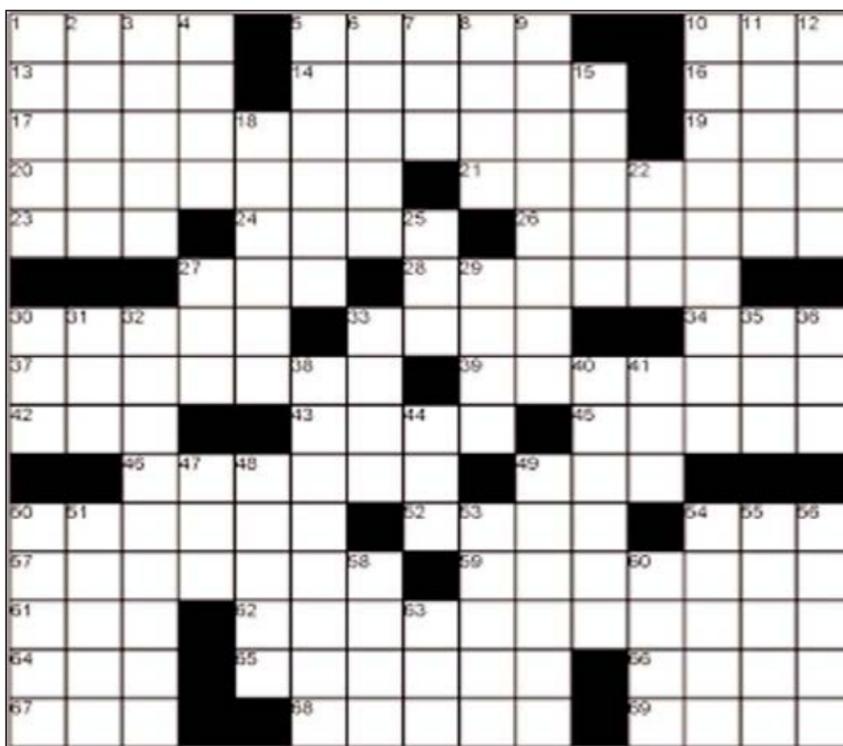
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See answers on page A5

WATCH THIS!



- ACROSS**
- 1. Slangy assent
 - 5. Syria's Bashar al-__
 - 10. Bleacher creature
 - 13. Bear in the air
 - 14. Marchers may take them up
 - 16. Hubbub
 - 17. Seer's prop
 - 19. Dove's sound
 - 20. Bob Cousy's team
 - 21. Baby blues
 - 23. Toothpaste tube abbr.
 - 24. Perfume holder
 - 26. Telly
 - 27. __ good deed
 - 28. "Peer Gynt" dancer
 - 30. Taj __
 - 33. "Ta-ta!"
 - 34. Perry Mason's field
 - 37. Language common in Miami
 - 39. Gate-crash
 - 42. One of a D.C. hundred
 - 43. Blue hue
 - 45. Pays attention to
 - 46. Spoilers of a sort
 - 49. Beiderbecke of jazz
 - 50. Alphonse's friend
 - 52. M, __ "mnemonic"
 - 54. Swabbie's rear
 - 57. Eight-footer
 - 59. Oran's land
 - 61. "... man __ mouse"
 - 62. Rocker known as "The Boss"
 - 64. Go astray
 - 65. "Joltin' Joe" or "The Mick"
 - 66. Heche or Rice
 - 67. __ "Kookie" Byrnes
 - 68. Industrious sorts
 - 69. Disney dog
- DOWN**
- 1. New Mexico's state flower
 - 2. Blew it
 - 3. Safe havens
 - 4. "... why __ thou forsaken me?"
 - 5. Tree that yields gum arabic
 - 6. Zesty dip
 - 7. Second-stringer
 - 8. Rush job letters
 - 9. Removal of text
 - 10. 5¢, for a nickel
 - 11. Love to pieces
 - 12. Wild West knot
 - 15. Winter fall
 - 18. Villa d'Este locale
 - 22. The "p" in wpm
 - 25. Chou En-__
 - 27. Dapper dude
 - 29. Catch but good
 - 30. Submissions to eds.
 - 31. Knuckle-dragger
 - 32. Heels-over-head maneuver
 - 33. 1987 Best Actress
 - 35. Stick on
 - 36. Jazzman Montgomery
 - 38. Note-taker's tablet
 - 40. Possessions
 - 41. "Oedipus __"
 - 44. Botanist Gray
 - 47. Prefix meaning "ear"
 - 48. __-turvy
 - 49. Places for stagnant water
 - 50. Honker in a skein
 - 51. Pungent-smelling
 - 53. Not as nutty
 - 54. Bout locale
 - 55. Diabolical one
 - 56. Chief Justice, 1836-64
 - 58. First Bond flick
 - 60. List-ending abbr.
 - 63. Tina didn't like him

Combat Center

DISASTER PREP



Importance of preparing for disaster

NIKI MCBAIN
MAGTF/TC/MCAGCC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

Chances are you know someone who was affected by Hurricane Sandy. After every big disaster people across America start thinking, "Could that happen to me?" Living on the west coast, chances are fairly good that we will never see a super storm the likes of Sandy, but there is still a strong possibility that we will see some of the after-effects here in the Morongo Basin. So what is one of the lessons we can learn from the eastern seaboard?

Are you a renter? Make sure you have renter's insurance. Many renters believe that their landlord's insurance policy covers them. Unfortunately this is not the case. The homeowner's insurance, if they have it, only covers the structure should it sustain any damage during a disaster- it does not cover your personal items or your living expenses should you be displaced after a disaster.

Are you a homeowner? Know your insurance policies- Many homeowners policies do not cover all the things we

would expect them to. Make sure your policy also includes earthquake coverage as well as flood insurance if you live in a designated flood plain. Ensure you know whether you are covered for the cash value of your items (the amount they are worth today), or complete reimbursement value (the cost to replace the item today).

Figure out how much coverage you really need. Take an inventory of the items in your home along with the replacement value of those items. Take pictures. Write down serial numbers. Mark any items of significant value so that if they are lost or stolen and later recovered you will be notified. Once you have taken this inventory talk to an insurance agent about policies and remember to store your inventory in a secure location; consider sending it along with your policy to a family member who lives out of the area or placing it in a fire-proof safe.

For more information on insurance and what you really need to be covered visit the California Department of Insurance Website at <http://www.insurance.ca.gov/>.

Headquarters Battalion hosts family day



LANCE CPL. LAUREN A. KURKIMILIS

Marines from Headquarters Battalion play volleyball at the Headquarters Battalion Family Day Oct. 25 at Del Valle Field. Friends and family of Headquarters Battalion met for a day of games, food and activities. For more photos of the event, check out the album on Facebook.

Relax with the paper



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- 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>

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

THE BIG SISTER

Sgt. Heather Golden

Art student, Otis College of Art and Design
26, Dallas, Texas

INTERVIEWED BY

LANCE CPL. LAUREN A. KURKIMILIS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY

CPL.SARAH DIETZ

October 28, 2012

Editors Note: Sgt. Heather Golden worked as a Combat Correspondent for the Observation Post. She is now transitioning to civilian life and is attending Otis College of Art and Design

- > **I don't like this whole** being on the other side of the interview thing. Is this what we do to people?
- > **My parents have been** divorced since I was three, so I guess I've always known them separately.
- > **They met as Marines** and now my mom is an

English teacher and my dad is a history teacher.

> **They never really talked to each other** unless it was about me or my brother for like 14 years. So it was really funny when my mom called me one day and told me she was going back to school and she was going to get her teaching degree. Then my dad called me literally about a week later and said, "Hey guess what kiddo, I'm going back to school to be a teacher." I just started to laugh. They had no idea they were both doing the exact same thing at the same time. I got to go to both their graduations and that was pretty cool.

> **I got most of how I look** from my mom, except for my hair, that's my dad's, and my eyes. Everything else is my mom.

> **Also, my 13-year-old** sister is like my little twin, so if you put pictures together of the three of us, it looks like you're looking at the same person but different decades.

> **I remember her working really really late** when I was six or seven. I think she's a very independent, strong person and I think I'm now more like her than I'd like to admit.

> **I've noticed I grew to have** her sense of humor. Which is funny because, when I was a kid, it was mortifying. But now we have the same jokes, so, I guess, what does that say?

> **My dad and I had** a pretty rocky relationship when I was younger and he hated it when I joined. But then he went to my graduation and I think that was when he started to remember what he loved about the Marine Corps. Ever since then, we've gotten so much stronger as father and daughter.

> **Most of my sense of humor** I got from my mom but then there's that one cruel streak, that snappy, witty side that comes off rather insulting. I think I got that from my dad because he has a very mean sense of humor.

> **Sean, my brother, spelled s-e-a-n**, not the other way, he would get mad at me, he was my best friend and my worst enemy growing up. I think because he's only three years younger.

> **He's a pastry chef right now**, which is funny because my mom will tell her friends, "One of my kids is a Marine and one of my kids is a pastry chef. My daughter is the Marine." It's just funny because it's a deviation from what you would expect.

> **My sister Jessica** is 17, which I think I had a mild heart attack when she told me she was turning 18 this year because last I had checked she hadn't even started puberty yet. She's the calm one. She's not quite shy, she's just more observant.

> **The next sister is Samantha**. Out of all my sisters I think I'm closest to her. She's 15, which also is shocking. We talk often and she continuously asks when I'm coming home.

> **And then the youngest, Erin**, is like my little mini-me. She's 13 and I think she's just now in

that phase where she's developing her sense of humor so the poor thing is in the awkward stage. I didn't really get to know her before I left because she was 5 and now she's like a person.

> **For the longest time Erin** wanted to grow up to be a Marine like her sister but now she's discovered eyeshadow, so I don't know if that's still her life goal.

> **It sounds really cheeseey and cliché** to say, I joined because my parents were both in. But that's why I joined, because they were both Marines.

> **It goes a little deeper** than that though. It's what I was comfortable around. My first memories were when my parents were both in and I think it was just the mentality, people and culture of a military lifestyle that I've been so comfortable with.

> **My mom never regretted** it so it seemed like something I wanted to try for myself.

> **I didn't get what I wanted out of the Marine Corps** or what I expected to find during my first four year tour. It wasn't a disappointment. I just hadn't seen or experienced what I was looking for, even though I didn't quite know what that was. So I thought that if I got out after that first go, I would never know what I could have found, those four years would have been sort of wasted. I've never regretted re-enlisting because I had so much fun in the last four years.

> **I've been stationed in Parris Island**, that's pretty much where I did my whole first enlistment. Then I went to Okinawa and then here.

> **My favorite duty station**, hands down, was Okinawa. A lot of people when they go they either hate it or they love it and I was one of the ones that loved it. You could get out and experience these other people and this other culture that is completely different from what we are. I had fun going out and essentially getting myself lost.

> **I learned how to speak** to the cabbies who knew no English at all, which was fine because it's their country. It was an adventure. Sometimes I would just get on the bus, pick a random spot and explore everything around it. That's how I got to try the best food and meet the coolest people. Those are some of my favorite memories.

> **I loved being somewhere** new and different. I got to go to other countries when I was there too on little one-month mini deployments. I went to the Philippines, Guam, Thailand and mainland Japan.

> **In the Philippines** we met a little girl that we met and nicknamed "Mango." I was so surprised at how much she reminded me of my little sister. Their mannerisms were the same down to the way they laughed and the jokes they found funny. When you go to another country, everything is so different than what you're used to and you always notice the differences, but I thought it was really neat to find some of the similarities between us and them.

> **That's a really scary thought**, "When I grow up." I'm terrified of change even though being in the military requires you to be really flexible. The thing is, no matter what situation you're put in in the Marine Corps, you always have that safety net, you'll always be taken care of. You don't have to worry about your next meal, or your next paycheck, or whether or not you'll get fired. Well, some of us don't have to worry about getting fired.

> **Now I'm pushing myself out** into the "real world." When I left the "real world," I was a teenager and now I'm not. I know that the Marine Corps isn't who I am. I'm definitely an individual, but I've grown to be the person I am over the past eight years while in, so that's always going to be a part of me.



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CUTTING EDGE, from A1

taught how to use pack mules as a logistical asset in resupplying units in otherwise unreachable terrain as well as getting injured Marines evacuated using the mules.

The unit also conducted casualty training through the use of several UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. Marines called in 9-lines to the air officers who would guide the birds to the location of the unit. Simulated casualties were evacuated out of areas that would take normal vehicles hours to reach.

The steep earth of the training center was used to its fullest in the Marines' instruction on climbing and rappelling. They used their lessons on ropes and knots to climb and rappel off the rocky ridges of the mountains.

"In the desert there aren't a lot of places you can practice rappelling or rock climbing," said Lance Cpl. Adam Burzynski, team leader, 3/7, in reference to the Combat Center's training areas.

After basic mobility, 3/7 Marines headed to main side for a few days' rest and to prepare for their final exercise.

"During basic mobility, they will have their combat loads, they might realize there are things they do and don't need in their packs," said Sgt. Warren Sparks, team leader, Mountain Leaders Unit Training Group. "When they come back down they can re-adjust and be able to whip it on for the FINEX."

The FINEX tested Marines on everything they learned over the course of their training at Bridgeport. They needed to survive the environment as well as tactically conduct their combat operation.

"All the training leading up to this con-

ditioned us for what we had to do for the final exercise," Adcox said.

At night temperatures dropped below freezing and the days were spent procuring and purifying water and conducting combat operations. The Marines stayed vigilant, always aware of a possible attack by a simulated enemy across the ridgeline of the adjacent mountains.

They conducted interdiction operations, established blocking positions and sent out patrols as they maneuvered through the steep terrain of the training areas.

The shifting dirt of the sharply angled mountains proved to be difficult to traverse, especially with the thick bundles of vegetation that often cut them off, forcing them to reroute to reach their destination. Their load of ammunition, radio equipment, food, water and personal gear exceeded 100 pounds, pushing them to their physical limits as they hiked in the high altitude.

In addition to their constant movement by foot, heliborne 3/7 Marines conducted operations taking them further out to new training areas.

After several days in the mountains, the Marines returned to main-side to return their gear and rest before their return to the Combat Center.

"This training enables us to not only successfully meet our missions in this particular type of environment, but also preparations for Afghanistan and possible other mountain environments," Adcox said. "Changing the environment and giving the variety of different climates and places offered to the Marines is a great opportunity and one that every unit should experience."



PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI



[Above] Marines with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, patrol through the Sierra Nevada Mountains during the battalion's final exercise at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Oct. 13.

[Left] Staff Sgt. Charles Case, platoon sergeant, 2nd platoon, 3/7, provides security during the battalion's final exercise Oct. 15 at MCMWTC.



LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

Sammie Escamilla, daughter of the commanding officer, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, discovers how much an artillery round weighs during the Family Fire Exercise Oct. 26.

FAMILY, from A1

first time shooting a rifle. Some found a hidden talent, while other realized shooting was harder than they had expected.

From the firing line, family members cycled through different stations, resting at the bleachers with their pre-packaged military rations. They also used night vision goggles to navigate through a small obstacle course set inside a blacked out tent.

The Family Fire Exercise ended with a bang. After cycling through, they packed up and headed to the main event in the field — the live battery shoot.

Marines with 3/11 had gone out into the field the night before and set up their M777 Howitzers on the gun line as well as several static displays. They took pictures taking a position in the fighting holes with machine guns and were instructed on several other aspects of the battalion, such as the vehicles and the Fire Direction Control Center.

The FDCC gave several family members the chance to call "Fire" over the communication systems.

Once the call for fire was made, the families stepped aside and watched as the gun line erupted into a fury of smoke and gun powder. The Marines quickly loaded up the Howitzer and awaited the loud cry of "Fire." When the loud boom was heard, smiles came across the faces of family members.

"I didn't even know what to expect," Aleman said. "It was so loud my ears were like, 'oh.'"

However, what most family members looked forward to was seeing the Howitzers up close. They were led onto the firing line, where they learned about the weapon system and its different types of ammunition.

The family members left the field with a better understanding of their Marines' everyday lives.

"I think they are really tough," Aleman said. "I could not do this every day and for them to be able to do this for a month straight, it's crazy."

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ONGUARD

Dog handlers teach kids how to stay drug free

[Right] Cpl. Jared Sellers, K-9 handler, Provost Marshal's Office, takes an attack from two military working dogs at a K-9 demonstration at Condor Elementary School for Red Ribbon Week, Oct. 26.

[Bottom, left] The students of Condor Elementary School laugh as they watch a K-9 demonstration presented by PMO's military working dog handlers.

[Bottom, right] Cpl. Jared Sellers, runs from military working dog Lil Rex during a presentation at Condor Elementary.



PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

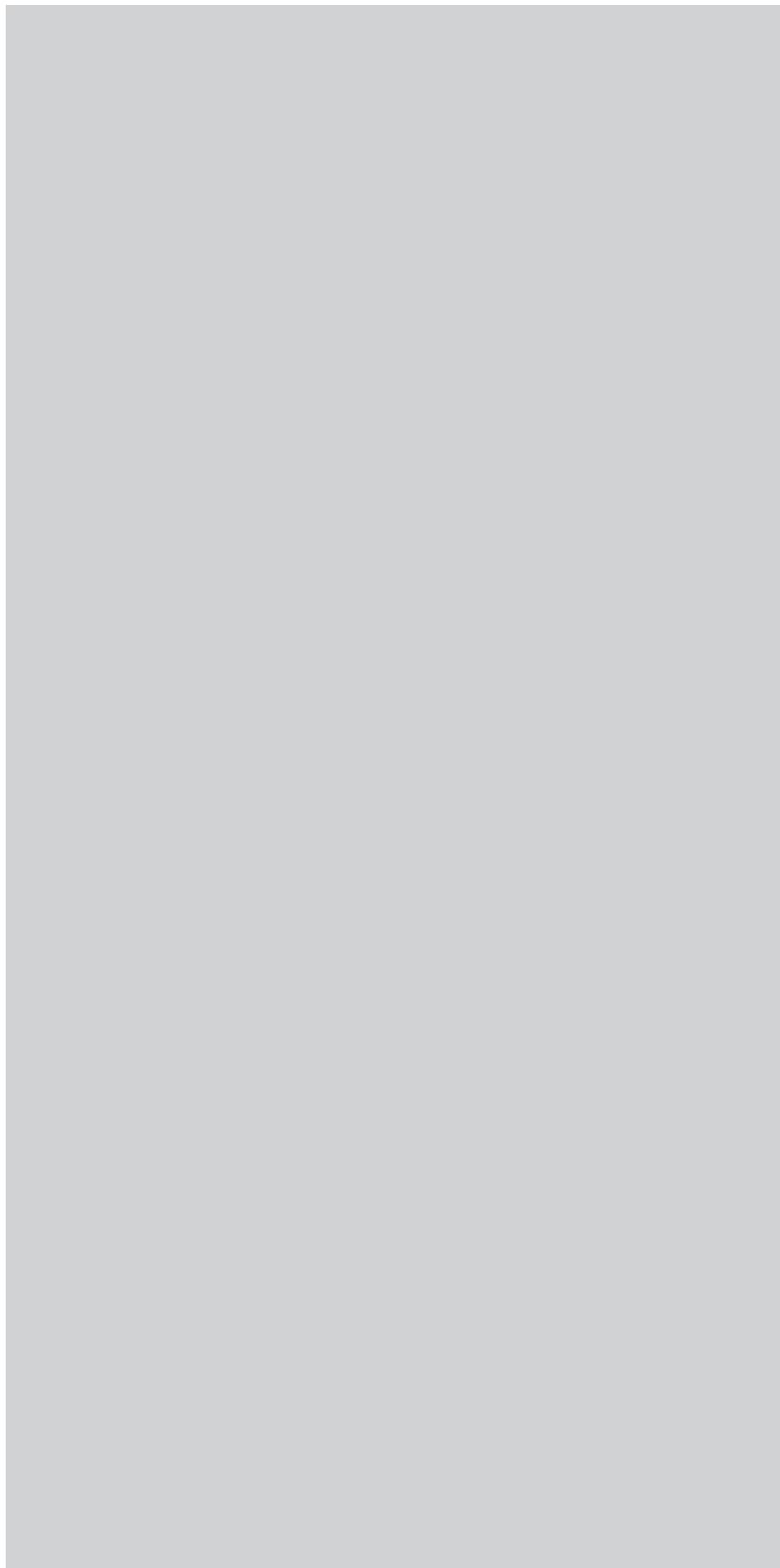
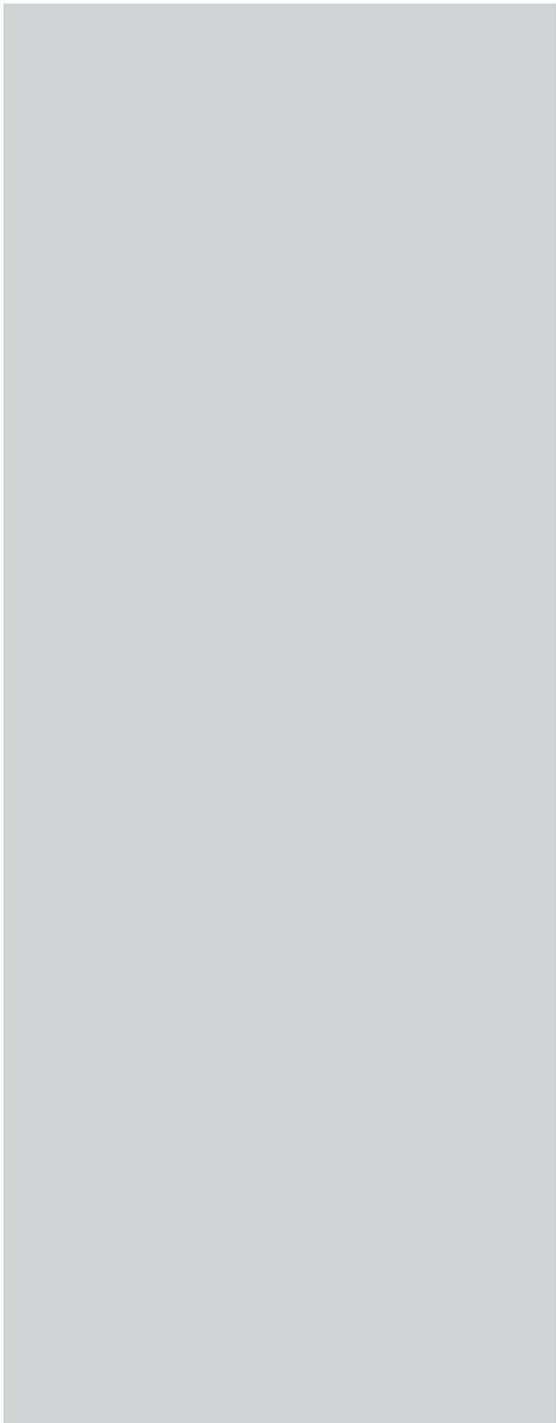
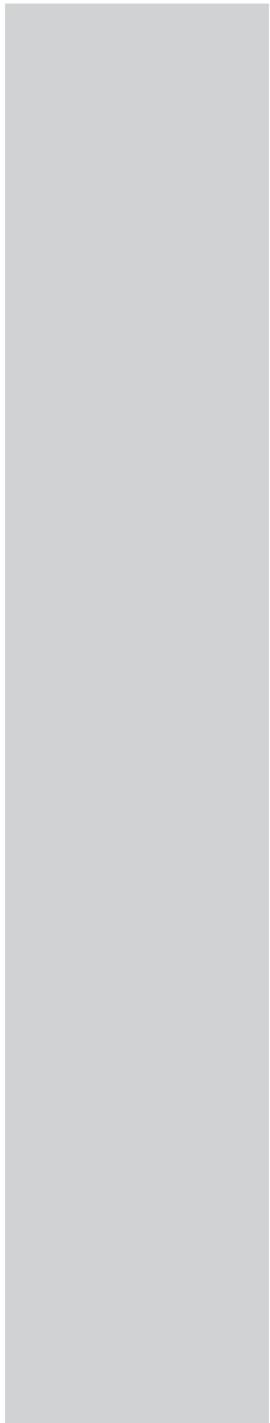


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8	2	6	9	7	4	5	3	1
9	1	7	8	5	3	6	2	4
3	4	5	1	6	2	8	7	9



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





PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

3/3, from A1

islands to Bridgeport with an expectation of what they would be encountering. They had hiked through rough terrain and high altitudes before. They understood Bridgeport might be a little tougher, but some underestimated the extent.

"A lot of us came out here thinking kind of cocky because we thought that the Kahuku training area in Hawaii had a lot of hills," said Lance Cpl. Matthew Nolan, squad leader, Co. L, 3/3. "We kind of got a reality check around day three when we moved from Penguin to Sardine Rock and we started rappelling with main packs and we were all kind of like, 'Wow this is not Hawaii.' I think overall we have adapted pretty well."

The Marines spent 12 days in basic mobility, learning to effectively traverse the terrain with gear. They were familiarized with all aspects ranging from survival to tactical proficiency. They were tested mentally in their knowledge as well as physically on the mountains.

"Bridgeport is a little different from Hawaii, which is my baseline. It's not a jungle, but you're still going up hundreds of meters of elevation at a time and that can be pretty rough," Nolan said. "I think the biggest shocker for me was every time you go up a hill there's just another one after it, so you've got to get used to that."

After their 12 days of lessons and acclimation mountainside, the Marines were ready for their five-day final exercise. The FINEX combined everything they had learned throughout their stay

at the MCMWTC.

"It's warm in the day time out here. They sweat a lot, lose a lot of hydration. At night time, temperatures drop. They get cold and wet," Sparks said. "The first night or two they had snow and rain. They were experiencing a lot of that."

During the FINEX, 3/3 Marines conducted ambushes, casualty evacuations, vertical cliff assaults, defensive operations and patrols through the rough mountain terrain. The wide expanse of land provided Marines with a setting to conduct their company-sized training that they could not easily do in the training areas at home.

"They both bring something to the table that's unique. Bridgeport has a lot of company-sized training that you can't do in Hawaii because there isn't a lot of open terrain," Nolan said. "On the flip side, Hawaii offers you a lot of squad-level training which is good for me as a squad leader and my squad. It really works on unit cohesion when you work on that small unit leadership."

After five days of traversing the steep mountains, 3/3 Marines traveled to main side and prepared to head back to Hawaii.

"We've taught them a lot of things to help them when they go back to Hawaii with the wet environment as far as waterproofing their bags and dealing with the environment," Sparks said. "I've sat down with a lot of Marines and they've said it's the best training they've ever had. Hopefully they take a lot from this place."



[Above] A Marine with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, calls in a 9-line to a helicopter during their training at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif. The Hawaii Marines spent five consecutive days in the mountains for their final exercise.

[Left] Marines with 3/3 load up a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter as part of their training at MCMWTC. The training was designed to get the Marines, stationed at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, out of their familiar tropical climate and into a very different mountainous terrain.

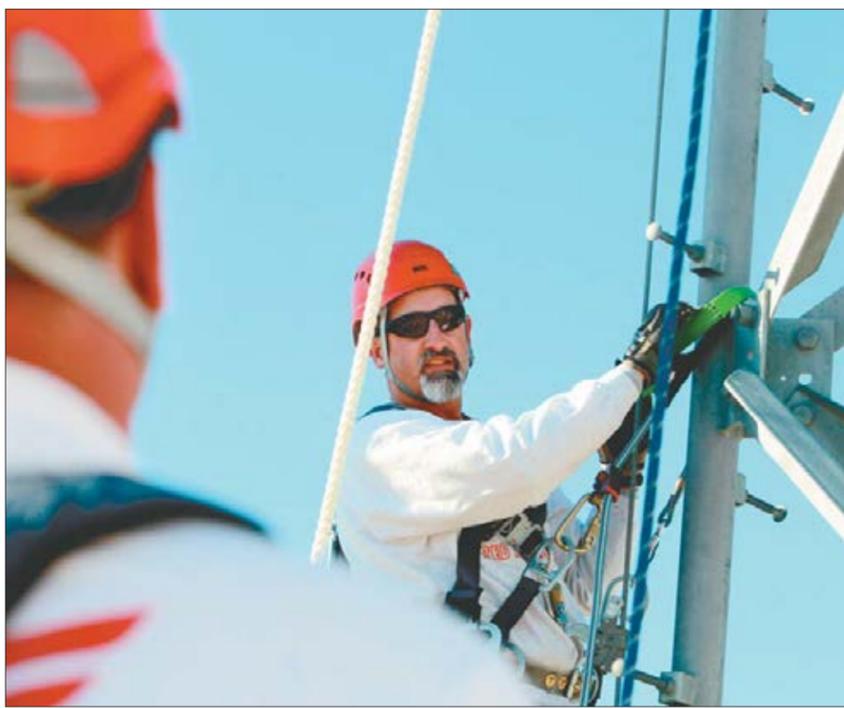
YouTube

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**LOOKING
for local
entertainment?**

See page B2 for our
LIBERTY CALL
section



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Paul Ratchford, electronics technician and instructor, shows students proper climbing techniques when scaling a communication tower. The students were training to properly climb and rappel off the towers to conduct repairs and keep information flowing.

TOWER, from A1

time climbers. The instructors made sure the Marines had the knowledge needed and were comfortable before they made their ascent.

"It's really hard to fight the urge to look down," Sherod said. "I think looking up was worse during the climb. It's nerve racking, especially when it gets

windy up there. I was scared at first but now it's just a joy."

The tower climbing training was necessary for the Marines to learn how to do their job safely and efficiently.

"These towers have to be maintained at all times," Becker said. "We're making sure that these Marines are able to do their jobs and do it safely on these towers."



MUD RUN

Combat Center personnel take on 2012 Coyote Mud Run
Story and Photos by Lance Cpl. Lauren A. Kurkimilis

Running through the terrain, the air was chilled and she could feel the mud dripping off her legs, arms and face. Her hands were covered in the thick, dark gunk, looking as though she were wearing gloves. Her shoes felt heavier and there was even mud between her toes, but she kept running. Just as she and her team thought they had seen the worst of it, they turned the corner and saw their next challenge, a two foot deep trench, filled with brown mud and murky, ice cold water. They knew they had to crawl through it. Sgt. Carmen Pilman began to wonder what she had gotten herself into.

"This was my first mud run ever and I was not expecting it to be like this," said Pilman, adjutant non-commissioned officer, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School. "It was freezing cold, crazy muddy and I had so much fun."

Approximately 800 Marines, family members and other DOD personnel ran in the Coyote Mud Run Oct. 26 and 27, held at Del Valle Field. They faced a 6.2 mile-long course that featured 29 obstacles including wall climbs, muddy low-crawls and an ice bath.

"The course was designed to make the runners think it was different than it was," said Cpl. Yamil Tomassini, embark chief, MCCES. "We kept all the good stuff in the back, that way when they started running, they wouldn't have a clue what was coming up."

The Combat Center's first mud run took months of planning and help from multiple units and organizations on base.

"We started building the course around October 15th," Tomassini said. "We started with laying out the route and everyday we would have to re-grade it because the wind would come and make the path not as visible. October 18, we started moving the obstacles in. We had to build them on site because we were using 6 inches tall by 6 inches wide beams at 16 feet long to transport a fully constructed obstacle all the way down there would have been near impossible. Then we graded and police called the entire route, to get rid of large rocks and any other hazards."

With the help of other Combat Center units, MCCES was able to turn areas of the Combat Center's dry desert land into mud trenches, slides and hills.

"The Monday before the race, we had CLB-7 start soaking the ground," Tomassini said. "We knew it had been dry for a while and it would take

a while for the water and mud to start building up."

CLB-7 tested the water used to soak the ground, beforehand, to ensure it was potable, Tomassini said.

"They supported us through the week and they came in at 3 a.m. both days and soaked the ground until the the race started at 7," Tomassini said. "We can't take all the credit because without them supporting us with water, we wouldn't have had a mud run."

Corpsmen from 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, offered a helping hand by being stationed at every other obstacle to ensure safety and tend to injuries.

Participants were grouped in waves and released 15 minutes apart to ensure the obstacles wouldn't become too crowded. The run took approximately four hours for all participants to run through, each day. When they crossed the finish line they were able to rinse off, eat and enjoy festivities such as bounce houses, games and music.

"That last half mile was really tough," Pilman said. "By that time, all the mud was drying and caked everywhere. It was stuck in my hair, in my clothes, in my eyes. Finishing the race was the best feeling ever. Well, and rinsing out all the mud."

"I would ask people what the best part was and some would say, 'The ice bath,' and I'd ask what was the worst part. Some would say, 'The ice bath,'" Tomassini said. "So, people had different reactions but all together they loved it, even the kids."

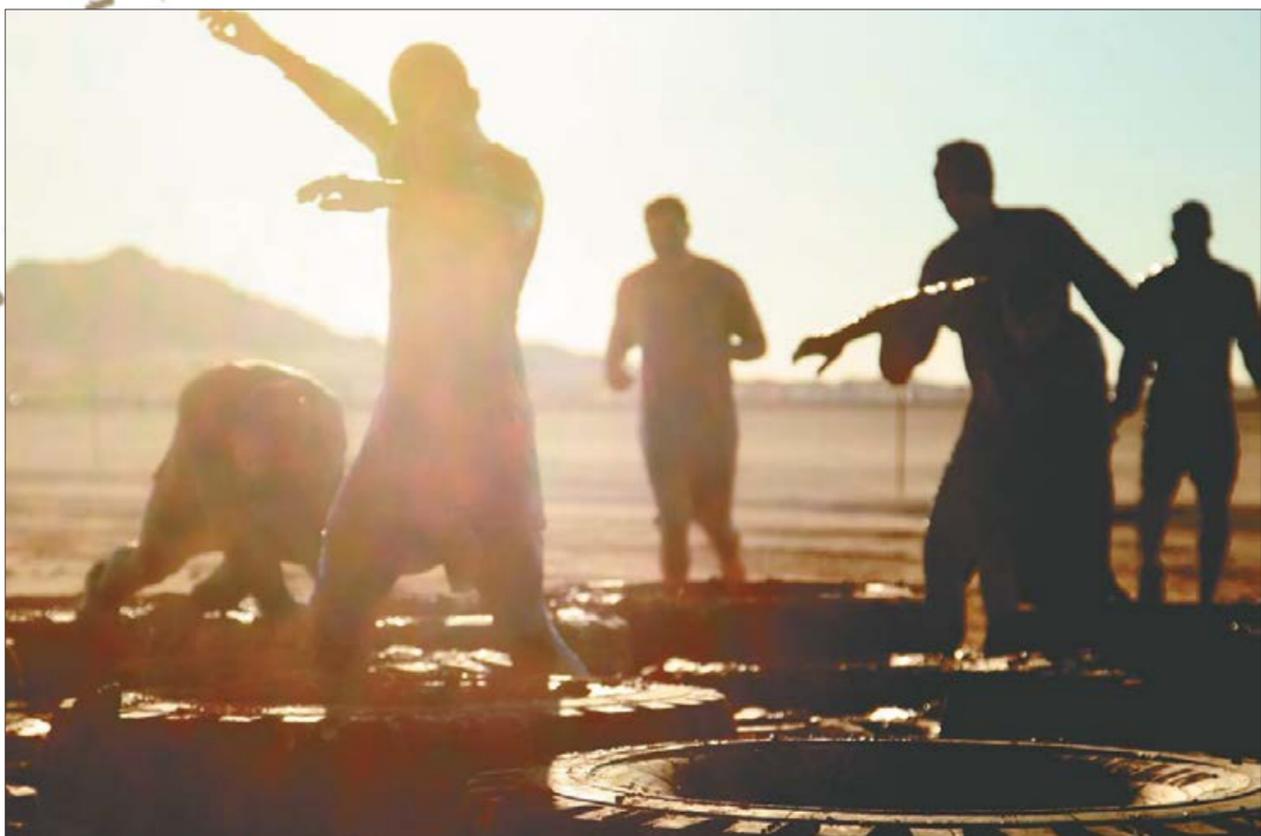
In addition to the 10k, there was a kid's mud run offered, making the event suitable for the

"By that time, all the mud was drying and caked everywhere. It was stuck in my hair, in my clothes, in my eyes. Finishing the race was the best feeling ever. Well, and rinsing out all the mud."

- Sgt. Carmen Pilman

whole family. The kids course was a one-mile course with 10 obstacles that were smaller versions of the obstacles on the 10k. They got to do windows, up-downs, low-crawls and tire hurdles.

"The satisfaction people got out of it was what made all the work worth it," Tomassini said. "The first year is always going to be the hardest year to run but now we have all the obstacle and the groundwork laid, so next year will be even better."



Combat Center Marines and family members and personnel participate in the 2012 Coyote Mud Run Oct. 26 and 27. The Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School organized the 10 kilometer race with 29 obstacles that consisted of mud crawls, wall climbs and ice baths.



Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Monday: Margarita Mondays
 Thursday: Rockin' Karaoke 7-10 p.m.
 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.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Monday: Margarita Mondays
 Thursday: Warrior Night 4:30 - 9 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 from 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
 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

Open Mic Night

Local bands play
 When: Monday, Nov. 5, sign ups start at 7 p.m.
 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.



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

Lower Desert

Restless Heart

Night of classic music
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 3
 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>.

John Legend

Nine-time Grammy Award winner performs
 When: 9 p.m., Friday, Nov. 16
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino 84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
 For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Moon Walker

The ultimate Michael Jackson experience
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 17
 Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort 46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
 For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit <http://www.spotlight29.com>.

Sinbad/Zapp

Comedian performs
 When: 8:00 p.m., Friday, Nov. 23
 Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa 49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
 For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinosort.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, November 2

6 p.m. - Possession, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. - Lawless, Rated R
 Midnight - Hit and Run, Rated R

Saturday, November 3

10:30 a.m. - **Free Matinee** Cars 2, Rated PG
 12:30 p.m. - Premium Rush, Rated PG-13
 3 p.m. - Finding Nemo 3D, Rated G
 6 p.m. - House at the End of the Street, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. - Lawless, Rated R
 Midnight - Resident Evil, Rated R

Sunday, November 4

12:30 p.m. - Trouble with a Curve, Rated PG-13
 3 p.m. - End of Watch, Rated R
 6 p.m. - Dredd 3D, Rated R
 9 p.m. - Dredd, Rated R

Monday, November 5

7 p.m. - Trouble with a Curve, Rated PG-13

Tuesday, November 6

7 p.m. - Resident Evil, Rated R

Wednesday, November 7

5:30 p.m. - Lawless, Rated R
 8:30 p.m. - Dredd, Rated R

Thursday, November 8

5:30 p.m. - Premium Rush, Rated PG-13
 8:30 p.m. - Hit and Run

Murder, madness, ghosts, demons...Happy Halloween!



COURTESY PHOTO

In "Sinister," Ethan Hawke plays a true-crime novelist, Ellison Oswalt, who relocates with his wife and kids to the Pennsylvania town where the subjects of his latest book-in-progress were murdered.

NEIL POND

"Sinister"

Starring Ethan Hawke & Juliet Rylance
 R, 110 min.

If you're looking for a last-minute Halloween jolt or two, here's a scary-movie treat that'll do the trick.

In "Sinister," Ethan Hawke plays a true-crime novelist, Ellison Oswalt, who relocates with his wife and kids to the Pennsylvania town where the subjects of his latest book-in-progress were murdered.

As they're unpacking the van, we get the impression he's done this kind of thing before. "We didn't move a few doors down from a crime scene again, did we?" asks his wife (British actress Juliet Rylance). Of course not, assures Ellison.

He's not lying--because he's actually moved his unsuspecting brood smack onto ground zero itself, into the very house where four previous occupants

met a hideous end in their backyard, and from which one young child went inexplicably missing.

The case has stumped the local cops, including the police chief (J. Fred Thompson), who's none too pleased that Oswalt has come to his town to pick at an old wound.

Ellison is hoping, however, he'll find inspiration he needs to lift his career out of a major slump. It's been 10 years since his last bestseller. "I've never been onto something this big before," he tells his wife. "This could be my 'In Cold Blood.'"

His young daughter likes to paint on her bedroom walls, an activity that seems harmless enough. But just wait--those darling drawings will get creepier. His teenage son suffers from "night terrors," which are creepy enough to begin with.

Their house will soon be springing other surprises, including a box in the attic of what appears to be home movies. The films, however, turn out to be something far more unsettling than their benign-sounding titles suggest.

As Ellison watches the profoundly dis-

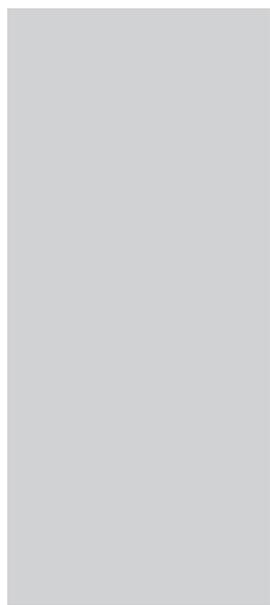
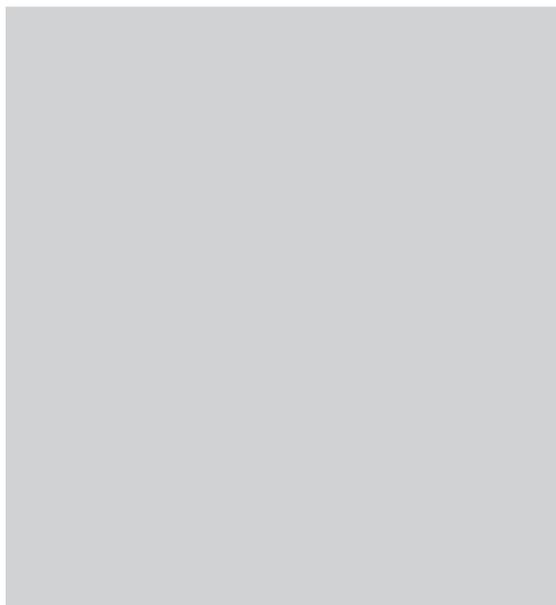
turbing movies, it points him to a story much bigger than his local case--and leads him to consult with a professor (an uncredited Vincent D'Onofrio) who suggests something even more ancient, supernatural and terrifying.

The story takes Ellison down a tunnel of increasingly dark discoveries. There are some intensely unsettling images, several of them involving children, although what the movie doesn't explicitly show is more unsettling still.

Echoing elements of some other well-known fright films, particularly "Children of the Corn," "The Shining" and "The Amityville Horror," "Sinister" will probably split the vote among horror fans. Some viewers will probably say they saw its ending coming several goose bumps away.

But others will likely find it a stylishly made, perversely twisted tale that swirls with murder, madness, ghosts, demons and the stuff of nightmares...pretty much just what many grownup trick-or-treaters want for a fright-night cinematic snack.

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YouTube

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

facebook

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



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

CANNONEERS VOLUNTEER IN COMMUNITY

Marines with 3rd Battalion 11th Marine Regiment, took time to volunteer at the Friendly Hills Elementary School for the school's Fall Festival in Joshua Tree, Calif., Oct. 26.



Marines have been volunteering at Friendly Hills Elementary School for the past several years. This year six Marines participated in the school's Fall Festival preparing food and interacting with students and parents.

"It's always good to have the Marines here," said Juliana Beaston, treasurer, Friendly Hills Elementary Association. "They're role models for the kids and they help out a lot here."

The Marines took this opportunity to show the community the Corps is about more than war and weapons.

"We're out here showing the Marine Corps' good side," said Sgt. Jason Leblanc, section chief, Battery K, 3/11. "Events like this give us an opportunity to give back to the community and do good things."

The school's annual festival fundraiser is a time where students and parents dress in Halloween costumes to have fun, play games, socialize and raise money for the school.

"We do several fundraisers every year, but this is our fun one," Beaston said. "When the Marines come out for this event the kids really respond to it. We have a lot of students in military families."

The event, is also an opportunity for the Marines to get to know their community and for the community to know them.

"I think that it's important for us to get out here and show the community that we're not just about blowing stuff up," said Pfc. Jonathan Vargas, cannoneer, Battery K, 3/11. "I enjoy giving back to the community and I've seen a lot of cool costumes."



[Top] Lance Cpl. Paul Valadez, Lance Cpl. Victor White and Pfc. Tony Begay, cannoneers, with 3/11, volunteer at Friendly Hills Elementary School in Joshua Tree, Calif., Oct. 26.

[Left] Lance Cpl. Paul Valadez, cannoneer, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, serves some nachos to a Friendly Hills Elementary School student at the school's Fall Festival Oct. 26.

[Right] Pfc. Tony Begay, cannoneer, with 3/11, socializes with a participant of the Friendly Hills Elementary School Family Fall Festival Oct. 26, in Joshua Tree, Calif. Marines volunteered at the event to help raise money for the school and get to know the community a little better.