



# OBSERVATION POST

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS

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## SECDEF announces repeal of Combat Exclusion Rule

Public Affairs Office

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced Jan. 24, that the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Exclusion Rule is to be rescinded, a move which will open up to women more than 237,000 positions across the services.

The announcement as part of a thorough and deliberate implementation process which the Marine Corps will follow to review and validate occupational performance standards for all Marines in the Corps' 335 primary occupational specialties.

The timeline for implementation extends to January 2016, providing the Corps with sufficient time to analyze the task and develop a detailed implementation plan, due to the Secretary of Defense in May. No changes will take place until after a period of congressional notification.

Changes to manpower assignments will begin taking effect in both previously closed occupational specialties and in units formerly closed to women. Officials will evaluate the physical requirements of jobs previously closed to women and will correlate those with expected scores on the Physical Fitness Test and the Combat Fitness Test. Units previously closed to women will be evaluated for new job opportunities within those organizations. Two of the first communities which will see impacts from the new policy are the Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Companies and the ground intelligence officer community. At this time, infantry, reconnaissance and special operations MOSs will not be opened to females. However, female Lieutenants graduating from officer training at The Basic School will continue to be allowed to volunteer to go through the Infantry Officers Course for research purposes. Two officers are expected to participate in the upcoming IOC class beginning this March.

Once fully implemented, the change could affect 11 of the Combat Center's tenant units, to include the four infantry battalions within 7th Marine Regiment, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 1st and 4th Tank Battalions, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion. Across the Marine Corps, the policy change will affect approximately 53,000 positions. Previously closed job fields account for 38,000 positions that could eventually be filled by women and 15,000 positions in previously closed units could be made accessible.

The Marine Corps is by-and-large male-dominated, with females historically making up only 7% of the ranks. Only 494 females serve out of the 12,080 Marines assigned to the Combat Center. Nine of these women have earned their Combat Action Ribbons.

"Women have shown great courage and sacrifice on and off the battlefield, contributed in unprecedented ways to the

See **COMBAT** page A6

## 23rd Dental sets 2012 CFC tone

Cpl. William J. Jackson  
Combat Correspondent

The 2012 Coachella and Twentynine Palms area Combined Federal Campaign ended only a few thousand dollars short of its \$500,000 goal. This year's top contributors were awarded at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Jan. 25.

During the 2012 Combined Federal Campaign there were 68 Eagle awards, 316 Medallion awards and 72 Gold awards given to key contributors aboard the Combat Center. Medallion awardees donated \$240 to \$390, Gold awardees donated \$391 to \$799 and Eagle awardees donated \$780 or more a year. The contributions aboard the Combat Center earned the CFC \$323,822.91 and attracted a total of 5,183 donors, doubling last year's efforts.

23rd Dental Company won the Commanding General's Unit Award with the highest participation rate and highest

*"You know, if everybody just gave one dollar that would a lot of money for the whole base"*

— Petty Officer 2nd Class Esra Colvard

gift per capita of 91 percent participation rate and \$162.62 averaged in donations per person.

The award was presented to Petty Officer 2nd Class Esra Colvard, hospital corpsman, and CFC representative, 23rd Dental Co., by the Combat Center's Chief of Staff Col. George C. Aucoin.

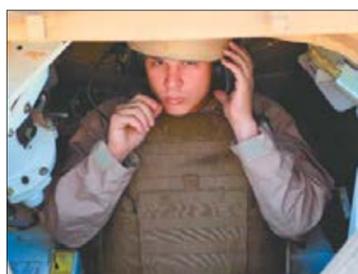
23rd Dental's total contributions for 2012 were \$7,318.00. For 2011, 23rd Dental provided CFC with contributions totaling \$4893.00, with only a 50 percent participation rate and only \$94.11 gifted per capita. The unit set the tone for giving in the 2012 campaign drive.

"Most people felt like they could only give a dollar or two and they felt embarrassed by that," Colvard said, a native of Adana, Turkey. "When I got this job you kind of have to prove your point with people. I was trying to

See **DENTAL** page A3



STORY AND PHOTOS BY GUNNERY SGT. LEO SALINAS



**[Top]** Sgt. Brian Alloway, 24, is the tank commander for White 2-3. Alloway is in his 6th year in the Marine Corps and has completed three combat deployments. Alloway is a Lowell, Mass., native. **[Left]** Cpl. Jose L. Hernandez, 26, is the gunner for White 2-3. Hernandez will be completing his first Gunnery Qualification Table as a gunner for White 2-3 and name the 120mm smooth bore cannon. Hernandez is a Los Angeles native. **[Middle]** White 2-3 consists of a four man crew and an M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank. The M1A1 Abrams has four weapon systems that include a 120mm smooth bore cannon, a M2 50. Cal machine gun, and two M240 machine guns. **[Right]** Lance Cpl. Miron San Miguel, 22, is the driver for White 2-3. San Miguel is in his fourth month in the fleet and new to White 2-3. San Miguel is a Ocean City, New Jersey native.

A four man tank crew and an M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank comprise White 2-3, a tank crew with Company A, 1st Tank Battalion. White 2-3 prepared this week for their Gunnery Qualification Table. After qualification, Cpl. Jose L. Hernandez, White 2-3 gunner, will be able to choose the name stenciled on the main gun, a traditional honor reserved for a gunner that passes and excels in the qualification. White 2-3's crew consists of Sgt. Brian J. Alloway, Cpl. Hernandez, Lance Cpl. Miron San Miguel, and Lance Cpl. Aaron Hulett. Hulett is currently acting as an armory custodian and will be back for the qualification table.

## Tax Center opens for business

Cpl. Ali Azimi  
Combat Correspondent

The Combat Center's Tax Center opened its doors at Building 1428 Wednesday for this year's tax season. This center provides free tax preparation services for all retired and active duty service members and their dependents, as well as any reserve service members on orders for more than 30 days.

The center is open weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. until May 15 and is staffed by Marines certified in beginner, intermediate, advanced, and military-level filings. These Marines have undergone two weeks of formal training followed by another four weeks of individual training to understand the intricacies of filing both federal and state taxes before earning their certification from the IRS.

The Tax Center provides easy on-base access with professional help, free of charge, and is done by people who understand the complications and financial challenges associated with military life.

This program beats competing offers from other services, such as free online programs or commercial centers in town, in both quality and price. Commercial tax centers provide tax professionals, but charge hundreds of dollars for their services and online programs are only free for basic level filings, but anything much more complicated would require a purchase.

Patrons are accepted on a walk-in basis and must bring their W-2s, Military I.D., social security cards for themselves and their dependents as well as their state and federal returns from the previous year.

For more information, call the Tax Center at 830-4TAX.



Capt. Rasheed Bakkar, the flight officer for Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268 and a native of Seattle, radios for extraction during a tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel exercise during the first Integrated Training Exercise at Twentynine Palms, Calif., Jan. 20. The TRAP is an exercise designed to rescue aviators, whether in hostile territory or not, in the event their aircraft is forced to the ground.

## HMLA-268 practices recovery operations

Cpl. Bill Waterstreet  
Marine Corps Air Station Yuma

Finally, the sound of helicopters overhead, gunfire and explosions in the direction of the enemy, the sight of friendly forces streaming out of their transports. The wait has been excruciating, communication aggravating, every moment punctuated by the hope of rescue and the fear of capture. But now the running, hiding and waiting are done. Salvation is finally here. Salvation in the form of helicopters with "MARINES" painted on the side.

This may sound like a scene out of a Hollywood movie, but in reality it is the scene Capt. Rasheed Bakkar faced as he was evacuated from the desert of Twentynine Palms, Calif.

during a tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel (TRAP) training exercise as part of the first Integrated Training Exercise, Jan. 20, 2013.

Bakkar was placed in a remote location a few kilometers from his simulated downed aircraft between the allied and enemy positions. There he waited until proper extraction could come for him.

A TRAP exercise is the process of rescuing a pilot and securing his aircraft should he be downed in a location far from his home base, whether it is in a hostile area or not. This process begins with finding the pilot utilizing unmanned aerial drones equipped with cameras and,

See **TRAP** page A6

# Combat Center CFC awards key contributors

**Cpl. William J. Jackson**  
Correspondent

During the 2012 Combined Federal Campaign there were **68 Eagle awards, 316 Medallion awards and 72 Gold awards** given to key contributors aboard the Combat Center. Medallion awardees donated **\$240 to \$390**, Gold awardees donated **\$391 to \$799** and Eagle awardees donated **\$780 or more** a year. The contributions aboard the Combat Center earned the CFC **\$323,822.91** and attracted a total of **5,183 donors**, doubling last year's efforts.



PHOTOS BY CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON



**[Above]** Paula Wharton, Coachella and Twentynine Palms area Combined Federal Campaign manager, Master Gunnery-Sgt. Lawanda Hall, manpower staff noncommissioned officer in charge and Col. George C. Aucoin, chief of staff, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center congratulate key personnel for their efforts to contribute to the CFC during the Combined Federal Campaign award ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Jan. 25.

**[Left]** Col. George C. Aucoin, chief of staff, awards Petty Officer 2nd Class Esra Colvard with a plaque signifying 23rd Dental Company's achievements for having the highest participation during the Combined Federal Campaign award ceremony.

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See answers on page A6

## GUN IT!

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## Officers' Spouses' Club scholarships, grants available

Officers' Spouses' Club has scholarships and grants available for the 2013-2014 academic year.

Applicant must be a family member (child or spouse) of an active duty, active duty reservist assigned to the Combat Center (or of a retired or deceased military member) and must be residing in the Morongo Basin or Greater Palm Springs area at the time of application. High School applicants must be graduating from an MUSD or Great Palm Springs area high school, a senior registered in a home school program (who meets all other requirements) or recipient of a GED in the year of application. A spouse applicant may be currently enrolled in a college or vocational program. All applicants must have applied to an accredited 2

or 4-year institution for undergraduate study and be working toward an AA or BA/BS degree or vocational certification.

Twentynine Palms OSC scholarship recipients from previous years or recipients of funds from any other installation OSC are not eligible. See applications for complete list of eligibility requirements.

Grants are also available for those non-profit organizations benefitting military members and their families.

All application materials must be post-marked no later than March 1, 2013 for consideration.

For more information and to download the scholarship or grant application form visit the OSC website at [www.osc29palms.com](http://www.osc29palms.com) or email Laura Scotto at [osc2ndvice@gmail.com](mailto:osc2ndvice@gmail.com).

### ACROSS

1. Gunslinger's tally,
6. Calls from Bossy
10. Ballpark arbiters
14. Pianist Claudio from Chile
15. Sooner State: Abbr.
16. Aswan Dam site
17. Brewery container
19. Sammy Davis Jr.'s "Yes \_\_\_"
20. Easily molded
21. Ovine utterance
22. Falling-shapes game
24. Command to Rover
26. Half an LP
27. Horrify
30. Some chair makers
31. Wine sediment
32. Feline crossbreed
33. Radar gun wielder
36. Hamlet, for one
37. Fits of wrath
38. Bagel center
39. Dict. offering
40. Insinuate
41. Brown pigment
42. Be a whiner
44. PTA member
45. Fuel pipeline
47. Shaving mishap
48. 1/8 of a circle
49. d.t.'s sufferer
50. Island of Scotland
54. The whole spectrum
55. Upholsterer's tool
58. Dueller's distance
59. Nay sayer
60. Stiller's mate
61. Igloo dwellers: Abbr.
62. Fuji outflow
63. Common gearshift sequence

### DOWN

1. Slaps the cuffs on
2. Creme-filled cookie
3. Not kosher
4. Punic Wars side
5. Center of activity
6. Fable finale
7. Gumbo need
8. Corrida call
9. Freebies with soup
10. "I'm a \_\_, not a divider": G.W. Bush
11. Bio lab instrument
12. Yogurt choice
13. Have a hunch
18. Genesis victim
23. River of central Germany
25. Windy City transports
26. Bob of "Full House"
27. Uses an abacus
28. Recite the rosary
29. Cheap Wall Street buy
30. Claro or cheroot
32. Grow dark
34. Lena of "Chocolat"
35. Bog fuel
37. Payment by mail
38. General mortally wounded in the Battle of Oriskany
40. FBI agent
41. Cul-de-\_\_
43. Bowls over
44. \_\_ helmet (safari wear)
45. Lose one's cool
46. Play the role of
47. Big name in mobile phones
49. John Candy's old show
51. Mideast sultanate
52. Computer geek, e.g.
53. Inland Asian sea
56. Santa \_\_ winds
57. Roadie's haul

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

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 Lance Cpl. Lauren Kurkimillis

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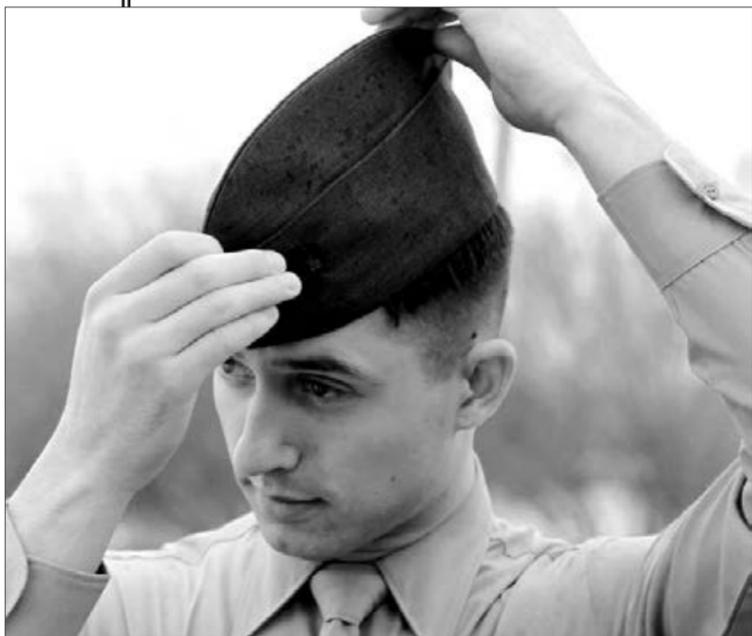
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  - Get It On Shoppe, 3219 Mission Blvd.
  - Main Street Motel, 3494 Main St.
  - Vulcan Baths, 805 W. Cedar St.
- In National City:**
- Dream Crystal, 15366 Highland Ave.
  - Sports Auto Sales, 1112 National City Blvd.

- 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.29palms.marines.mil>



# Philip Mitchell

Denver — Commanding General's Driver, 23

- > **I didn't know** this was going to happen, still kind of taken back by it. I've never been interviewed before, it's definitely a first.
- > **I thought the job** was just sitting around, waiting to take him somewhere, but actually there's a lot of admin work, managing DTS, personal things. There's a lot of stuff I do.
- > **Redbull is awesome.** It's like my lifeblood now, always being on the go.
- > **I haven't** gotten lost yet.
- > **If you don't look good,** it comes back to bite

MITCHELL IS A MOTOR TRANSPORT MECHANIC BY TRADE WITH THE EXERCISE SUPPORT DIVISION, HEAD-QUARTERS BATTALION.

you, pros and cons do reflect. Maj. Gen. Berger, he's one of those people you really enjoy working for. He's an awesome guy, you don't have to be the most uptight penguin around him.

- > **People always ask me that,** "Where did you come from?" ESD, Headquarters Battalion.
- > **I went from seeing** one or two officers a month to seeing nine or ten a day. It was a big change of pace.
- > **Being a mechanic,** you're always under a truck or running back and forth and you don't see the officers until they want to come see what you're doing. Here, I have to be on the spot and need to know things that they don't even know yet.
- > **Complacency kills,** it's not fun being bored anyway.
- > **It pays off to be ahead** of the curve. If you sit around and wait to be given an order then you don't go as far as you could. It pays off to be paying attention.
- > **I drive the General** around in a Ford Explorer, but I drive two bikes and a muscle car.
- > **I love riding.** Who doesn't have a hobby unless it's somewhat of a passion? Riding is both for me.
- > **I have a sport bike and Harley.** I can't put a comparison on them. I couldn't have either growing up, so as soon as I got on my own feet, I got both.
- > **I love this job.** I can't complain at all.
- > **Don't ever take** things too seriously.
- > **Make the best** out of every situation. It is what you make it.
- > **Everybody always looks** at things like the glass is half empty or half full. If you think of things like that, there's always a glass. I choose to be the free-flowing liquid that fills everyone's glass.
- > **You don't really stop,** keep going and try and always keep your head up. Look for the next thing to do and have fun with it. It's like a game, trying to win all the time.
- > **Little town?** It was a place where you either make it or break it. One out of maybe 50 people has actually done something with their life. I go back once a year and see people hanging out not doing anything, not making anything of themselves. It's weird cause somehow that little town still survives.
- > **It was a town** where you either have goals in life or you don't.
- > **If you don't set a goal** for yourself every once in a while, an attainable one, you just get stuck in that rut and not happy. You set bars for yourself that you can constantly reach and go above them.
- > **I'm a protective** older brother. A typical older brother. My little sister just turned 18.
- > **Everyone I meet** teaches me something. I think that's a good way to get ahead anyway, you got to learn something from everybody. You are the product of who you surround yourself by.
- > **Being able** to teach people skills gives me satisfaction.
- > **I want to go to the drill field.** My thing was always drill and uniforms, teaching people to be squared away. Being able to influence somebody and encourage them in a productive way is what I want to do.

Interviewed by Cpl. Sarah Dietz, January 25, 2013

## DENTAL, from A1

explain that it was still helping and they (would be) still trying to help. You know, if everybody just gave one dollar that would a lot of money for the whole base. That's why our percentage was raised."

According to Colvard, her strategy for success was to shed light about the CFC to the Marines, sailors and staff of the dental clinic.

"Instead of getting a lot of money I was more concerned with raising the awareness, Colvard said. "I felt like people have such a good life, they don't see how things are run on the other side of the world."

Colvard said she feels strongly for organizations that help abused children and small animals, referring to a poster board covered in heart wrenching photos of abused children and animals. "I have a daughter so I'm sensitive about kids, like child abuse and stuff."

"This is a real picture," Colvard said about photojournalist Kevin Carter's Pulitzer winning photo of a starving Sudanese child being stalked by a vulture. "It kind of affects you. Not just the pictures, but people see that you care. I actually volunteered to do this job to do good things and to get money for organizations."

"It means a lot, of course. We are a small command and we were surprised. Maybe it was easier to communicate with the staff. I don't think a meeting with a hundred people in one room would have the same effect. I had to go to each person individually and walk around the clinic and ask them about the CFC."

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# Turning Wrenches

■ Marines provide crucial maintenance support in Afghanistan

**Story and photos by Cpl. Anthony Ward Jr.**  
Regional Command Southwest

COMBAT OUTPOST SHIR GHAZAY, Afghanistan - The Intermediate Maintenance Activity section at Combat Outpost Shir Ghazay, Afghanistan, plays an integral part in keeping things up and running.

Marines with the IMA operate out of the base in support of the 32nd Georgian Battalion, Georgian Liaison Team 6 and the units who fall under Regimental Combat Team 7 in the area.

"We provide third and limited fourth echelon maintenance support," said Gunnery Sgt. Dale Tilley, staff noncommissioned officer in charge of the IMA. "We support all the outer lying units."

Third and fourth echelon maintenance involves several different capabilities. With its personnel, the IMA can take a battle-damaged truck and repair it to a serviceable state. Oil changes, replacing tires, wiring vehicles and even replacing key suspension parts of vehicles used in Afghanistan are also part of the IMA's repertoire.

Additionally, the IMA also provides maintenance and care for generators, heavy equipment and aids other units aboard COP Shir Ghazay.

"The IMA supports all the other units," said Lance Cpl. Travis King, heavy equipment mechanic with the IMA. "A lot of these units come in with convoys and we aid them out by using the forklift to unload them. Without that ability, they would be stuck in a hard place."

The IMA does their part in providing essential services to the units aboard the base with the wide assortment of Marines they have in the shop. The IMA has generator mechanics, heavy equipment operators, motor transport mechanics, armorers and plenty more Marines holding different jobs.

With all these resources, the IMA is able to keep equipment and trucks operable to help keep the troops in the fight.

They are also in a unique situation, because they not only are helping to support the Marines in the area but also supporting the Georgian soldiers.

"It's a challenge from day to day because of the language barrier," said Tilley. "It's also a reward though. You're working with the coalition forces, and we are all out there trying to make a difference."

The IMA makes a difference. Without the maintenance they provide on trucks, several Marines would be deprived of the vital supplies they need. Without the IMA, the ability to keep generators operational and the command center powered would not be possible.



**[Left]** Lance Cpl. Travis King, heavy equipment mechanic, repairs a Kalmar forklift at Combat Outpost Shir Ghazay, Afghanistan, Jan. 17, 2013.

**[Below]** Recently repaired vehicles wait for transportation back to Camp Leatherneck after Marines with the Intermediate Maintenance Activity section repaired them on Combat Outpost Shir Ghazay.

**[Bottom]** Marines with the Intermediate Maintenance Activity section repair a broken generator on Combat Outpost Shir Ghazay, Afghanistan, Jan. 16.




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CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Staff Sgt. Casey Senn, explosive ordnance disposal technician, Company B, Headquarters Battalion, prepares to fire a .50 caliber rifle at the Combat Center's Range 112 Jan. 18.

# EOD

Explosive Ordnance Disposal

## Marine changes fields, finds passion

### Cpl. William J. Jackson Combat Correspondent

He sat across from me in a classroom amongst 13 of his peers. He was singled out by the instructors to breakdown his life as an explosive ordnance disposal technician. He seemed nervous but when he spoke, he spoke clearly and fluently about the job that he continues to perform.

Staff Sgt. Casey Senn, an EOD technician aboard the Combat Center, finished his first enlistment as a combat cameraman and began his new life in 2006.

"I wasn't fulfilled in my old job," said Senn. "I didn't feel like there was anything for me to learn anymore. EOD is an always-evolving and ever-changing field. You're never going to reach your limit. There's always something more you can do."

He said it's the best military occupational specialty in the Corps, like many Marines before have said. The smirk of accomplishment strewn across his face made his intent apparent. He believes it and I'm sure the rest of his peers feel the same.

Senn spoke about his family's feelings about his current job, "They hate it. I've got three kids, Ashlyn, 9, Brayden, 6, and Kaitlin, 3. My oldest has become more aware but for the other two they're too young to understand what's going on. For my wife, it's hard when I deploy."

Like any Marine who wants to be an EOD technician, he had one enlistment under his belt, per Marine Corps Order 3571.2G, before changing fields. In 2006, Senn began the process to laterally move to the EOD field. It's a voluntary military occupational specialty for Marines.

"I never had any problems with that," Senn said

about meeting the prerequisites to change his MOS. "You'll know right away if most guys have an issue."

EOD technicians are trained to handle many situations an enemy throws at them. It's a small community and the risks are high.

The basic EOD course is about seven months long, said Senn, looking back almost six years to his days as a student.

He told me they threw so much at him as a student and that he had to be able to process things quickly and then move on to new subject matter. It made me think about him in-country making a decision that could affect the fate of another Marine.

"You don't ever get overwhelmed. In my experience you get pissed off," Senn joked. "Most of the time it's just dealing with the on-scene unit that doesn't know what's going on or the local populace. You have to deal with them, security and deal with your job. It can just be a lot of stuff going on at once; you need to be able to delegate and task things out."

Consequences are high but he assured me he's never been scared in the moment. If anything, it's when he takes a moment to reflect when things become real.

"I don't think you're going to find a more fulfilling job anywhere," Senn continued. "It's the amount of pride because of all the [training] we have to go through, all of the school we have, high level training that we do to stay on top of our game. Being operational and being integrated with grunts and keeping them out of harm's way you get tangible results from the job. You see the devices [that can] kill people and you take them apart with your hands. You get instant gratification."

Senn began to tell me about his first deployment as

an EOD technician in 2007, just one year since his "lat move." His first words about working with Company K, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, in Iraq were, "It was fun."

During this timeframe, EOD technicians noticed a transition from conventional ordnance like 155mm rounds to improvised explosive devices that Marines are more familiar with during Operation Enduring Freedom.

"The first real crazy [IED] I had was about five days into my first deployment as a tech," Senn said. "We had five IEDs at an intersection and we lost our robot that day. The robot ran over a tertiary IED and it blew the robot about 20 meters down the road."

"It was interesting going to an IED and dealing with that and trying to stay on par with the changing tactics, techniques and procedures with the enemy," Senn said. "It was adapting to what they were adapting to."

Senn explained that when the Corps would come out with a technical advancement, like mine rollers or high armored vehicles like the mine-resistant ambush protected vehicle, the enemy would create a tactical way around those advancements.

"It was interesting to try and stay in the loop and bridge the technology gap with how we operate," Senn said.

When I asked him about anything he's learned since he became an EOD tech he laughed and said, "I don't even know where to begin with that one."

Senn plans to retire from the EOD field. His future plans aren't set yet, but for now he just hopes to spend as much time as he can with his family.

"I don't know if I'll stay in an EOD-related field or not. I think I might transition into something a little less dangerous afterwards," Senn said. "I'm trying to be really family oriented."



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**COMBAT, from A1**

military's mission and proven their ability to serve in an expanding number of roles," said Panetta. "The Department's goal in rescinding the rule is to ensure that the mission is met with the best-qualified and most capable people, regardless of gender."

Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James Amos addressed the issue in a white letter to the Corps' general officers. "My foremost guiding principle remains fielding a Marine Corps that is ready to fight and win, on short notice, in difficult and uncertain circumstances," Amos wrote. "We will maintain our high standards while ensuring maximum success for every Marine."

In a statement released by the Commandant's office, Amos further emphasized that the measured and responsible approach to implementing the changes will keep the Marine Corps focused on combat readiness and generating combat-ready units while ensuring that deserving Marines will have the maximum opportunities for success.

"The talent pool from which we select our finest warfighters will consist of all qualified individuals, regardless of gender."



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**TRAP from A1**

depending on the aircraft, radio equipment. The pilot attempts to guide allied forces to his location if radio communication is possible.

After the stranded aviator is located, fixed wing attack aircraft protect the surrounding areas as troops deploy from helicopters to secure the area while the pilot is brought aboard the aircraft. Once contact is made with the downed pilot, his identity is authenticated to ensure the correct person is being retrieved.

Marines will never leave one of their own behind, and this exercise is the embodiment of that practice.

"The U.S. is never willing to give up one American citizen, one U.S. armed service member for any reason," said Maj. David Slay, the MAG-13 future plans officer and a native of Escondido, Calif. "Anywhere the (Marine Expeditionary Unit) goes to, a TRAP is ready to be done at a moment's notice."

In operations as recent as the conflict in Libya, where the Marines of the 26th MEU rescued Maj. Kenneth Harney from his downed F-15E Strike Eagle, the effectiveness and importance of the TRAP can be seen.

"Being able to bring back our crew members who are down-field is absolutely priceless," said Capt. Rasheed Bakkar, the Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268 flight officer from Seattle.

Practice makes perfect, and nothing deserves perfection more than the rescue of a fellow Marine.

"If we don't train for it then we can't expect to be ready for

it," added Bakkar. "If I was down there, knowing the Marines coming for me have seen this before and done this before makes me very confident that they will be able to pick me up in a timely manner."

Bakkar, who has now walked in the shoes no pilot wants to wear, echoes the sentiments of every aviator.

"I would never want to be out there in an actual hostile environment," stated Bakkar. "But I'm glad I've had the training. If it was Iraq or Afghanistan, I would be hoping and praying someone would come pick me up."

And as Bakkar returned home with an escort of dedicated brethren, it was clear that should the need ever arise, his prayers will be answered.

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**367-3577 For Advertising**

# 'Cutting Edge' Jane Wayne



## 1/7 families get taste of their Marines' life

**Cpl. William J. Jackson**  
 Combat Correspondent

**F**amily members of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Marines and sailors got a chance to walk in their loved one's boots for a day Jan. 24, when they geared up and participated in the unit's Jane Wayne Day aboard the Combat Center and its training areas.

Family members rode in 7-tons, wore flak jackets, ate rations, learned about and fired the M4A1 rifle and M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle and experienced many other aspects of their husbands' lives. Throughout the course of the day, the family members traveled to the Combat Center's obstacle course, Del Valle Field and Range 106 for demonstrations and force-on-force training.

The guests were divided into four groups, with a platoon sergeant leading each group.

"It's exciting," said Andrea Tatayon, family readiness officer, 3/7, about the day's events. "We haven't had a Jane Wayne Day in a few years."

The first part of the day put the willing participants through some of the physical strains their Marines endure. The Marine Corps Martial Arts Program and the obstacle course set the bar for the rest of the day's events.

The groups split up to allow for more hands on MCMAP training with their instructors. Gunnery Sgt. Francisco

Martinez, operations chief, Weapons Company, showed the family members moves like hip tosses, leg sweeps and wrist-lock techniques.

Throughout practical application of the martial arts techniques, Rochelle Kimmel had a chance to hip toss her husband, Cpl. Gavin Kimmel, squad leader, Weapons Co., before they rotated to the looming obstacle course.

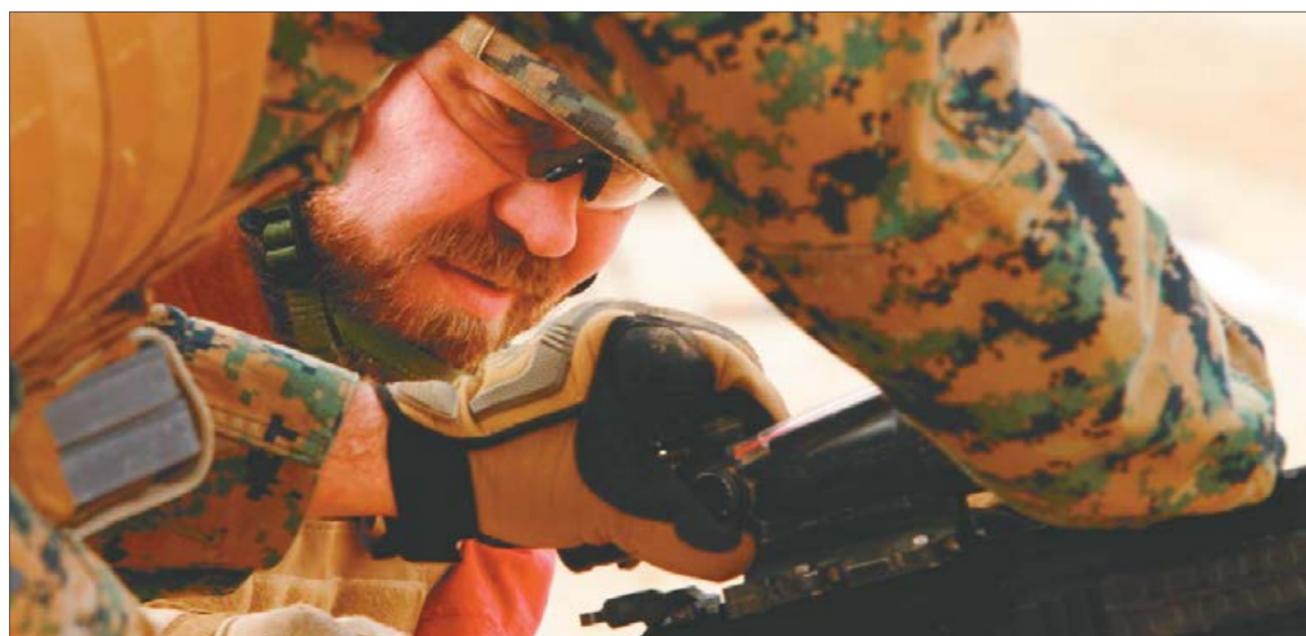
"I expected this to be a lot of hard work. Even though it is a lot of hard work it's fun," said Samantha Ducharme, after she completed the obstacle course. "I know why my husband complains now."

Once the excitement of the obstacle course and the MCMAP sessions subsided, the group geared up, loaded the 7-tons and headed to run a modified combat fitness test. "I'm actually really excited to shoot," Ducharme said. "We're from Alaska so we shoot all of the time."

The four platoons ended their day at Range 106. Each person, dressed in their loved one's flak and kevlar, headed to the firing line to put rounds down range.

"I've done a couple (Jane Wayne Day)," said Ted Speers, brother of Capt. Matt Speers, company commander, Company I. "What I really liked was being able to handle and ask questions directly to the Marines about all of the individual weapon systems."

The day served as a unique learning experience for the family and friends in attendance, giving them a brief look into the daily life of their Marines.



**[Top]** Samantha Ducharme, wife of Lance Cpl. Tristero Ducharme, mortarman, Weapons Co, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, traverses the obstacle course Jan. 24. Ducharme finished the obstacle course the fastest in her group.

**[Above left]** Rochelle Kimmel hip tosses her husband Cpl. Gavin Kimmel, squad leader, Weapons Co, 3/7, Jan. 24, during the unit's Marine Corps Martial Arts Program portion Jane Wayne Day.

**[Above right]** Affton Gilcrest, wife of Staff Sgt. James Gilcrest, platoon sergeant, Co. I, 3/7, walks back from the firing line at the Combat Center's Range 106 Jan. 24.

**[Left]** Ted Speers, brother of Capt. Matthew Speers, company commander, Company I, 3/7, receives help clearing a double feed from a Marine at the Combat Center's Range 106 Jan. 24.



**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**

**Free Line Dance Lessons**

Learn to dance the night away  
 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.

**DEATHTRAP**

When: Now - Feb. 9  
 Where: Theatre 29  
 73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.  
 For more information call 316-4151  
 or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

**Lower Desert**

**Keith Sweat**

American R&B singer-songwriter performs  
 When: 8 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 14  
 Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort  
 46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.  
 For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit <http://www.spotlight29.com>.

**Jeff Dunham**

Popular comedian performs  
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 16  
 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>.

**Earth Wind & Fire**

Classic 70's band performs  
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 2  
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino  
 84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio  
 For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

**Boyz II Men**

R&B / urban soul group performs  
 When: 9:00 p.m., Friday, Feb. 15  
 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, February 1**

8p.m. - The Hobbit, Rated PG-13  
 Midnight - This is 40, Rated R

**Saturday, February 2**

10:30 a.m. - Free Matinee Brave, Rated PG  
 12:30 p.m. - Parental Guidance, Rated PG  
 3 p.m. - The Hobbit 3D, Rated PG-13  
 6 p.m. - Guilt Trip, Rated PG-13

**Sunday, February 3**

12:30 p.m. - Jack Reacher, Rated PG-13  
 3 p.m. - Silver Linings Playbook, Rated R  
 6 p.m. - Monsters Inc. 3D, Rated PG  
 8 p.m. - Django Unchained, Rated R

**Monday, February 4**

7 p.m. - Django Unchained, Rated R

**Tuesday, February 5**

7 p.m. - The Hobbit 3D, Rated PG

**Wednesday, February 6**

5:30 p.m. - Cirque du Soleil, Rated PG  
 8:30 p.m. - Guilt Trip, Rated PG-13

**Thursday, February 7**

5:30 p.m. - Monsters Inc., Rated PG  
 8:30 p.m. - Playing for Keeps, Rated PG-13

**Chastain stars in old-fashioned creep-out of a ghost story**



COURTESY PHOTO

**NEIL POND**

*"Mama"*

Starring: Jessica Chastain & Nikolaj Coster-Waldau  
 Directed by Andrés Muschietti  
 Rated PG-13, 100 min.

When two little girls left alone in the forest after their father murdered their mother are found five years later in a remote cabin, they're living in filth, scampering around like spiders, and unable to speak.

The authorities assume they've been alone all those years. Not quite!

Given to the care of their kindly uncle Lucas (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau) and his live-in goth-rocker girlfriend Annabel (Jessica Chastain), the two nearly feral children, Lilly and Victoria, come with some serious emotional baggage. Lilly sleeps on the floor and eats the moths that have suddenly started appearing in the house. They both giggle and smile at something that Lucas and Annabel can't see. They talk to the wall, make strange-looking dolls out of sticks and weeds, and sing in their bedroom...along with what sounds like a third grown-up voice.

Things start going bump in the night, lights flicker off and on, a shadowy figure darts about, and Victoria ominously warns Annabel to not open the closet door.

And the kids don't say much, except "Mama."

Spooky and stylish, "Mama" hums with the trademark tones of executive producer Guillermo Del Toro, who didn't direct (as he did with "Pan's Labyrinth" and "Hellboy"), but

whose influence is evident in the film's dark imagery, supernatural themes and scare tactics. Admirably, it achieves all its jolts without resorting to any blood, guts or gore. It's about as "clean" as a horror movie can come.

But that doesn't mean it's not capable of making you squirm, gasp...or scream.

As the plot unfolds, Annabel becomes increasingly essential to the story, and we find out more about what--and who--the ghostly, gnarled figure might be. And as the nightmarish figure of "mama" starts showing up with increasingly frequency, and ferocity, things get really good and goose-bumpy.

The four young newcomer child actors who play the two sisters (at both stages of their lives) do great jobs. They're chillingly believable as the innocent little pawns in this skin-crawling creep-out of a custody battle, torn between their bond to the jealous, malevolently protective entity that raised them, and Annabel, the new maternal figure now "competing" for their love and attention.

And Jessica Chastain--is she in every movie these days? Or does it only seem like it?

Hollywood's busiest actress has certainly been churning 'em out. She's appeared, with a steadily building buzz, in 10 films in the past two years, including "The Help," "Lawless," and "Zero Dark Thirty," in which she's been nominated for a Best Actress Oscar.

This solid little spook-fest of a ghost story won't bring home any awards, for Chastain or anyone else. In another couple of years, it'll likely be just a little fright-film footnote.

But for now, in the cold, drab doldrums of winter, "Mama" livens things up with more than a few good, old-fashioned scares.

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