



Remembering Belleau Wood



SGT. TATUM VAYAVANANDA

Aisne-Marine American Cemetery lays on the historic battlefield of Belleau Wood and consists of 2,289 epitaphs of the fallen from one of the fiercest battles of World War I.

Battle not forgotten by U.S. Marines, French soldiers

Sgt. Tatum Vayavananda
Marine Corps Forces Europe

To commemorate Memorial Day, and to mark the 95th anniversary of the historic Battle of Belleau Wood, Marines with their French brothers and sisters in arms, locals of the town of Belleau, and visitors from around the world, gathered at Aisne-Marne American Cemetery May 26, to remember and honor the fallen heroes of World War I, as well as celebrate the long-standing partnership between U.S. and French militaries that is still alive today.

"Near this very site, just behind me and over the hill, Marines and their French counterparts together demonstrated their unflinching valor during a fight that would forever change our Corps," said Col. Roger Turner, commanding officer, 5th Marine Regiment.

The event was held in the memorial cemetery that lies outside of the historic grounds of Belleau Wood,

the battlefield where the modern Marine Corps first made its name in one of the fiercest battles during World War I. The ceremony was held on the parade grounds overlooked by the Romanesque chapel and flanked by 2,289 epitaphs of the fallen.

"We are privileged to return here each year to join you in honoring the memory of the many brave warriors who died fighting in the pursuit of liberty," said Turner.

In the June of 1918, during World War I, the Battle for Belleau Wood was fought during the German Spring Offensive. The battle, a "baptism by fire" as known in Marine Corps legacy, was fought in the 200-acre forest located by the Marne River, named "Belleau Wood." This piece of French territory was contended for by the opposing German forces due to its strategic location; it was approximately 90 kilometers north from the capital

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CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Lance Cpl. Craig Mikolas, Combat Center Honor Guard, bows his head during a prayer at a Memorial Day ceremony at Joshua Tree Memorial Park and Mortuary, May 27.

Combat Center participates in local celebrations

Cpl. William J. Jackson
Combat Correspondent

Memorial Day is often thought of as a time to barbecue, relax and spend an extended weekend in the sun. But for most, it is also a time to reflect on the great sacrifices that American service members have made for their country. Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, was created after the Civil War and to this day is meant to honor those who perished in wars both past and present.

Communities across the United States, to include the Morongo Basin area, paid their respects by planting flags, presenting wreaths and saying prayers at local cemeteries and memorial sites for fallen service members.

We remember the legacy of fallen service-men and women from every branch of the United States Armed Forces. We remember their profound sacrifice and noble service to our great nation.

— Cmdr. Steven R. Moses

"We come before you today to remember," said Cmdr. Steven R. Moses, assistant chief of staff, religious ministries, during the invocation at Twentynine Palms Memorial Cemetery. "We remember the legacy of fallen servicemen and women from every branch of the United States Armed Forces. We remember their profound sacrifice and noble service to our great nation."

"We gather to remember a special breed of fallen warriors, many of whom are buried in this cemetery, members of the United States Marine Corps," Moses said. "Lord, we recognize the contribution of all of our nation's warriors and commemorate them today by setting aside a day out of our busy schedules to stop and remember. They deserve this brief moment of quiet contemplation and concentrated reflection on their contributions to the freedom we enjoy."

Local residents honored fallen service members at the Twentynine Palms Memorial Cemetery and at the Joshua Tree Memorial Park and Mortuary Monday. Maj. Gen. David H. Berger, Combat Center Commanding General, was the guest speaker at both events.

"This day definitely reminds us of sacrifices," Berger said. "Sacrifices of Marines and sailors, soldiers, airmen,

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New THC candy deemed illegal

Cpl. Ali Azimi
Combat Correspondent

Cheeba Chews are a small, taffy-textured product, enclosed in an attractive colorful wrapping. They are marketed in a variety of candy-like flavors, but a read of the label reveals their true intent.

These assorted taffies contain tetrahydrocannabinol, the main chemical component in marijuana. Since its discovery by law enforcement, it has come under investigation. The

candy has been deemed a controlled substance and is banned within the Marine Corps.

This new candy is unlike other edible THC-based products found at marijuana dispensaries, said Gunnery Sgt. Isaac Lynn, Substance Abuse Control Officer. Cookies and hash-type products sold in those stores are legally sold and regulated by the state. These chews are illegal.

"This has been identified by law enforcement and is working its way up through the Drug Enforcement

Administration," Lynn added. "It is identified as a controlled substance, therefore anyone caught with it will be processed per the separations manual."

The dose found in one 10-gram cube is more than a million times the amount needed in a Marine's urine to be tested positive during a urinalysis. Marines testing positive will face punitive action regardless of claims of negligence to the contents of the chews.

"It's such a concentrated dose of THC,

See **DRUG** page A2



CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Staff Sgt. Richard Davenport, motor transportation staff noncommissioned officer in charge, Support Company, 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion throws a ball at a dunk tank target during the unit's family day event, May 23.

3rd CEB families play together before Memorial Day weekend

Cpl. William J. Jackson
Combat Correspondent

Marines, sailors and family members of 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion kicked off their Memorial Day weekend with grilling, games and learning about the dangers of drunk driving at their battalion's compound May 23.

Erika Capistran, family readiness officer, 3rd CEB, said it was a great way to keep the 3rd CEB family safe over the holiday weekend.

The day's events and activities included horseshoes, bean bag games,

inflatable bouncy houses, cupcake making competition, minute to win it games, drunk driving goggle races and a dunk tank.

The battalion will utilize the funds raised from the dunk tank and cupcake sales for their Marine Corps Ball later this year.

"Drunk driving has affected the Marine Corps a lot," said Master Sgt. Matthew Johnson, communications chief, Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd CEB. "I think it takes

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Combat Center's top chefs compete

Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
Combat Correspondent

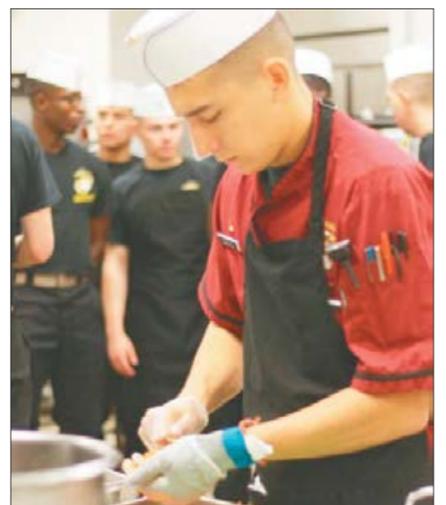
The tension was high and the heat was on at the Phelps Mess Hall aboard the Combat Center Thursday. For the first time, five duos from Combat Center mess halls and the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif., mess hall came together to compete in the Chef of the Quarter competition. The competition showcases the culinary skills of these chefs in a competition format similar to the well known television show, the Iron Chef. The chefs were tested in multiple skill sets from written knowledge of their skill set to their performance in the kitchen.

"The chefs have to show off their skills and bring their expertise front and center," said Maj. Richard Martinez, director of Combat Center food service program. "It is an Iron Chef type setting where the chefs are competing against each other in different settings and work on a team."

The chefs compete in teams of two. The teams consist of two civilians, two Marines or one of each. Normally, each chow hall will hold their own competition to see which two chefs are the best to continue and compete in the Chef of the Quarter.

"It builds camaraderie between the civilians and Marines," said Master Sgt. Marianna Martinez, food service technician. "It also gives them a chance to show skills they really don't get a chance to show when they are working together on a regular day."

Once the teams are chosen, they proceed to the first portion of the three part competition. The competition begins with a jeopardy-



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

Lance Cpl. Nicholas Casas, team 2, prepares sweet-baby yams for his first Chef of the Quarter competition at Phelps Mess Hall Thursday.

type question. The two chefs are asked one random question based on basic food service specialist knowledge. The pairs worked together to answer the question correctly. Following the jeopardy-type question, the chefs take a written test on more basic knowledge of their job.

According to Maj. Martinez, the questions are very simple and the chefs should be able to answer them without hesitation.

See **CHEF** page A4

FIREARMS

Rules & Regs

Cpl. Ali Azimi
Combat Correspondent

Firearms are defined as a small-arms weapon from which a projectile is propelled by gunpowder or air pressure. Aboard the Combat Center, these weapons are carefully tracked by the Provost Marshals Office as a precautionary measure for the safety of its officers and the residents of the base.

The Combat Center order regarding firearms, CCO P1630.6E, parallels many of the California State laws and adds a few of its own. It is the responsibility of a gun-owner to keep up with these rules and regulations. Currently, the procedures for the Combat Center are as follows:

Purchase: The rules to buy firearms on base follow state laws and regulations set by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Any purchase of a firearm requires a background check and a 10-day waiting period. You must be at least 18 years old to purchase rifles or their ammunition and at least 21 to buy handguns or their ammunition.

Any weapons banned by the state are also prohibited aboard the base. Combat Center residents may also not have any magazines with a maximum capacity of greater than 10 rounds.

The Combat Center's Marine Corps Exchange began the sale of firearms earlier this year. The purchase of weapons on base is exclusive to Combat Center residents. This excludes Marines in transit or in school. Family members and retirees are also allowed to purchase products as long as they have exchange privileges and meet the state's requirements.

Registration: After the purchase of a firearm, Marines are required to register their weapons at the Vehicle Registration Office, located at Building 901. Do not bring the weapon into the registration office. Owners must provide paperwork showing the weapon has been registered in the state as well as fill out a weapons registration form, available at the office. The form must then be signed by a command representative. Staff noncommissioned officers and below must have a signature from an E-8 or above to purchase from the gunshop at the exchange. Upon completion of the registration process, the owner will receive a Weapons Registration Card, which must be kept on the person any time they are in possession of their firearm.

Transportation: Privately owned weapons are permitted in any vehicle for transportation purposes on and off base. Firearms may not be kept in vehicles as a means of long-term storage. While transporting the firearm, the weapon must be unloaded, and on safe. The weapon must also be properly stored in the trunk, meaning the firearm is in a locked box designed for the weapon.

Storage: The storage of the weapon largely depends on the housing situation of Marines. Marines and sailors living in the base housing areas are permitted to keep their weapons at home as long as they are unloaded, on safe and in a locked box designed for the weapon. Marines and sailors residing in bachelor enlisted quarters are required to keep their firearm at their battalion's armory and are explicitly forbidden to keep their weapons at the barracks.

For more information about regulations for owning firearms on base, call the vehicle registration office at 830-6794 or see the Combat Center order at www.29palms.marines.mil/Portals/56/Docs/P1630_6E{1}.pdf.

DRUG, from A1

that if you metabolize it, it would be 70 milligrams to 175 milligrams of THC that would appear on the drug test," Lynn said. "It's four times the concentrated dose. Bottom line, it's a synthetic mix of THC and they cook it into different flavors of candy."

Cheeba Chews deliver the THC directly to the blood stream after dissolving in the mouth, unlike marijuana which is most commonly smoked and works through the lungs.

These 10-gram cubes produce a euphoric absence of reality, according to Lynn.

In addition to the end of a Marine's career in the Corps or possible jail

time, Cheeba Chews may have adverse-health effects, contrary to claims made by the product's website.

"It can cause various medical problems because of the high concentration of THC in such a small candy-like chewable substance," Lynn said.

A good rule of thumb for the sake of Marines' health and careers is simply to stay away from the illegal substance. There is zero tolerance.

"Everyone has common sense to know what a legitimate candy looks like," Lynn said. "There are no excuses because the information is out there."

For more information call the SACO at 830-1116.

WEEKEND, from A1

more than just safety briefs about drinking and driving. Show Marines statistics and proof of what happens. I think this does have an effect on the Marines, it's better than doing nothing about it, as long as (Marines) are aware."

In addition to keeping Marines and sailors aware of the dangers of drunk driving, the event was a time for family members to get together while some of their spouses are deployed.

3rd CEB deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom earlier this year and replaced 2nd CEB, based out of Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. Their primary mission during their deployment is to provide direct combat engineer support to Regimental Combat Team 7. 3rd CEB is slated to return this fall.

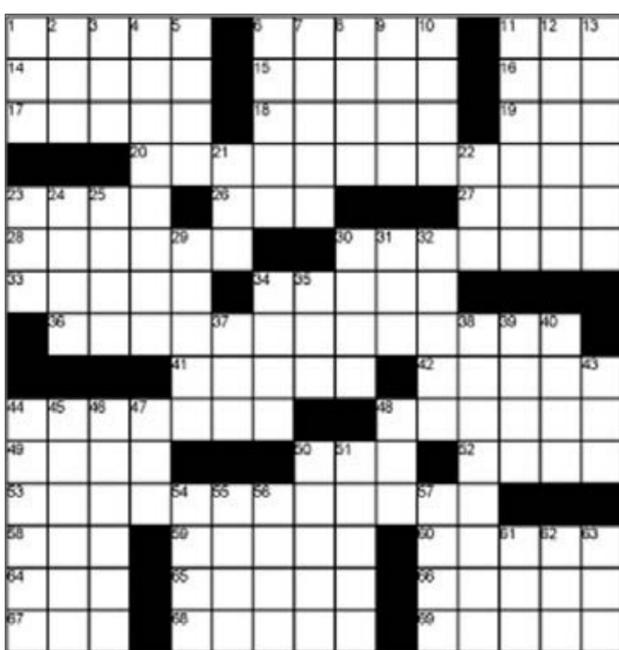


CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Gavin Natt, 3, son of Sgt. Kevin Natt, assistant administration chief, Headquarters and Services Company, 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, throws a ball at a dunk tank target during the unit's family day event, May 23.

CHUMP CHANGE

- ACROSS**
- Dorian Gray creator Oscar
 - Hawley's tariff act co-sponsor
 - Raises
 - "The Tempest" spirit
 - Make very dry
 - Singer/actor Peeples
 - It may be subject to a code
 - Hot under the collar
 - Inhabitant: Abbr.
 - Shoes with coin ornaments
 - Pisa's river
 - Half-wit
 - 200-meter, e.g.
 - "Yer dern ___!"
 - Skec-Ball locales
 - Livy's tongue
 - Supply-___ (certain economic theorist)
 - Gridiron formation
 - Aquafina rival
 - Dashboard array
 - Like a paid parking spot
 - On-off switch, e.g.
 - Dummy Danny
 - ___ up (conclude)
 - Miami five
 - Ned Buntline, notably
 - Airport approx.
 - Musical about Sra.
- DOWN**
- Glob of gum
 - Links position
 - Tyrannical
 - "... or ___!"
 - Starts a "Wheel of Fortune" turn
 - "The Bells of St. ___"
 - Word before hygiene or history
 - Eight: Prefix
 - "Take ___ Train"
 - Like tossed junk mail
 - Fictional doctor Hawkeye
 - Gets smart with
 - Indian flat bread
 - Monk's title
 - NL East city
 - Equine shade
 - Words of denial
 - Worker on a comic book
 - Mideast's Gulf of ___
 - Sports "zebra"
 - Words to live by
 - Lost traction



- First lady McKinley
- Adam's madam
- Sip before bedtime
- Like Solomon
- First name in seat
- Things that go together
- Early Ford
- Blue-pencil wielder
- Burrito's cousin
- Look over
- ___-night doubleheader
- Mother ___ (American saint)
- Spiral-horned antelope
- Verne skipper
- Place to bake
- Awful-tasting
- Easy dupes
- Mattel card game
- "Curse you, ___ Baron!"
- Pub potable

See answers on page A6

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

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OFF-LIMITS ESTABLISHMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

- In Twentynine Palms:**
 - Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Rd.
 - STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.
 - K Smoke Shop, 5865A Adobe Rd.

- In Yucca Valley:**
 - Yucca Tobacco Mart, 57602 29 Palms Hwy.
 - Puff's Tobacco Mart, 57063 29 Palms Hwy.

- In Palm Springs:**
 - Village Pub, 266 S. Palm Canyon Dr.
 - Whispering Palms Apts., 449 E. Arenas Road
 - NYPD Pizza, 260-262 N. Palm Canyon Drive

For the complete orders, but not off-limits, check out the Combat Center's official website at <http://www.29palms.marines.mil>

WHAT I'VE LEARNED



Sarah

Grand Haven, Mich., correspondent, PAO, 22

DIETZ

> **I'm kind of nervous**, so bear with me. Now I realize what I do to people when I interview them and now I'm getting the brunt of it. I kind of want to apologize to everyone I've put on the spot like this.

> **When I first got here**, I was angry because I believed all the rumors that everyone said about Twentynine Palms — that it's hot and miserable and there's nothing to do. I was also angry because I got placed in a non-deployable unit and I really wanted to deploy. I've been here for three years and now I'm upset I'm leaving because this is my home now.

> **If I hadn't been stationed here** I wouldn't have learned what I have. I wouldn't have developed my skills as a photographer and a writer, so I'm very grateful for the time I've spent here. It was a really good first duty station.

> **My advice to people is**, don't believe what others tell you. Find things out for yourself before you take on someone else's judgment.

> **I grew up** on the outskirts of a city. I was on the line between the country side and the city side so I got the best of both worlds. Most of my friends I went to school with had farms so we got to grow up playing hide-and-seek in the corn fields. I was also ten miles from Lake Michigan, so I got to shop downtown in the city and spend time on the beach.

> **I grew up in a** good environment. It was kind of like a bubble. Everyone is friendly. So, when I got to some of the big cities in Calif., it surprised me. I had never been around such a fast-paced environment before. It was kind of an eye-opener when I joined the Marine Corps. Even though Twentynine Palms is a small city, everywhere around it is big.

> **Growing up, I was** huge into sports. I wasn't really that good at basketball; they just sort of put me on the court to foul people. Which is really sad but I was really an aggressive player. I didn't really have that much skill but I was really fast and I was really rough with people. I couldn't really shoot and I wasn't that good at dribbling but I wasn't afraid of getting hit.

> **After every game** growing up, my dad would say, you shouldn't be afraid of getting hit. It'll just hold you back. So I was never afraid in sports. I broke my toe once in soccer and didn't even realize it until after the game.

> **My husband and I** were high school sweethearts. He is very interesting. He finds joy in simple things and he has such a heart for kids. We volunteer as youth leaders at our church. He has a passion for developing these kids as people of character and people of integrity. He likes being a leader and a mentor. I really found myself growing as a mentor to these kids by being around him.

> **We are easily entertained**, so we can find fun in anything; like driving down the road playing games or going to Joshua Tree and climbing a mountain and then just sitting there talking. We have a lot of fun.

> **We fight a lot but** it's not like angry fighting or bickering, we literally fight, we grapple. It usually ends in 30 seconds when he puts me in a headlock, a knee bar or an arm bar because I just don't know how to get out of it but I still always want to fight him. I think it's fun to provoke him.

> **He is my best friend.** He really cares about things like honor and being a leader in our home, which I really appreciate, even though it gets interesting with us both being in the military.

> **My brother joined** the Marine Corps and I went to his graduation. I saw how proud he was of himself, of the great feat he accomplished and I was really envious of that. I wanted to do something that I could be proud of. After high school, I really didn't want to sit around in a classroom for another four years and, because I played so many sports, I wanted to stay active so I thought the Marine Corps was going to be a good option.

> **I really like my job** and I got Hawaii as my next duty station. Of course I want to stay in the Corps.

> **I was surprised** how much I liked this job. I like to meet new people and do things that a lot of other Marines don't get to do. I get to learn their jobs and spend time with other Marines out in the field.

> **I've climbed a mountain** 9,000 feet up in Bridgeport, Calif., to take pictures of snipers that were hiding at the top of the mountain. I've fired a tank round. I've spent hours in the field with artillery Marines just hanging out until their next command to fire. I've sat down with role players and heard their stories. I've taken pictures of memorial services and of the honored Marine's family. I got to take those photos for them, so they could remember.

> **I was surprised by how much** I enjoy talking to people and learning their stories. I've gotten to know people really well and make some great friends through my job. This job forces me to get out there and interact with people that I probably wouldn't have ever met.

> **My favorite part** of the job is when the story and photos are done and I get to see their reaction. I take photos and write stories for the people in them, not for me. I don't even necessarily do it for the Marine Corps, but for the people in the Marine Corps.



Interviewed by Lance Cpl. Lauren A. Kurkimilis
May 28, 2013

DIETZ SPENT HER FIRST ENLISTMENT WRITING AND SHOOTING FOR THE OBSERVATION POST. SHE IS MOVING ON TO WORK WITH THE HAWAII MARINE AT MARINE CORPS BASE HAWAII

MEMORIAL, from A1

city of Paris. The opposing forces launched a surprise offensive and reached the bank of the Marne River at Chateau-Thierry, which fell on the evening of June 1. In response, U.S. troops, consisting of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, marched more than 10 kilometers to plug the gap in the line by dawn. On June 26, the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, attacked Belleau Wood and cleared the forest of the German opposition, ending one of the fiercest battles the U.S. would fight during the war.

“This is where modern history for the Marine Corps really started,” said David M. Atkinson, the superintendent of Aisne-Marne American Cemetery. “Prior to June of 1918, very few people had heard of the Marine Corps; after, the Marine Corps was absolutely known throughout the world”

“For the Marines, it represents something exceptional to be here. It is a tie between the Marine Corps and the French Marines that is tremendous and they find it here with each other every year,” said Atkinson, an Anderson, Nev., native.

Though seldom mentioned in historic texts, the Battle for Belleau Wood has an endearing place in Marine Corps legacy and is known to all Marines as sacred ground where Marines and French troops fought together, an endearing partnership that has lasted to the present day.

“The links uniting U.S. Marines and

French soldiers are ancient. They date back to the U.S. War of Independence and they have strengthened with all the events of the 20th century,” said French General Francis Autran, deputy chief of staff of “Plans and Programmes” at the French Army Staff.

“The brotherhood-in-arms seen here today, and this faithfulness to the memory of these heroes surrounding us and those who died since then in operations are the proof of strong links uniting our services and the values we share; values that the U.S. Marine Corps has maintained, making it an elite Corps,” said Autran.

The battle was fought by Americans under French command and many units received French decorations for their outstanding valor and courage. The 5th and 6th Marine Regiments are authorized to wear the French fourragère on their dress uniform as a result of being the only regiments in the American Expeditionary Force to receive the Croix de Guerre, an award for distinction in combat with the enemy, three times during World War I.

“Because of the legendary Marines that earned the fourragère fighting side-by-side with our French friends, we’ve earned the right to wear it today,” said Sgt. Christopher M. Steward, an intelligence analyst with 5th Marine Regiment. “The importance of this legacy continues today and we come here to commemorate what they did and what it means to our Marine Corps,” added the Merrimack, N.H., native.

Mayor of Belleau Monique Benier

and Maj. Gen. Raymond C. Fox, commanding general of Marine Forces Africa and II Marine Expeditionary Force, were in attendance along with military officers and officials representing the U.S. and France.

The event also featured the laying of wreaths in commemoration of the fallen, a firing of volleys, the playing of TAPS, raising of the American and French national colors, and a concert by the French military band. Participating units from the U.S. Marines included 5th Marine Regiment, Marine Security Guard Detachment, the Wounded Warrior Regiment and Marine Forces Europe and Africa. French units that participated in the ceremony included the 21st Marine Infantry Regiment and the Musique Principale des Troupes de Marines.

The Memorial Day celebration is an annual even that is hosted by the American Battle Monuments Commission, the guardian of America’s overseas commemorative cemeteries and memorials that honor the service, achievements and sacrifices of U.S. Armed Forces around the world.

“Here, we stand shoulder-to-shoulder in solidarity and in tribute to those who bravely fought for freedom and gave the last full measure... This was the kind of enduring freedom we celebrate today,” said Turner. “Just as our forefathers fought shoulder-to-shoulder, nearly 95 years ago... today, we continue to serve together in foreign lands. The legendary partnership between French soldiers and American Marines continues.”

LOCAL, from A1

coast guardsmen who’ve died in the service of our country. It’s also about the sacrifice of the wounded. As a nation we need to not ever forget that.”

Patrons from veterans associations, the Combat Center and retired personnel presented wreaths during both ceremonies.

Berger also spoke about the sacrifices of family members who bear a burden while their loved ones are deployed. He said families have a strength and unselfish attitude that too often goes unnoticed.

“It’s good that we recognize our service members, but rarely do we mention their families,” Berger continued. “The sacrifice of those whose plain white markers stand proudly, all aligned in Arlington, Normandy and all around the world, is a solid reminder that the cost of freedom is really high.”

The Combat Center’s Honor Guard fired a three shot volley, a salute to those that have passed in defense of the country. Taps played and the ceremonies came to a close.



CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Sgt. William Raymond Heffner, career planner, 1st Tank Battalion, holds his daughter Penny Sue, 3, during a Memorial Day Ceremony at the Joshua Tree Memorial Park and Mortuary May 27. The ceremony in Joshua Tree was one of two the Combat Center participated in on Memorial Day.

CHEF, from A1

The chefs take the written portions of the test separately but the scores are averaged together to make a final score the duo.

“They should not only know how to cook, but should be able to answer simple questions about their jobs,” said Master Sgt. Martinez, food service technician. “They have to work together to get the best possible scores in order to win this competition. Every portion is important.”

The third and final portion of the competition is the cooking portion. The chefs arrived at the mess hall at 7 a.m. to begin the third portion of the competition. They are faced with a container full of different foods all chosen by the judges. The chefs draw from the container and choose one protein plate, a starch plate, vegetables and a dessert plate. They also tailor a menu for the judges and make sure the plates are related.

“The plates must go hand-in-hand,” said Maj. Martinez. “They can’t serve plates from random cultures or tastes with each other. It will affect their score sheet. The judges are constantly with the chefs.”

As soon as the competition begins, judges from the food service chain of command judge the chefs on food safety, sanitation, cooking fundamentals and other responsibilities the chefs are faced with while cooking on a day-to-day basis.

While applying cooking fundamentals, the chefs are under a time hack. The product must be finished and served before the time set by the judges.

According to Maj. Martinez, The tasting judges consist of different members of the Headquarters Battalion chain of command. The judges give an un-bias view on the culinary skills of the chefs.

“It’s just like iron chef when it comes to the final portion,” said Maj. Martinez. “Things get hectic. Chefs run around grabbing what they need and trying to get it done before time is up. These chefs are all competing for bragging rights and the awards that follow.”

A first, second and third prizes were given out to the five teams competing. There is also a people’s choice based off of which duo get the most votes from the people who go through the line. During the cooking process, the judges grade the chefs on how they utilize the materials they are offered with the food they receive from the container and to be considered for the Chef Award. The winners also receive a Navy Achievement Medal and a chance to compete in the West Coast Chef of the Quarter.

The winners of the first Chef of the Quarter competition aboard the Combat Center were Lance Cpl. Nicholas Casas, Team 2 and Damien Snell, Team 2.

“We just stuck to the basics,” said Snell. “We are excited to move on and to represent our mess hall anywhere we go.”

Each installation winner from the West Coast will go on to compete in the West Coast Chef of the Quarter competition. The winners of the West Coast Chef of the Quarter receive a full-paid eight-week course to the Culinary Institute of America. The winners also will go on to compete against the East Coast winners.

“We both jumped to our feet when they asked who wanted to compete in the competition,” Casas said. “We signed up to expand our knowledge in this field and enjoy the field at the same time. We will keep competing and striving until we reach the top.”

Faces in the Crowd



1



2



3



4



5

[1] Cona Long, 8, takes a look at the insides of a .50-caliber machinegun at a static display which was part of the Grubstake Days Festival in Yucca Valley, Calif., May 25. This is the 63th annual celebration of the town's rich mining heritage.

[2] Elijah Denton, 10, straps on a flak jacket and explores the Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle at a static display which was part of the Yucca Valley Grubstake Days, May 25.

[3] David Roth, 4, tries on a Kevlar helmet at a static display which was part of the Yucca Valley Grubstake Days May 25.

[4] Nani Stephens, 3, chases some bubbles floating over the Yucca Valley Grubstake Days Parade, May 25.

[5] Autumn Radcliff, 7, and her sister Sierra, 6, watch as floats pass by in the Yucca Valley Grubstake Days Parade, May 25.



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The summer season officially begins on June 21 and is rapidly approaching, which brings along an increase in activities such as barbeques, parties, traveling, swimming, boating, cycling, hiking, and camping to name a few. The onset of summer also brings with it the 101 Critical Days of Summer Campaign, which runs from Memorial Day, May 27 to Labor Day, Sept. 2. During the 101 Critical Days of Summer Campaign, units and organizations are asked to provide their Marines and sailors with the tools and training necessary to help them participate in their summer recreational activities in a safe and responsible manner.

TIPS

For Vehicle Safety

- ★ Never drink and drive
- ★ Start every trip well rested
- ★ Drive during daylight hours
- ★ Schedule breaks every two hours
- ★ Pull over if you get tired, better to be late than not at all
- ★ Use the Travel Risk Planning System (TRIPS) for your travels

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day 2012

32 Marines and sailors across the Marine Corps and Navy were killed
7 Fatalities involved cars and trucks, **20** involved motorcycles

After spiking in 2008, summer fatalities decreased in 2009 and 2010, but unfortunately increased in 2011 and in 2012.

Motorcycle fatalities increased from 13 in 2011 to 20 in 2012 for more than a 50% increase. Let's work together towards a common goal and bring the number back down in 2013.

TRIPS is an easy online survey that helps you recognize and reduce travel risks. Leadership involvement is a key element. TRIPS is available at the USMC Safety Division (SD) website, <http://www.marines.mil/unit/safety/Pages/welcome.aspx>.



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

Crossword Solution

W	I	L	D	E	S	M	O	O	T	U	P	S		
A	R	I	E	L	P	A	R	C	H	N	I	A		
D	R	E	S	S	I	R	A	T	E	R	E	S		
		P	E	N	N	L	O	A	F	E	R	S		
A	R	N	O	A	S	S	R	A	C	E				
T	O	O	T	I	N	A	R	C	A	D	E	S		
L	A	T	I	N	S	I	D	E	R					
N	I	C	K	E	L	D	E	F	E	N	S	E		
		E	V	I	T	A	N	D	I	A	L	S		
M	E	T	E	R	E	D	T	O	G	G	L	E		
O	D	A	Y		S	E	W	H	E	A	T			
D	I	M	E	N	O	V	E	L	I	S	T			
E	T	A		E	V	I	T	A		A	C	U	R	A
L	O	L		M	E	L	O	N		P	A	N	E	L
A	R	E		O	N	E	N	D		S	P	O	D	E

Sudoku Solution

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



Miracle GAME

Story by
 Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya

He has waited for this moment his entire life. Even though the world has told him the odds are against him, in this moment, he is proving them wrong. For the first time ever, he is wearing an official baseball uniform. Before he joined the team, he could be in the crowd and wear the jersey but had no need for the cleats. He could sport a baseball cap in support of his team but had never felt the weight of a batting helmet. Until today, Reed Luckino had only ever been a spectator; an outsider looking in.



CPL. ALI AZIMI

John Coronado hits a baseball in the Miracle League of the Desert's opening day celebration after the 2013 Grubstake Days Parade in Yucca Valley May 25. The league is the only special-needs baseball program available in the high desert.

Organization builds baseball field for special needs community

Reed and his brother Nico were born only minutes apart, weighing less than two and a half pounds. At birth, they were diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy and in many respects, the odds have been against them. Since then, they have been faced with the harsh reality that some milestones will never be a possibility but thanks to the Miracle League of the Desert, playing for an organized baseball team, in a real league, is a milestone they have conquered.

"The league is designed for people with special needs,"

the game," said Anthony Cooper, Miracle League baseball player. "He plays third base for Joshua Springs, I have seen pictures of him in the newspaper so it was cool playing with him."

The Miracle League of the Desert is the only special needs baseball program in the high desert. Families had to drive to Palm Desert before the opening ceremony of the desert league.

"There is a need for this program here because there is a portion of the population who don't have the ability to really do the whole sports thing," said David Cooper, Anthony's father. "Whether it is an organized program or an unorganized gathering, it doesn't matter. The kids get a chance to play and actually get a chance to be a part of the team."

the children. It is a rubber field designed to be a flat surface. The field was designed to be wheelchair and walker accessible, to include the dugout.

"The field is interesting, I like it," Anthony said. "The balls bounce higher for me."

The field is designed to meet the needs of people with wheelchairs, walkers or who have difficulty walkin. It also has lights for the children to play during the evening hours. Everything from the dugout to the outfield is designed to meet the needs of the children.

A Parent's Dream

"Sometimes when the children are at school, they may feel a little bit left out because they can't participate in some of the sports," said Lee Anne Cooper, Anthony's mother. "When they get a chance to play, there is a sense of belonging and I think it is good for the children."

Cooper says that it is sometimes difficult for those with special needs to attend and participate in different events.

According to Shannon, local families needed a special needs-friendly field for the children to play on. It is also something the children can look forward to.

"We knew Anthony was excited because his room is usually a mess but the night before the game, he had his jersey nicely folded on a chair," Lee Anne said. "We couldn't help but to think, 'oh man, this must be big.'"

The families participating are a portion of a bigger community with children who have special needs.

"There are about 1,300 students in the community who have disabilities," Shannon said. "Some call them the invisible children because no one ever sees them. It is hard to go places with them but I want to give these children every opportunity in life."

Members of the Miracle League try to help all of the children with special needs. They also try to help on a personal level.

"My children haven't had the ability to participate," Shannon said. "I want them to be able to say they are a part of a team. To many other families, their son being a baseball player is ordinary. To us, that is extraordinary. You learn to appreciate every little thing."

According to Shannon, this program is run off of heart and soul. Not only from the board of the league but from the children.

"Before the event today my son said something to me that hit me as a mother, not a president," Shannon said. "He looked up at me and said, 'Guess what mom, your son is going to play baseball.'"



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

said Shannon Luckino, President of Miracle League of the Desert. "The idea is to give everyone the chance to play baseball."

The Miracle League of the Desert held its opening day celebration at Brehm Park in Yucca Valley May 25. The League gives children the chance to play baseball who might not have the physical abilities to play in other leagues a chance to play. The League of the Desert is one of the three Miracle Leagues offered in California.

A Community Effort

The high desert community also played a part in the opening day celebration. The community lined the fences of the field to watch the game. Some of them also played a major role in the completion of the field. Donations were made from many members of the community to go towards the completion of the field. The community also participated in the game to help the baseball players.

Baseball players from Joshua Heights High School came to assist the players of the Miracle League. They were there as buddies to run the bases with each player and provide them with individual coaching and encouragement.

"I made friends with my buddy that was helping me in



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

A Baseball Player

"I like playing baseball a lot," Anthony said. "I like to go hiking and fishing but I think baseball keeps me very active."

For many players, it was their first time playing baseball.

"There are no words for the joy expressed by the children," Shannon said. "For us to have that amount of joy, we would have to hit the lottery."

According to Shannon, the Miracle League, to include their baseball diamond, is completely designed to meet the needs of



CPL. ALI AZIMI

[Above, left] Reed Luckino, 12, approaches the plate at the Miracle League of the Desert's opening day celebration after the 2013 Grubstake Days Parade in Yucca Valley May 25.

[Above, right] John Coronado runs to first base in the Miracle League of the Desert's opening day celebration after the 2013 Grubstake Days Parade in Yucca Valley.

[Left] James Neal approaches home plate in the Miracle League of the Desert's opening day celebration after the 2013 Grubstake Days Parade in Yucca Valley.



Liberty Call

Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Thursday: Karaoke, 8:30 - 10 p.m.
 Friday: DJ Gjettblaque, 8 - 11 p.m.
 Saturday: DJ Gjettblaque, 8 - 11 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Thursday: Warrior Night, 4:30 - 9 p.m.
 Friday: Karaoke Night, 6 - 9 p.m.

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Monday: Steak night, 4:30 - 8 p.m.
 Wednesday: Wing Special Wednesday, 4:30 - 9 p.m.
 Thursday: Free Happy Hour Food, 5 - 7 p.m.
 Friday: Steak Night, 4:30 - 8 p.m.
 Friday: DJ Gixxa, 8 - 11 p.m.

Combat Center Officers' Club

Thursday: Free Happy Hour Food, 5 - 7 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 to 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.

Ragtime

When: June 1
 Where: Theatre 29
 73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
 For more information, call 316-4151
 or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

Lower Desert

Scotty McCreery

Country musician performs
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, June 1
 Where: Spotlight 29 Casino
 46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
 For more information, call 866-377-6829 or visit
<http://www.spotlight29.com>

Jewel

Folk singer performs
 When: 9 p.m., Friday, June 7
 Where: Agua Caliente Casino, Resort and Spa
 32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage, Calif.
 For more information, call 888-999-1995 or visit
<http://hotwatercasino.com>

The Doobie Brothers

California pop/rock band of the '70s
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, June 15
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
 84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio, Calif.
 For more information,, call 800-827-2946 or visit
<http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

MC Hammer

American pop artist performs
 When: 9:00 p.m., Friday, June 21
 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, May 31

6 p.m. – Pain and Gain, Rated R
 9 a.m. – Evil Dead, Rated R
 Midnight – The Big Wedding, Rated R

Saturday, June 1

10:30 a.m. – **Free Matinee**, Escape from Planet Earth, Rated PG
 12:30 p.m. – Scary Movie 5, Rated PG-13
 3 p.m. – 42, PG-13
 6 p.m. – Oblivion, Rated R
 9 p.m. – The Big Wedding, Rated R
 Midnight – Pain and Gain, Rated R

You don't have to be a fan to follow it, but a little Trek 101 sure helps



COURTESY PHOTO

NEIL POND

"Star Trek Into Darkness"

Starring: Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto & Benedict Cumberbatch
 Directed by J.J. Abrams
 Rated PG-13, 132 min.

It's been four movie years since the last voyage of the U.S.S. Enterprise, but chronology is a pretty wonky concept in the space-hopping, time-warping world of "Star Trek."

Director J.J. Abrams' 2009 reboot of the venerable sci-fi franchise rewound the story to its roots, setting up younger versions of characters who'd eventually head into the stars on a mission to "boldly go where no man has gone before."

Now Abrams' second movie takes place in 2259, following the events of his previous film but still ahead of the future in the original 1960 TV series, and well before everything in the later movies or TV spinoffs.

Got it? Well, just go with it, because otherwise you could drive yourself batty trying to move all the pop-cultural pieces into the right sequential order.

Here, the cast of the 2009 movie returns with Capt. Kirk (Chris Pine), First Officer Spock (Zachary Quinto), cool-headed helmsman Sulu (John Chu), testy Medical Officer Bones (Karl Urban), high-strung Chief Engineer Scotty (Simon Pegg), and brainy, beautiful Communications Officer Uhura (Zoe Saldana).

The plot involves the resurfacing of rouge Starship Command officer John Harrison from three centuries ago (there's that wonky time thing again), his mission of cataclysmic revenge, and Capt. Kirk's assignment to hunt him down without starting an interplanetary war. There's also a "whoa" moment that will cause the "Star Trek" faithful — at least the ones who consider everything in the franchise to be sacred text — to slightly realign their planets.

You don't have to be totally immersed in Trekkie lore to

follow "Into Darkness," but a bit of basic Trek 101 would at least shed a little guiding light.

Someone who's never seen the TV show, for instance, might not grasp the significance of the brief cameo by Leonard Nimoy, the original TV Spock, or catch his passing reference to another movie in the "Star Trek" lineage with the critical bit of knowledge he imparts about this movie's villain, played with scene-stealing theatrical pizzazz by British actor Benedict Cumberbatch.

A viewer with a limited "Star Trek" background might also miss the reward of hearing a flustered "Bones" McCoy deliver the line that long ago became his character's trademark, "Dammit, man, I'm a doctor!"

And newcomers to the party would certainly not remember, when Spock and Uhura share a kiss, just what a big deal it was in 1968 when Capt. Kirk (William Shatner) locked lips with his own black Communications Officer (Nichelle Nichols) for one of the first scripted interracial smooches on American television.

"Into Darkness" shows off its \$185 million budget with some spectacular scenes: the Enterprise under attack; Spock fighting the treacherous Harrison on top of a levitating, barge-like transport; the demolition of a major chunk of San Francisco with a kamikaze crash of a monstrously large Starfleet ship; Kirk and Harrison zipping like a little silver bullet through a treacherous, debris-strewn expanse of space protected only by their spacesuits and helmets.

There's a lot of crashing, crunching action, but it's balanced by a storyline that focuses on the bond of friendship between Kirk and Spock, and with a seasoning of character-based humor that keeps things fun and peppy.

And at the end of the movie, Kirk and the Enterprise have finally caught up to where the TV show began; they're ready to begin their five-year mission to "explore strange new worlds" and "seek out new life" that defined the original series.

"Where should we go?" Kirk asks his crew. For the answer, we'll all just have to wait for the next mission—and movie. But I'll bet the time will just fly by.



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Marines receive letters from local kids



PHOTOS BY CPL. ALI AZIMI



[Left] Marines with 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, hold up the letters they received from local K-Kids club at Felix Field, May 23. Kiwanis International, K-Kids, is a programs where children learn important life lessons through leadership and community service.

[Above] Brandon Benton, 12, with the local K-Kids club examines his letter before giving it to a Marine with 3/11 at Felix Field, May 25. The children gave the Marines letters expressing their gratitude for their service. The two groups spent the afternoon playing games getting to know each other.



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