



'Cutting Edge' prepares for next deployment

Cpl. D. J. Wu
 Combat Correspondent

In the past 10 years, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, has deployed for combat missions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

With OEF coming to a close in 2014, 3/7 is heading into the Integrated Training Exercise for the unit's last time in preparation for their deployment.

The unit is utilizing ITX to work on their new plan for Afghanistan. They will be focusing their efforts on letting the Afghan National Security Force take the lead.

"There are a lot of unknowns surrounding this deployment," said Capt. Colin Chisholm, operations officer. "It's not that our mission isn't clear, it's that the mission includes a broad spectrum of potential tasks for 3/7. With ANSF doing more and more, we are transitioning into a follow and support position."

This will be the battalion's third and potentially final deployment to Afghanistan and even though much of their mission is similar to previous deployments, there is a sense that things are different.

"It's not going to be the same as it was last



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

Cpl. Zachary Wrightsman, data supervisor, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, fills a sand bag at the Combat Center's Range 215 Forward Operating Base 3, July 17.

time," said Staff Sgt. James Gilchrist, platoon sergeant, Company I, 3/7. "With all the stuff that we're getting, its going to be a different fight."

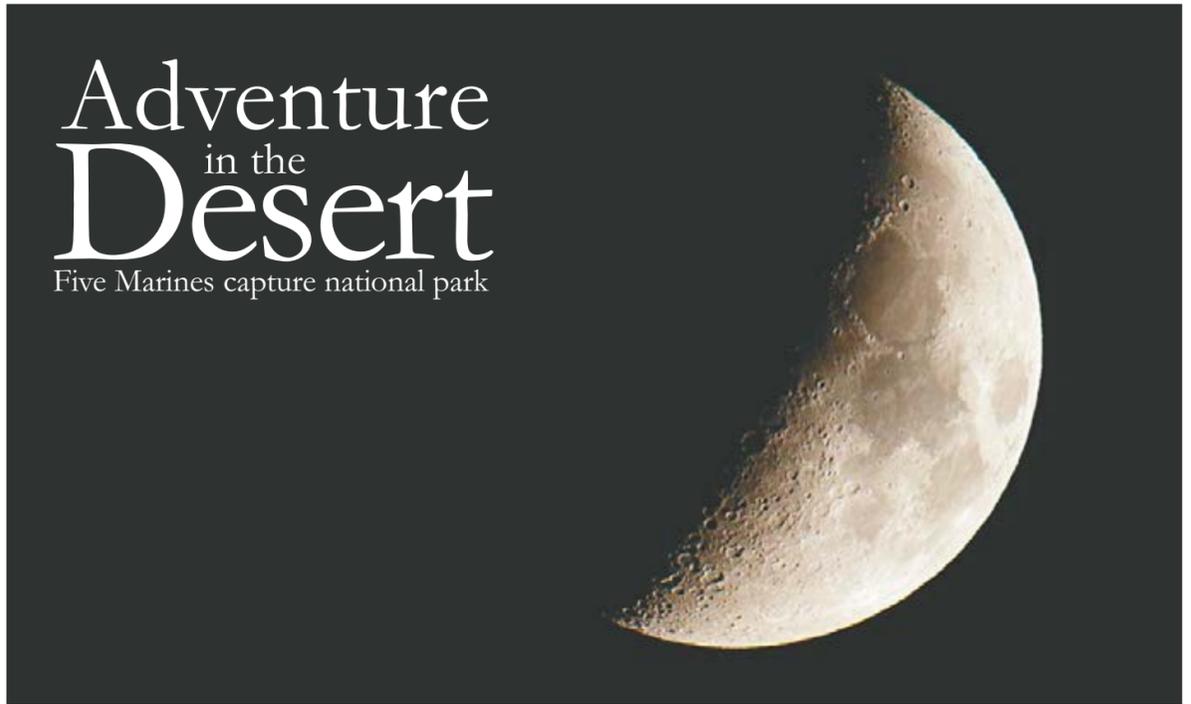
The 'Cutting Edge' starts their iteration of ITX this week and will make the most out of the 29-day-training cycle.

"We're going to use this ITX to make sure we're good at the basics," said Chisholm. "We're going to make sure we're as good as we possibly can be, offense and defense stability. We're going to use the last evolution of the ITX, the battalion stability exercise, to try to model what (3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment) is doing in Afghanistan."

The battalion will be replacing the 'Thundering Third' in Afghanistan and taking over from where they left off. The mission in Afghanistan is establishing the ANSF as the main authority of the region and the Marines are helping to guide the way.

"We're there helping them plan," said Chisholm. "They do it, but we're there if they need the help. We're trying to train for a lot of contingencies, a lot of small-scale platoon to

See **ITX** page A9



CPL. D. J. WU

Adventure in the Desert

Five Marines capture national park



CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

The Observation Post staff headed to Joshua Tree National Park to explore the high desert July 12. The park has trails for all-day hikes into the back-country, campgrounds available by permit and an extensive network of dirt roads that makes for less crowded and safer cycling than the paved main roads. Joshua Tree is also a popular rock climbing venue. For more information visit www.nps.gov and for more Adventure in the Desert photos see page B6.



CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

'Phantoms' provide eyes in the sky

Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
 Combat Correspondent

Unmanned aerial vehicles are piloted by men and women with a remote control or by a computer. They come in a variety of sizes and characteristics. They are capable of providing pictures and video of a target location but may also be equipped with missiles to strike on command.

Remote-sensing functions include electromagnetic spectrum sensors, gamma ray sensors, biological sensors, and chemical sensors. A UAV's electromagnetic sensors include visual spectrum, infrared, or near infrared cameras and radar systems. Other electromagnetic wave detectors may also be used but are uncommon. Biological sensors are capable of detecting the airborne presence of various microorganisms and

See **PHANTOMS** page A9



CPL. D. J. WU

Marines with Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3 practice the launch procedures of their UAV July 2. The unit is practicing their maintenance with the vehicle and training Marines on the system. Unmanned aerial vehicles are piloted by men and women with a remote control or by a computer.



Sexual Assault Awareness

From the Office of The Commandant of the Marine Corps

Editor's note: This is the seventh installment in a series about sexual assault prevention.

Court Martial

Since the formation of our CTTs in October 2012, we have seen significant improvements in our ability to successfully prosecute Courts-Martial involving sexual assault offenses. After the first six months of our legal reorganization (October 2012-March 2013), we compared court-martial disposition data against the same six-month period from the previous year (October 2011-March 2012). Here are our main findings:

- A 77 percent increase in the number of cases involving sex offenses that went to Court-Martial (from 31 to 55). We attribute that significant increase to three main things: first,

an improved investigative effort as a result of improvements in NCIS' ability to investigate cases, along with the force multiplying effect of our embedded investigators; second, the dedication of increased prosecution resources to complex cases; and three, increased reporting based on our Campaign Plan efforts.

- A 94 percent increase in the number of General Courts-Martial in cases dealing with sexual assault offenses (from 19 to 37).

- For General Courts-Martial involving sexual assault offenses, an 89.5% overall conviction rate, with 62.5% of those convictions for sexual assault offenses. In the 30 cases where there was a conviction for a sexual assault offense, 90% of the sentences included a punitive discharge. We also almost doubled the amount of sexual assault

See **SAPR** page A9

'1st Tanks' advon comes home



LANCE CPL. PAUL MARTINEZ

Staff Sgt. Raymond Cardoza, communications chief, Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, holds his daughter, Kayla, 7, during the battalion's advance party homecoming July 11.

Money Management

'1st Tanks' promotes financial readiness for junior Marines

Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez
Combat Correspondent

Marines aboard the Combat Center participated in a class on financial management at the base Protestant Chapel, July 12. Many junior Marines are new to independent living, and have very little experience with their personal finances. In order to combat this, the family readiness officer for 1st Tank Battalion sponsored this class.

The class gave Marines insight on how to be financially responsible with their money through discussed topics such as saving money, budgeting, and maintaining security.

Marines in attendance were given monthly income forms to help them learn

the instructor of the class.

Occasions such as the annual Marine Corps Birthday Ball or holidays where leave is taken and plane tickets are purchased can be made easier when an individual simply saves small amounts of money over time.

Aboard the Combat Center, the Single Marines Program offers monthly trips and recreational activities that Marines can take advantage of to save money, such as a free trip to San Diego.

Financial security was also discussed, with Marines being advised to always shred and never simply discard any unneeded documents that contain financial information such as account numbers or personal information. Such

said. "(Marines) want to buy something that will take them off base so they can go and do something."

Given the considerable purchase of a personally-owned vehicle, classes like this aim to give Marines guidance on how to safely prepare for purchasing one.

"Why wouldn't you want a map for your financial life?" Mega said. "If you want to be successful, you should have a plan set in place."

Different methods of recommended financial organization include hand written records or Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Record keeping is essential for an accurate financial lifestyle.

Marines also learned that in this day and age, a fine line between wants and needs still exists. The importance between what is a need and what is a want for an individual weighs heavily in proper spending and saving.

A savings account can be maintained simply by depositing 10% of your take-home pay. Over time, savings increase, and in the event of an emergency, an individual can resort to that money, sparing them significant financial hardship.

Resources are available for Marines that feel they need guidance with their finances. Military One Source is a Department of Defense-backed website that offers financial counseling over the phone. A unit's command financial specialist serves as an adviser for personal financial management.

A combination of a working budget and a positive cash flow will make financial responsibility easier to comprehend for any Marine.

"I feel strongly about these Marines making sure they know that there are places they can turn to for help," Wasdin said. "These aren't skills we are born with. We have to learn financial management."

Start building and managing your finances now, not only to set you up for the present but also the future,
- 1st Lt. Sean Graham

the basics of budgeting and organization of finances. They took the time during class to fill out the forms and really understand what they were doing with their money.

"I think financial management is important for a Marine's success because nothing is worse than being broke all the time," said Jany Wasdin, Family Readiness Officer, 1st Tank Battalion.

Marines were also made aware that budgeting can include something that you do not use every month, such as vehicle maintenance. Preparation is key.

"Start building and managing your finances now, not only to set you up for the present but also the future," said 1st Lt. Sean Graham, (tubular launched, optically tracked, wire-guided weapon) platoon commander, 1st Tank Battalion and

measures can significantly lower the chances of identity theft, a crime that is more recurring now than ever.

Lance Cpl. Jeffrey Mega, tank mechanic, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Tank Battalion, was among the Marines in attendance. He felt that it gave him a better understanding of how to be financially responsible.

"It definitely makes you take a closer look at what you're spending and opens your eyes a bit," said Mega. "It makes you want to be more responsible."

With the summer months ongoing, an increasing number of Marines aboard the Combat Center are actively leaving the base to pursue activities elsewhere.

"The biggest spending is on vehicles, whether it be cars or motorcycles," Graham

■ Combat Center renovates Felix Field

Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
Combat Correspondent

Felix Field will be closed off due to renovations July 11 until construction is concluded.

The employees of Naval Facilities Engineering Command are finalizing a design to battle the desert conditions and offer the people aboard the Combat Center a renovated and improved Felix Field.

"There is dirt and sand everywhere," said Margie Trandem, engineering technician, NAVFAC. "To be able to have a field of a better quality is something the Marines deserve."

The quality of the field will be improved by installing synthetic turf and a new track comparable to collegiate field standards. The field is also designed to be dual-purposed for both football and soccer.

Felix Field is one of the larger fields offered aboard the Combat Center. It consists of a grass field, dirt track and bleachers for spectators to occupy. The conditions are a constant challenge making maintenance of the field a continuous effort.

"People will be able to do their physical fitness and also have a place to take their families," Trandem said. "This is an improvement to the whole base. It affects everyone from the person with the job of maintaining it, to the families and athletes utilizing it."

The Combat Center offers a variety of fields and tracks for people to conduct different activities. The fields are used for everything from family days to recreational sports.

The renovations of Felix field are scheduled to be finished by the end of the year. The field and track are closed and off limits but in the mean time, feel free to visit Del Valle Field, Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field and the other recreational areas offered by the Combat Center.

For questions and concerns please contact resident officer in charge construction Lt. Michaud at (760) 830-7423 or e-mail: richard.michaud@navy.mil; Also, Margie Trandem, ROICC engineering tech at (760) 578-2572 or e-mail: marjorie.trandem@navy.mil.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

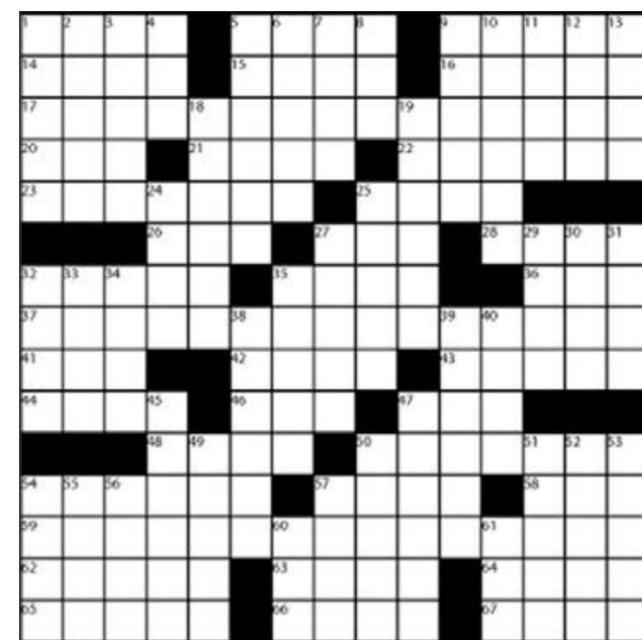
NOAH REY MENDEZ Born on: June 27, 2013 Born to: Reynaldo and Rovannel Mendez	TREVOR HOWARD KNIGHTEN Born on: June 26, 2013 Born to: Jason and Tiffany Knighten	MICHAEL ANDREW ADAMS JR. Born on: June 21, 2013 Born to: Michael and Sarah Adams
HARPER ROSE BECHTOLD Born on: June 26, 2013 Born to: Jason and Heather Bechtold	OSCAR JACOB SOSA Born on: June 26, 2013 Born to: Oscar and Rouaine Sosa	

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THREE CHEERS

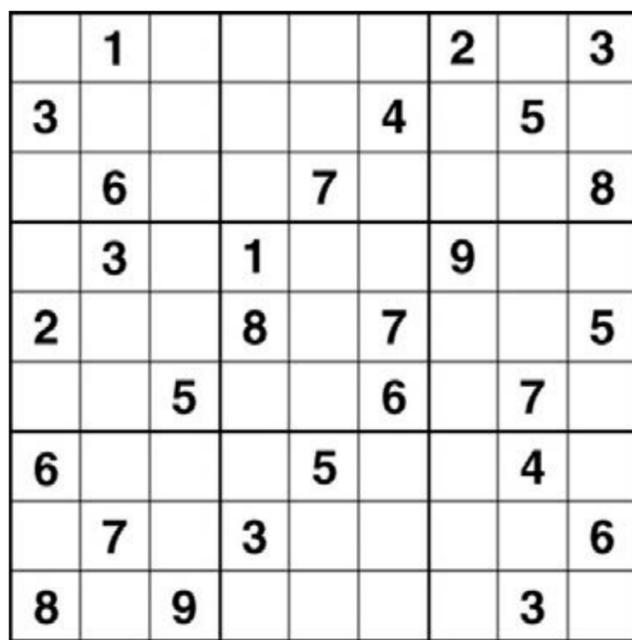
- ACROSS**
- Downhill racer
 - "Waterloo" pop group
 - In any way
 - Mah-jongg piece
 - Landlocked Asian country
 - "That's the truth!"
 - SIS
 - Left, after taxes
 - In a draw
 - Flared skirts
 - Part of a bedroom suite
 - One of the Mavericks
 - Cocks and bulls
 - "Yay, team!"
 - OK Corral lawman
 - "Taras Bulba" author
 - Sport with mallets
 - Route word
 - BOOM
 - Flower holder
 - City founded by Pizarro
 - Greets the judge
 - "O.K., why not?"
 - Has too much, for short
 - Just great
 - Still capable of exploding
 - Feast finale
 - Agreeing
 - __ qua non
 - Alternative spelling; Abbr.
- DOWN**
- Defensive effort
 - One with no hope of getting out
 - Make joyful
 - Rep. counterpart
 - Axis foes
 - Big name in aspirin
 - Investor's purchase
 - Faulkner's "___ Lay Dying"
 - Bracelet site
 - This evening, on marquees
 - Author Paton
 - Lawn application
 - Fermentation dregs
 - An end in __
 - Drive-in employee
 - "Scat, cat"
 - Glider wood
 - Suite parts
 - Hertz rival
 - Altar happening
 - Shells out
 - Ancient land including present-day France
 - Fairy tale monster



- Urbane fellow
- Serengeti group
- Short-billed shore bird
- End of a #2
- Barbecue fare
- Icky stuff
- Some property
- Reason out
- Hustle music
- Conjure up
- Goes ballistic
- Pick up the tab for
- "As __ saying ..."
- Junction point
- Like much folk mus.
- Overly self-assured
- Expose, in verse
- "Black gold"

See answers on page A5

SUDOKU 2963D



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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.

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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

Mitchell

Melbourne, Australia, tank operator, Australian Army, 22

CLINCH



> **The other day, I really wanted** to have Vegemite. I was like this is the perfect Vegemite opportunity and I didn't have any. I was at the chow hall and someone brought me some toast. He didn't want it. I was like, "Aw, sweet. Damn, some Vegemite would go down good here."

> **Some people called us British**, I'm like, "No, I'm not British. Don't say that."

> **It's a bit different. You just got to get used to it.**

The work is slightly different, but pretty much the exact same. Our militaries are identical, especially the way we act with Marines.

> **We have a lot of the same jokes.** We always like getting into the new guys, all that kind of stuff. We like officers, but we always kind of give them the officer thing. Like, whoa whoa, I'm an officer, gonna go back and have a cucumber sandwich.

> **It's all very open and sandy**, lots of sand. The temperatures are pretty outrageous compared to Darwin, where we're based. The temperatures are very humid compared to this. It's sort of a big jump, especially because I came from an exercise wearing jumpers and beanies and then came here and got off the plane and was like, "Oh my God, it's so hot here."

> **The other day, we were hanging out** in the PX. Some of the Marines don't know all of our ranks and one of my buddies is a lance corporal, and they saluted him. I think a gunnery sergeant walked past, saw it and started yelling at the guy. That was probably the highlight of our day. It made the Marine movies come true. This gunnery sergeant just screaming at this poor, brand new guy. I was like, "Yeah, this is so cool, it's like a movie."

> **We had a Marine infantry unit** come to Australia from Hawaii and I did the Marine corporal leadership course with them and that was pretty cool. I learned a lot. Especially coming here, I knew all of the ranks and the drill.

> **I love warrior's night.** I got to be the vice (president). I dealt with all the fines and all that. It got pretty outrageous.

> **Everyone's got their own tanks** and you got your crew and the crew works on the tank. It's your responsibility to keep that tank running. Obviously, there are things you can't prevent from happening, like an engine exploding, like mine did.

> **My engine decided to** fill up with fuel, because we had it sitting there and then it decided to just go kaboom. We were having a bit of a fuel leak. We didn't know where it was, and the vehicle was running fine. It was actually Anzac Day, April 25, and we didn't start them for a day. We came back the next day to start them and as the fuel that was sitting in the bottom of the engine ignited, it just blew up. It basically just took the back part of the engine out.

> **I've never gotten off** a tank so fast in my life. We tried to get the fire extinguishers, but we couldn't get close enough.

> **We are pretty laid back** and we get that a lot. We try to corrupt the Marines every chance we get. We're like, "Just chill out, man. Take a rest."

> **But when it comes down to work**, we hook in and get the work done. But any time we can sit down and relax, everyone just takes full advantage of it.

> **That's one thing** I really like about America, you're not afraid to show your colors.

> **I want them to know** that we're fun. I want them to take our lingo, the way we speak, always say "cheers" and "mate" to everyone.

> **We like to tell people** that we have more morale than them. We're a really friendly troop. All of these guys are fairly new together and they're a very young squadron.

> **Any idols? Oh! Katy Perry.** Me and my sergeant back home, Sgt. Jack are big Katy Perry fans. Every time we get a chance, we lay back in the field when we're not firing or we're in a hard situation, we'll just cheekily put on a bit of Katy Perry and sit around it like, "Yeah it's Katy Perry." That's where it's at.

Interviewed by Cpl. D. J. Wu
July 2, 2013



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schedule



CLINCH HAS BEEN WITH THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY FOR FIVE YEARS. HE BEGAN HIS CAREER AS AN ARTILLERYMAN AND IS NOW A TANK OPERATOR. HE ENJOYS COMING TO AMERICA AND HOPES TO VISIT AGAIN SOON.

Follow **the** flag

Combat Center implements hot-weather safety measures

Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez
Combat Correspondent

As summer continues, the temperatures are rising and service members aboard the Combat Center are urged to exercise caution during outdoor physical training.

The Marine Corps utilizes a weather condition flag system that provides guidance as to what caution should be applied when conducting PT during the summer months. This system is based on what is called the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature, which is a composite temperature that estimates the effect of

temperature, humidity, wind speed and sunlight.

Aboard the Combat Center and other installations throughout the Marine Corps, the flag color of the day is made visible to service members. The Combat Center's flags can be seen at the Commanding General's building and at Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital. The flag color of the day can also be seen on the hospital's website:

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhttp/Pages/FlagCondition.aspx>

The purpose of the flag system is to make service members aware of what outdoor physical activities are appropriate based on the temperature. Each flag represents a different weather condition and indicates that PT should be handled with varying levels of caution.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Martel Thomas, preventive medicine technician, preventative medicine Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, knows the types of heat injuries that can result due to excessive activity on a black-flag day.

Not having enough salt balance in your body can result in heat cramps, said Thomas. Salty snacks and a mix of Gatorade and water will help your body.

Heat exhaustion is another infamous injury caused from a lack of salt, and can cause those experiencing it to faint.

"The biggest (injury) is heat stroke," said Thomas. "Your body is unable to cool itself down, and you can get a core body temperature of 103 degrees."

Heat stroke is known as the biggest heat injury due to the irreversible damage a high body temperature can cause on the human brain. It can potentially be fatal, added Thomas.

"If someone is suffering from heat stroke, it is a medical emergency and they will need immediate care," said Thomas.

Those that are outdoors must be aware of danger signs such as dizziness, nausea, and headaches. If you are experiencing these signs or notice someone who is, immediate medical attention is advised.

There are multiple indoor gymnasiums and pools aboard the Combat Center. Service members can still get a good

workout without the chance of succumbing to heat injuries. Service members that do not take advantage of the gyms or pools and train outside on a black-flag day put themselves at greater risk for heat injuries.

Additionally, anyone conducting PT with heavy gear, such as a flak jacket, packs, or hiking equipment, must add 10 degrees to the current weather and adjust for the new flag condition. Conducting PT sessions with a buddy is recommended as an additional safety measure.

Marines all over the Combat Center can be seen conducting PT with the goal of attaining mission readiness. However, failure to be prepared for the high temperature will quickly take them out of the fight. Everyone is advised to know the flag conditions, drink plenty of water, and stay safe wherever they are this summer.

Staff Sgt. Sourinha Phakousonh, platoon sergeant, Battery I, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, adjusts PT for his Marines based on flag conditions. For him, PT on a green-flag day allows flexibility.

"For a green-flag day, we'll do green on green or boots and (utilities)," said Phakousonh. "It can be a 45-minute workout, or a 3 1/2 mile run with sprints in between."

Phakousonh will make a different plan for PT if it is a black-flag day.

"If the heat is high, we do a pool workout," said Phakousonh. "We'll also go to the indoor gyms and play sports or do section PT with the weights and equipment."



WHITE

This condition occurs when temperatures pose no threat. No flag will be flown, and regular PT may be carried out.



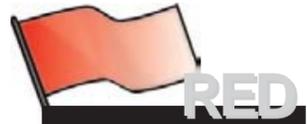
GREEN

Flown during low-risk temperatures that range from 80 - 84.9 degrees. Some caution should be applied during green flag, however this type of condition poses a low risk and is typically safe for most PT sessions.



YELLOW

Flown during moderate-risk temperatures ranging from 85 - 87.9 degrees. Physical activity should be limited to those who have been acclimated to local heat conditions for 10 days or more. This type of condition poses a slightly greater risk, and indicates that outdoor PT sessions can take place but not for as long or intense as would be advised during a green flag.



RED

Flown during high-risk temperatures that range from 88 - 89.9 degrees. Physical activity is advised only for service members who have been acclimated to heat conditions for a period of 12 weeks or more. This type of condition poses a highly elevated risk. Service members conducting PT should consider a short outdoor session or move indoors. Water intake should be increased as well.



BLACK

Flown during very high-risk temperatures that exceed 90 degrees. Intense outdoor physical activity, regardless of conditioning or heat acclimatization, is discouraged. During black-flag, PT should be conducted before 8:30 a.m. or after 5:30 p.m.

DRINKING & DRIVING

California cracks down on DUIs

Cpl. Brianna Turner
Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton

With summer in full swing, social gatherings are common. With that in mind, motorists are reminded that California laws on driving under the influence are some of the most strict in the nation.

There are two causes for a Driving Under the Influence case, one is the defendant being too impaired to operate a motor vehicle, which is proved by irregular driving habits, sobriety tests, or the smell of alcohol on the defendant. The other is based on chemical testing; proving that the defendant was over the legal blood-alcohol-content level of 0.08.

According to drinkinganddriving.org, it is important to ensure the designated driver has the keys before drinking begins and they should refuse any alcoholic beverages. Being a designated driver does not mean being the "least drunk of the bunch."

When a civilian client is arrested for a DUI they are fighting a civil administrative battle with the Department of Motor Vehicles and a criminal battle with the charging District Attorney's office. Members of the armed forces face additional penalties based on the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the Manual for Court Martial.

For more information contact the base safety office or visit drinkinganddriving.org.

Penalties for a DUI are dependent on a few circumstances including the number of the defendant's past convictions or if the incident resulted in injury to others. The punishment for DUIs become more severe the more times they occur.



Without probation, the penalties for a first conviction within 10 years are:

- 96 hours to six months of jail time
- Fines of \$390-\$1,000
- Six month license suspension



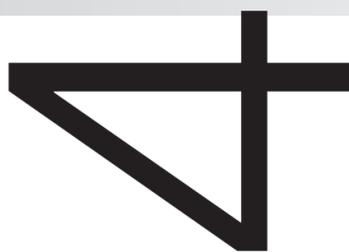
A second conviction within 10 years may result in:

- 90 days to one year in jail
- Fines of \$390-\$1,000
- Two-year license suspension



A third conviction within 10 years may result in:

- Three-year license revocation
- \$390 to \$1,000 fine
- 120 days to one year in jail



A fourth conviction is charged as a felony offense, which includes, but is not limited to:

- 16 months or two to three years in state prison or 180 days to one year in a county jail
- Four-year license revocation
- Fines of \$390 to \$1,000

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

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CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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Combat Center links military kids via website

Story by
Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez

The internet has become a primary tool to find resources and information and to connect with like-minds. The Department of Defense supports a website called Military Kids Connect, which helps children to cope with the stresses of that come with being a military child, like a parent's deployments or having to frequently relocate.

Extended periods of time away from a parent can undoubtedly be difficult, but this website is one of several resources available to aid.

Military Kids Connect is an online community for children ages six to 17. Conceived in 2010, militarykidsconnect.org is now a fully operational website that provides support and resources for children when their parent leaves for deployment.

The website is divided into three categories designed to cater to the age group of the child: kids ages six to eight,

tweens ages nine to 12, and teens ages 13 to 17. While most features remain the same across all age groups, only kids ages nine and up are eligible for the use of the online message boards.

With their parent's permission, children can easily register for an account, giving them access to everything the website has to offer. A virtual passport, which can be filled with stamps and keeps track of the progress children make through playing games. A feature called Deployment Daily takes sensitive topics such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, and prepares children to understand what it is.

Age-appropriate activities can also be found on the site, such as a fully interactive comic creator and scrapbook. Children can also check out the games tab and play Word Recon, a word-search puzzle, or a spot-the-difference game featuring cultural scenes from Afghanistan, among others. At the top of the page, kids can even see the time and temperature in Afghanistan,

giving them an idea of what their loved ones might be doing.

Children may also find significant support with the connectivity of the online message boards. Available for children ages nine to 17, the message boards allow for direct discussions between other children with deployed parents. Here they can openly share ideas and experiences with one another, and take comfort in knowing they are not alone in being separated from a parent.

Online safety is priority at Military Kids Connect. Parents and caregivers can monitor the activities of their child and even navigate the site itself to see what is available for their child to do. Adult educators have a section to access the website as well.

Military Kids Connect is a resource incentive for children to come together and share with one another their thoughts when a parent is thousands of miles away. The challenge of being alone is a burden that may be lifted through friendship.



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

[Top] Kids with the 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion family enjoy an afternoon of fun and workshops April, 13.

[Above] Aiden Gordon, son of Sgt. Antoine Gordon, imagery analyst, Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1, wears his father's cover before Gordon departs for Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



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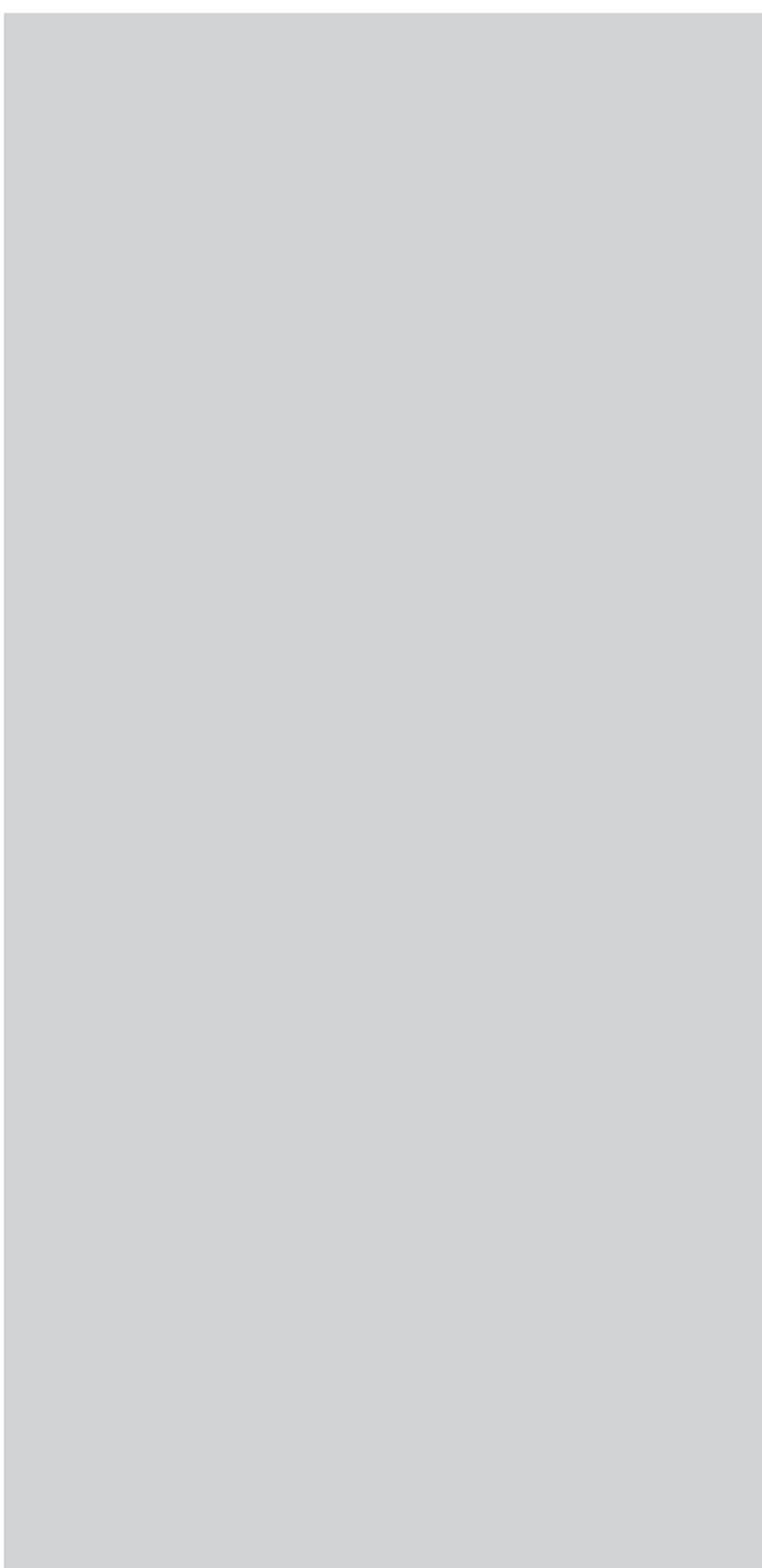
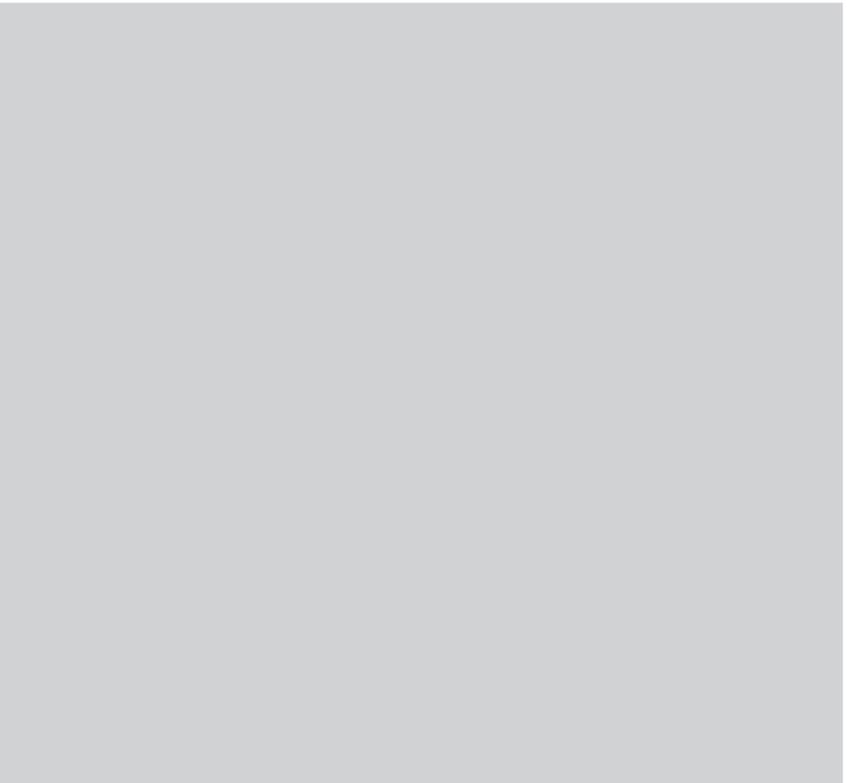


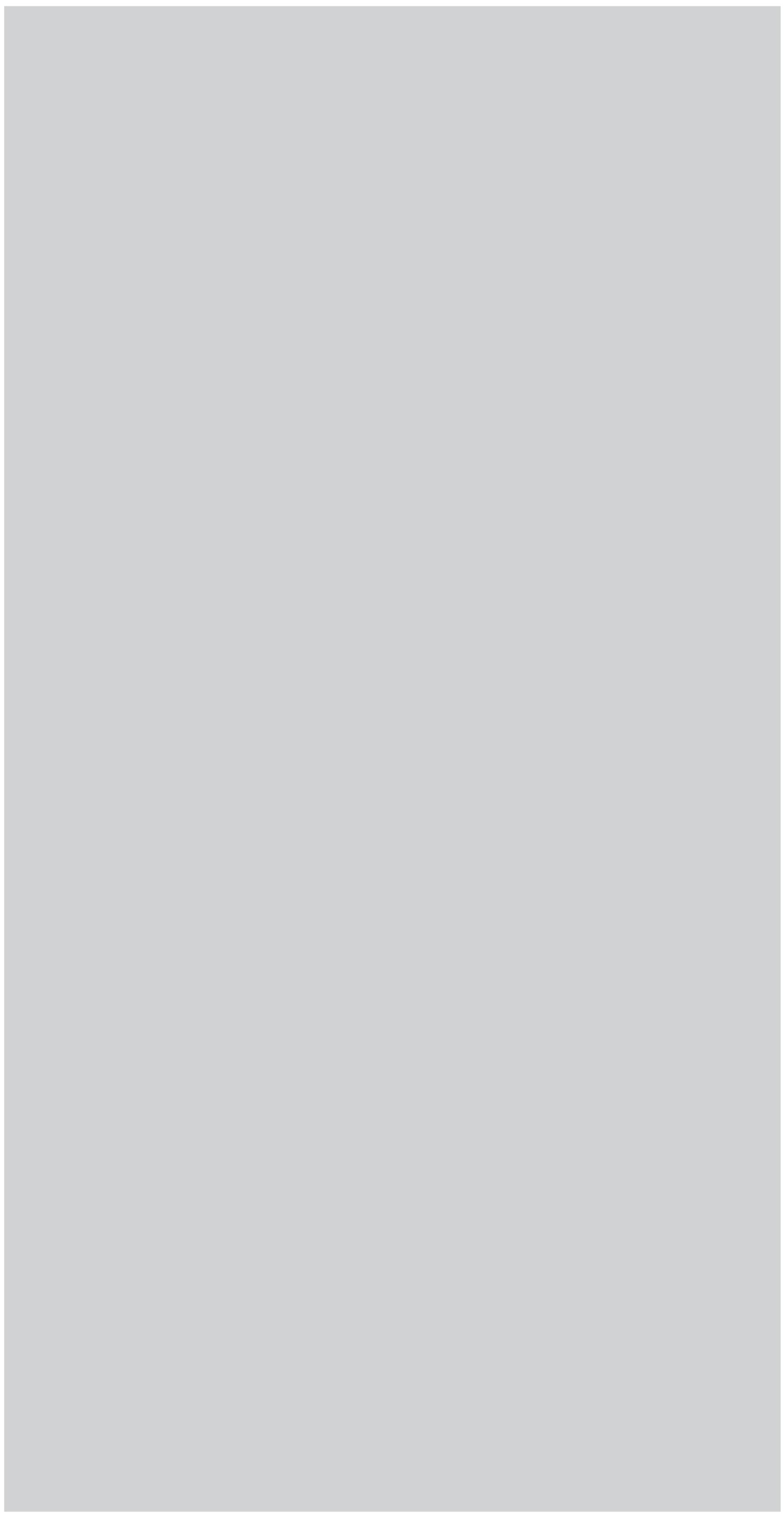
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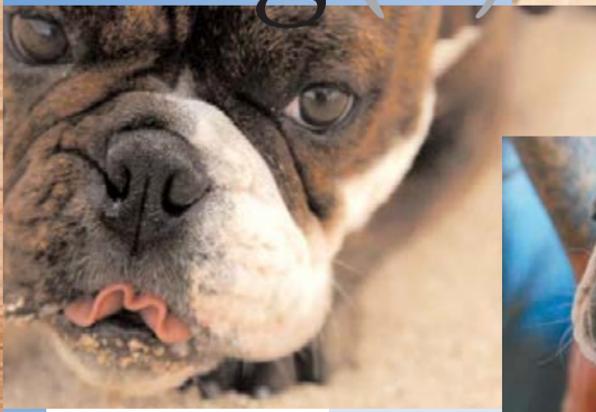
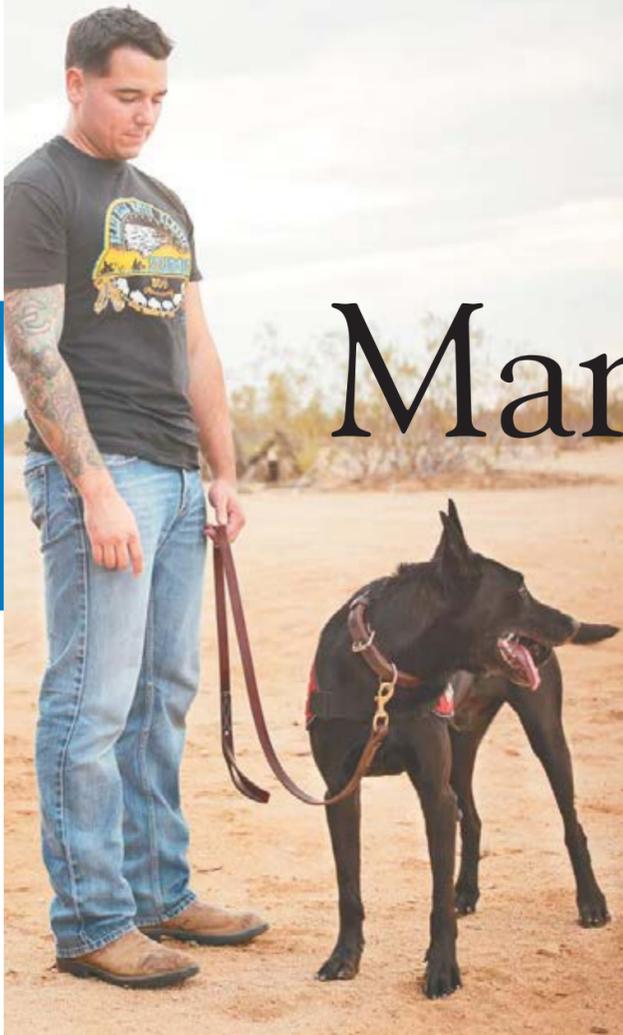
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Man and his Dog(s)



K9 handler surrounds life with man's best friend

Ryan worked at the Combat Center's Provost Marshal's Office for two years until a position opened up for a civilian working dog handler. He jumped at the opportunity and has now been in the K9 unit for three years. His one and only partner, Bono, patrols and finds explosives.

Ryan Carr got his first dog when he was 7. She was a labrador named Gabby and Ryan didn't like Gabby; she wasn't his kind of dog. It wasn't until 2007, when Ryan was deployed in Fallujah with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, that he saw a K9 handler and found his passion in dogs and now he works with a canine partner.

When Carr gets to work, Bono is always excited to see him. Carr loves this. This is why Carr loves dogs.

"I'm lucky because I get to go to work and see Bono, and he's super pumped to see me. It's the best of both worlds," Ryan said. "When you come home and walk through the door at the end of the day, the dogs are so excited to see you. You're their favorite person in the world."

His love for dogs doesn't just stay at work. When he gets home he is greeted by four more dogs. Dogs are his life and that's the way he likes it. The attitudes of his dogs are all very different and Ryan understands that. He approaches each of his dogs differently. He has, Gemma, a 1-year-old English bulldog; her father, Moto at two years old; a 2-year-old Belgian Malinois named Justice and 5-year-old Belgian Malinois, Rocco.

"My approach, from working with dogs would be that knowing each dog is different and has their own personality," said Ryan. "If you're going to have a dog, you have to cater toward its personality. Gemma is the sweetheart, Moto is the brat, Justice is a psycho and Rocco is the angel."

His professional life with dogs spills over to his personal. Ryan likes his dogs obedient and through his job skills, he knows how to instill it.

"Bono is like his kid," said Clara Carr, Ryan's wife. "I think because of how he is at work, he expects more out of our dogs at home."

Ryan has been with the K9 unit for three years and Bono has been his partner the entire time. They've traveled, doing missions around the country and Bono is an important part of Ryan's life. They've gone around the world and were utilized in almost a dozen Secret Service missions.

"My wife gives me crap sometimes. She says 'You can't love Bono more than your home dogs,'" Ryan said. "But Bono, he's like my partner. When we're actually looking for explosives, if he did find one, he'd be saving my life. So I have to treat him like a partner."

Sometime the line between work and home gets blurred, especially when it comes to Ryan and his dogs. He works eight hours a day with Bono, before he goes home to his four other dogs.

"It's funny because sometimes you go home and you still think you're working with the dogs, so you talk to your dogs like work dogs. My wife reminds me all the time, 'They're not working dogs, Ryan.'"

Sometimes Ryan tries some of his work techniques with his home dogs. Justice is the same breed as some of the dogs he works with.

"Justice is a really smart dog, she does listen but she's just so hyper," Clara said. "Ryan has his own bite guard and Justice will just automatically latch on to that thing without any real training. She loves that thing."

Dogs are an integral and consistent part of his life. One of his home dogs is a retired military working dog from the kennel where he works. Rocco, a 5-year-old Belgian Malinois, is where his work and home life meet.

"I didn't plan on adopting Rocco," Ryan said. "But it got to the point where he was done, no one had claimed him and not many people wanted him because he had medical problems. He over-heated really bad in 2011 and he collapsed while training. He was bleeding from his eyes, mouth, everything. The dog works 110 miles per hour. After he was evaluated and his adoption came up and no one had claimed him, I said 'I have the room. I have the space. I'll take him home' and since he's been home I haven't had a problem with him."

Rocco has been somewhat of a catalyst for Ryan's other dogs.



CPL. D. J. WU

Rocco's working dog habits have transferred into his retired life. Although he is now much calmer than in his working days, Rocco still knows all his commands and that level of obedience translates to the other dogs.

"Rocco was our hardest biting, hardest hitting, the most ferocious dog we had here," Ryan said. "A day after being home, he became the calmest, sweetest, chill dog. The other dogs have started learning from him. When I tell Rocco to sit, the other ones start doing it and they start feeding off of each other like that."

Ryan does do a good job separating his passion for his home dogs and the professionalism in his work life. Both sides will always seek his attention and love, but Bono is also there to work with and potentially save his life. He explains that all his dogs have very different personalities and that he loves that about them. He says that they always know how he feels and they take in those emotions and react the same way.

Ryan has five dogs in his life presently and with a daughter on the way, he doesn't plan on getting any more dogs.

The Carr Dogs

Ryan knows that all of his dogs are different. He caters to their personality and trains them accordingly.

Gemma "Sweetheart"

One-year-old female English bulldog. She's a dog who wants to be held.

Moto "Brat"

Two-year-old male English bulldog. He is Gemma's father. Moto likes to surround himself with all his toys. "Moto likes to test us. He's like the rebellious teenager."

Justice "Psycho"

Two-year-old female Belgian Malinois. Justice is always full of energy. "You just can't break that dog's spirit."

Rocco "Angel"

Five-year-old male Belgian Malinois. Rocco has calmed down a lot since retiring. "He's become our angel dog. He listens more than our other dogs, but then again, the first five years of his life was obedience."

Bono "Partner"

Four-year-old male German shepherd. "When we're actually looking for explosives, if he did find one, he'd be saving my life. So I have to treat him like a partner."



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

Monday: Steak Night, 5 - 7:30
Thursday: Free Pub Grub, 4:30 - 6:30 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.

The Perils of Goldilocks

When: 7 p.m., Fridays & Saturdays, June 28 - July 27
Where: Theatre 29
73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
For more information, call 316-4151
or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

Lower Desert

Lonestar

American country group performs
When: 9:00 p.m., Friday, July 19
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
For more information, call 800-252-4499 or visit
<http://www.morongocasinoresort.com>.

Golden Boy Boxing

Junior welterweight fighters compete
When: 5 p.m., Saturday, July 20
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>.

Intocable

Popular Tejano/Nortena group performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, July 20
Where: Spotlight 29 Casino
46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
For more information, call 866-377-6829 or visit
<http://www.spotlight29.com>

Sara Evans

American country star performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, July 27
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>

Sunset Cinema

Friday, July 19

6 p.m. - After Earth, PG-13
8:30 p.m. - Now You See Me, PG-13
11:30 p.m. - Man of Steel, PG-13

Saturday, July 20

10:30 a.m. - Free Matinee: Oz the Great and Powerful, PG
1:30 p.m. - The Internship, PG-13
5 p.m. - Man of Steel 3-D, PG-13
9:30 p.m. - The Purge, R
11:50 p.m. - This is the End, R

Sunday, July 21

12:30 p.m. - Monsters University 3-D, G
3:30 p.m. - Man of Steel 3-D, PG-13
7:30 p.m. - White House Down PG-13

Monday, July 22

6:30 p.m. - Man of Steel, PG-13

Tuesday, July 23

7 p.m. - Monsters University 3-D, G

Wednesday, July 24

6 p.m. - Man of Steel 3-D, PG-13

Thursday, July 25

5:30 p.m. - After Earth, PG-13
8 p.m. - Now You See Me, PG-13

Johnny Depp saddles up for rollicking reinvention of masked-man saga



COURTESY PHOTO

NEIL POND

"The Lone Ranger"

Starring: Johnny Depp & Armie Hammer
Directed by Gore Verbinski
Rated PG-13, 149 min.

In the opening of Disney's rollicking reinvention of pop culture's 80-year-old masked-man saga, a little boy stands in front of a Wild West carnival diorama in 1933, the year "The Lone Ranger" debuted as a radio show. The kid watches in wide-eyed amazement one of the still-life scenes come to life just for him.

That nifty little kickoff sets the stage, and the narrative framework, for this wildly entertaining recreation of the fable of the Lone Ranger and his loyal Native American sidekick, Tonto.

In this version, though, "sidekick" Tonto gets much more of the spotlight, the story and the glory—mainly because he's played by the eminently watchable Johnny Depp. One of Hollywood's most bankable stars, Depp is certainly capable of traditional roles, but really seems to prefer burying himself deep into unconventional characters...like this mysterious Comanche with little to say, a fascination with watches, white paint on his face and a dead bird on his head.

But Armie Hammer's Lone Ranger is no slouch, either. Most viewers will remember Hammer from his dual roles as both of the indignant Winklevoss twins in "The Social Network" (2010), but here he strikes just right wronged notes as John Reid, the idealistic young frontier prosecutor driven by tragic circumstance to seek justice beyond the boundaries of late-1800s Texas law.

Director Gore Verbinski, who worked previously with Depp on the first three "Pirates of the Caribbean" movies,

seems invigorated by the switch from ocean tropics to desert air. He weaves a rousing, captivating tale that incorporates back stories for both the Ranger and Tonto, explaining how each came with haunting personal motives to the quest that ultimately unites them against a monstrous outlaw (William Fichter) with a literal taste for blood and a greedy expansionist railroad baron (Tom Wilkinson).

Verbinski stages some absolutely stunning action pieces, which are not only tremendous fun to watch, but also complete knockouts in terms of execution. For anyone jaded with special-effect superheroes and space aliens, it's an exhilarating, almost jaw-dropping treat to watch what modern moviemaking can do with an "old-fashioned" action sequence, orchestrated to "The William Tell Overture," the Lone Ranger's iconic theme music, with all the characters and plot pieces come coursing together for an absolutely rip-roaring finale.

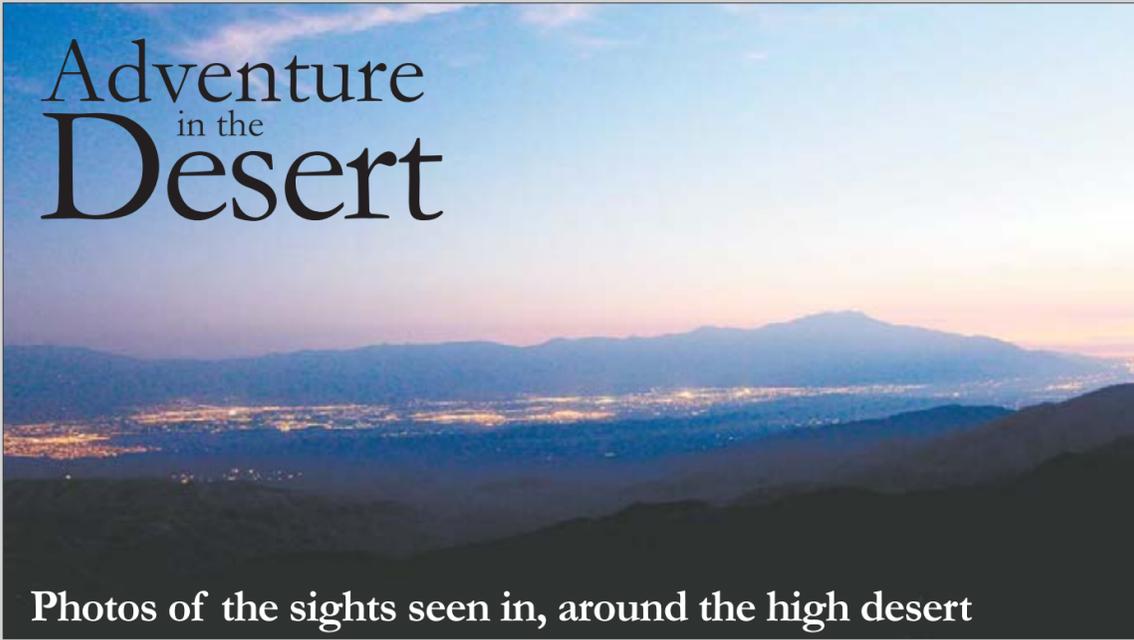
There's plenty of humor, too; often, it's almost campy, as when the Lone Ranger and Tonto, attempting to get information from a brothel owner (Helena Bonham Carter), threaten to bust her establishment on health code violations. "Well, it IS a house of sin," she says.

And it's sometimes violent. Bullets fly, bodies fall, and one particularly unsettling—though dramatically important—scene caused a mother and her preteen daughter to get up and leave the screening I attended. So moms and dads, you've been warned.

But stay through the credits and you'll hear the Lone Ranger say his character's famous catchphrase, "Hi-Ho, Silver! Away!" What Tonto dryly tells him in response gets a chuckle, but it also reminds us that yesteryear's Lone Ranger was many, many years ago—hat was then. And this is now, with a new movie, a new Ranger and a new Tonto, saddling up an old story to bring it to exciting, reinvigorated new life once again for a whole new audience.

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Adventure in the Desert

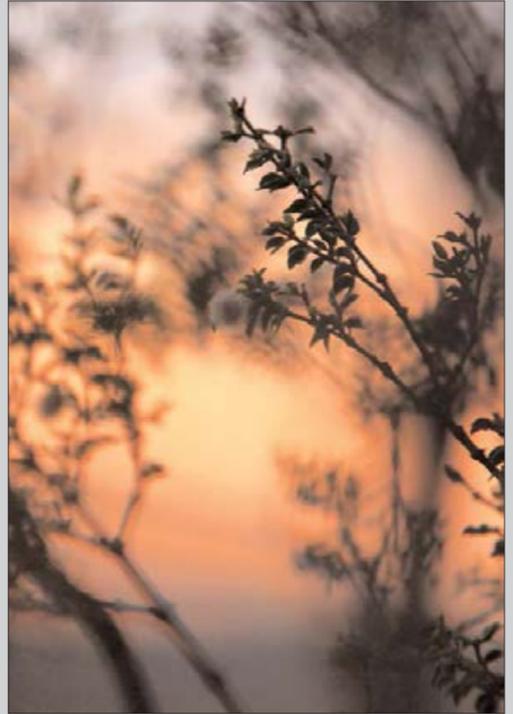
Photos of the sights seen in, around the high desert

CPL. LAUREN A. KURKIMILIS

Key's View is located on the crest of the Little San Bernardino Mountains on the southwestern border of Joshua Tree National Park. Coachella Valley, the San Andreas Fault and the Salton Sea can be seen from this look-out point. On a clear day, Signal Mountain in Mexico can also be seen.



CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON



CPL. LAUREN A. KURKIMILIS



CPL. LAUREN A. KURKIMILIS

[Top] Skull Rock is located along the main park road and is a favorite destination spot for patrons who visit Joshua Tree National Park. The area is home to a 1.7 mile nature trail located in the Jumbo Rocks Campground near the Skull Rock formation.

[Middle] Joshua Tree, Calif. is home to more than 700 species of vascular plants including the *Larrea tridentata*, an evergreen shrub, which is known to give the desert its characteristic scent during summer rain.

[Above] The latest sunset of the year in Twentynine Palms occurs June 28 at 8:01 p.m.

For more Adventure in the Desert photos, visit our Facebook page at [facebook.com/thecombatcenter](https://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter)



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