



OBSERVATION POST

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AUTISM OUTREACH

Pilot program enhances military special-needs care

Terri Moon Cronk
Headquarters Marine Corps

WASHINGTON — A congressionally mandated pilot program set to launch July 25 will enhance an existing DoD program that provides care and treatment for military children with autism, a senior DOD official said.

Dr. Jonathan Woodson, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs and director of the TRICARE Management Activity met with reporters yesterday to explain the new program.

An estimated 8,500 children of active-duty military families have a form of autism, Woodson said. He sought to dispel military parents' concerns about rumors of a potential loss in benefits for their children with autism and autism spectrum disorder.

"We understand that there's a lot of anxiety in the community of interest around autism about suspected changes that would adversely affect care," he said. "Providing care to children who have autism spectrum disorder and making sure they get the full range of care they need is a priority to us."

"All care will be continued," Woodson added. Noting that active-duty service members' children's autism care benefits in the applied behavior analysis administered through TRICARE would not change.

"Anyone who's receiving care under the (Enhanced Access to Autism Services Demonstration) — there will be no change," he said.

There's also no change in benefits to anyone enrolled in the basic medical program that began July 2012, Woodson said. An expansion of services through the autism pilot program, he added, will also allow retirees and their families to receive ASD benefits.

Autism care and treatment is evolving, Woodson said.

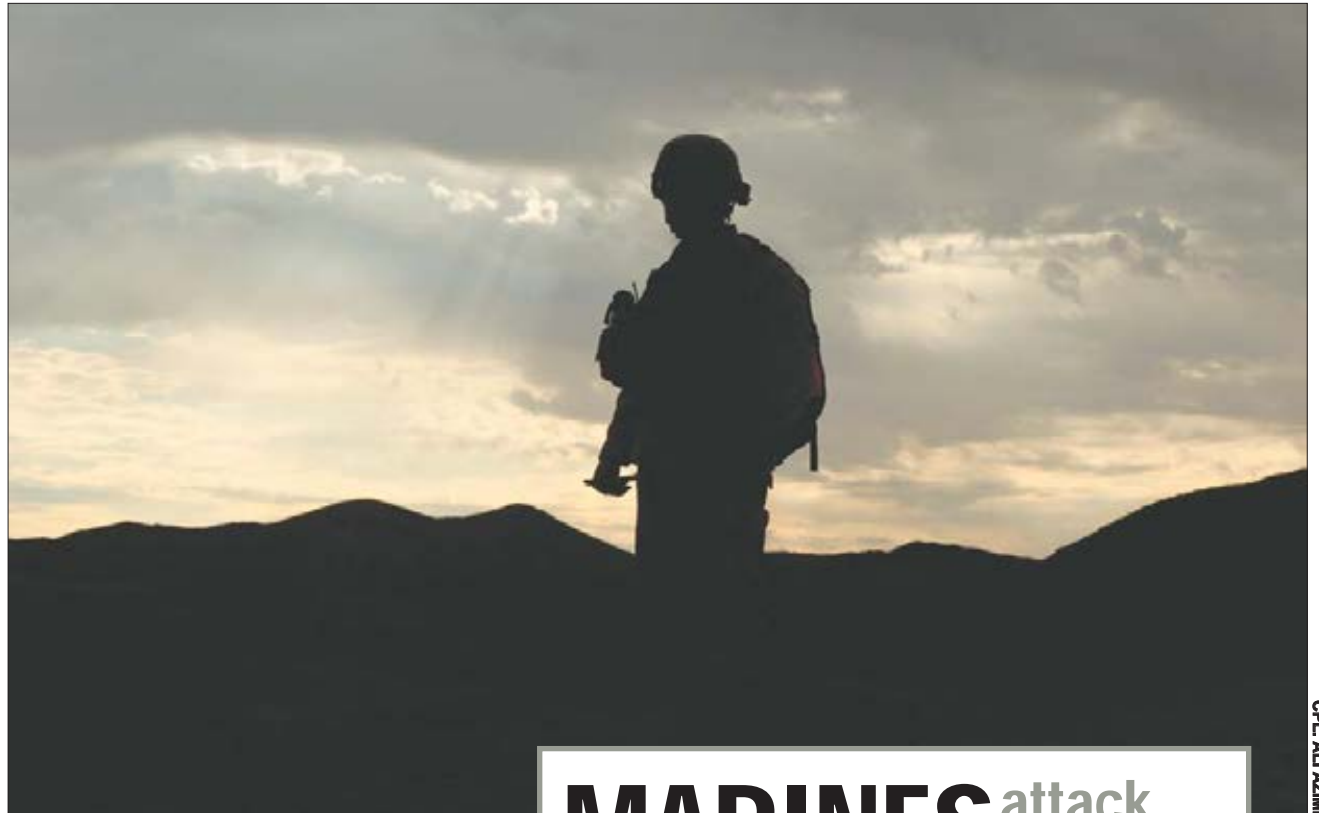
"In the future, we'll try to identify what the best practice is for the periodic assessments -- who should get it and over what period of time," he said, noting the pilot program is expected to yield "great insight" into evaluation protocols.

The pilot program was developed by crafting requirements through consulting with experts in the field and advocacy groups to "try to find validated tests and the best strategy for focusing on what would be the right care at the right time for children (with autism)," Woodson said.

Woodson said the pilot program's overall focus is directed at families, and what is best for their child. Parents' input will be sought to ensure their issues are represented as the program is shaped, he added.

There is "an expanding need and recognition

See **AUTISM** page A6



CPL. ALI AZMI

MARINES attack Range 401



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

[Top] A coyote with the Combat Center's Tactical Training Exercise Control Group, watches Marines with 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, 8th Marine Regiment, as they conduct a company-sized attack at Range 401 July 26.

[Left] A Marine with 1/9 throws a smoke grenade to provide cover for his fellow Marines at the Combat Center's Range 401 July 26.

Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
Combat Correspondent

Marines and sailors with Company B, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, 8th Marine Regiment, participated in a company-sized attack at the Combat Center's Range 401, July 26.

The company utilized combined-arms techniques to conquer the obstacles throughout the range.

"This terrain is unique to other training areas," said Capt. Juan Plascencia, company commander, Co. B, 1/9. "It gave us a chance to deliver an attack on a fortified position. This range was a company battle drill."

The battalion is based out of Marine Corps Base Camp Lejuene in Jacksonville, N.C.

"It's definitely different conditions out here," said Pfc. Dylan

See **ATTACK** page A6

9th Marines take pride in history

Cpl. D.J. Wu
Combat Correspondent

In the Corps, there is a group of men in 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, 8th Marine Regiment. They are Marines brought together solely to fight; a unit resurrected only in times of war. As many great American wars have come and gone throughout history, so has the activation and disbandment of these great warriors.

The battalion made their mark during the Vietnam War when the unit was reactivated for the conflict. The battalion underwent the longest sustained combat for a

battalion in the war, 47 months, and had the highest casualty rate, over 90% of the battalion, thus earning their name.

9th Marines was originally formed in 1917 when the Marine Corps was expanding during World War I. The battalion's mission was to patrol the Caribbean. The units did not fight in WWI but did execute its mission.

After the war, the unit was disbanded in 1919. They didn't appear again until World War II,

See **HISTORY** page A6

'1st Tanks' comes home

Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez
Combat Correspondent

Marines and sailors with Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, rejoiced with their loved ones after returning to the Combat Center after a seven-month deployment to Afghanistan.

Their arrival comes following the advanced party that returned in early July, marking the full completion and homecoming of all Marines in Co. D.

"It was a good seven months," said Capt. Chris Ashinhurst, company commander, Co. D, 1st Tanks. "It's always good to be home, especially (here) in Twentynine Palms."

The unit was deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Their operations contributed to an increased security in Helmand province in conjunction with infantry forces, and provided a more secure environment to the Afghan National Security Forces and helped them take the lead as a security force.

"Our Marines did an outstanding job," said 1st Sgt. Timothy Hartmann, company first sergeant, Co. D, 1st Tanks. "(They) were always prepared."

"Our job as a company was to provide combat support to the regimental combat team's

infantry units," said Ashinhurst. "That includes our Afghan brothers and their infantry forces in the Helmand Province."

According to Hartmann, Operation Dynamic Partner was the unit's most impressive operation. The operation involved full support of both tanks and infantry.

The Marines also conducted more than 350 patrols, and additionally, all 99 Marines that deployed returned home.

"I want to give thanks to the families for their support," said Hartmann. "I think our Marines were focused on the mission because of the support of their loved ones."

The hard work of the Marines with us made the deployment successful. Everyone from logistics to the tank crews were willing to go out there and take charge of the tasks to support the Afghan security forces, said Ashinhurst.

"We're glad to be home, and we'll take the next month to get our feet together," Ashinhurst said. "Delta Company will start getting back to work around the beginning of September."

For more pictures see **page A4**

'Scarface' supports ITX



CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

Marines with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 367 prepare their UH-1Y Super Huey for a Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel mission at the Combat Center's Latic Lake Training Area July 30. HMLA-367 utilized a UH-1Y to escort two CH-53's, which carried Marines and sailors with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, to rescue the simulated downed pilot. 'Scarface' is here in support of the on-going Integrated Training Exercise.

Operation Live Well is program a designed to promote healthy habits in the military and has reached the Combat Center.



For tips on easy exercises see **page A4**

Agencies work to bolster vet, family education outcomes

Karen Parrish
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Several government agencies are working on initiatives to improve educational success rates for service members, veterans and their families, senior Department of Veterans Affairs and consumer protection officials told lawmakers July 10.

Curtis L. Coy, deputy undersecretary for economic opportunity for VA's Veterans Benefits Administration, testified with several other witnesses before the Senate, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on educational outcomes for military members and veterans. Holly Petraeus, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's assistant director for the Office of Service Member Affairs, also testified.

A central question was whether veterans and serving troops are unscrupulously recruited by some for-profit schools. As

Petraeus explained, a "90-10" provision in law that is meant to protect students actually creates a loophole some schools are exploiting.

She said the rule requires for-profit colleges to get at least 10 percent of their revenues from a source other than Title IV, which covers federal student financial aid programs. The rule is meant to ensure that a college does not exist solely on federal funds, Petraeus said, but although tuition assistance and the Post-9/11 GI Bill are federally funded, they fall into the 10-percent category of the 90-10 rule.

"This means that for every service member using [tuition assistance] or GI Bill funds, as well as the spouse or child of a service member, in the case of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, that a for-profit college recruits, the college can then go out and enroll nine other students who are using Title IV funds," Petraeus said. "And that can be a problem."

This has given some for-profit colleges an incentive to see service members as "nothing

more than dollar signs in uniform," and to use unscrupulous marketing techniques to draw them in, Petraeus added.

Coy said that while VA defers to the Education Department on the 90-10 calculation, "we recognize the argument for including the [GI Bill] in the 90 percent limit on federal funding." He also noted, though, that a change in the 90-10 rule could leave some schools ineligible to receive federal funds.

"Our concern is to ensure that veterans are not adversely affected by any proposed changes," he said, "or to mitigate them to the extent possible."

VA and the Veterans Benefits Administration have collaborated with multiple agencies since 2001 to inform veteran students about their educational opportunities, he said, and resources are available online from VA, VBA and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to help potential students assess aptitude, plan a course of study and compare education costs.

VA also has placed vocational rehabilitation counselors at military installations across the country, Coy added, and will have counselors on 90 college campuses by the end of the fiscal year.

Coy noted VA has greatly increased oversight of all schools, including for-profit schools, and has this year completed more than 3,000 compliance reviews on schools as of the end of May. Nine institutions with a total of 177 veteran students were disqualified from receiving federal aid because of erroneous or misleading practices following those reviews, he said.

Petraeus noted a number of initiatives and online resources are in place to help troops and their families navigate post-secondary education.

"The wonderful education benefits provided to our military and their families through [tuition assistance] and the GI Bill should not be channeled to programs that do not promote — and may even frustrate — this outcome," she said.

L.I.N.K.S.

Opportunities made available to Marines

Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez
Combat Correspondent

The Lifestyle, Insight, Networking, Knowledge and Skills organization, or L.I.N.K.S., held a class for Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3 Marines aboard the Combat Center July 26 to educate them about a variety of on-base resources and opportunities.

The program, which dates its 16 years of service to Marines and their families, can be traced back to the Combat Center.

"The goal of L.I.N.K.S. is to empower Marines and their families about the Marine Corps lifestyle," said Gina Smith, L.I.N.K.S. trainer, Marine Corps Family Team Building.

In the recent session, held only for Marines, topics of discussion include programs available aboard the Combat

Center for recreation and personal assistance. This includes the Single Marines Program, Marine Corps Community Services, Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society and the New Parent Support Group.

There are plenty of fun places to go for Marines and their families, such as Outdoor Adventures where service members can rent camping and party equipment, the base theater or Sandy Hill Lanes Bowling Center.

"If knowledge is power, be empowered," Smith said.

In addition to what exists on base, the Marines in attendance were also taught about general but important Marine Corps topics, such as separation and deployment, pay and entitlements, and moving in the military.

"I learned what to expect in the future," said Lance Cpl. Chris Datan,

intelligence analyst, VMU-3.


If a Marine is new in the Marine Corps and they're having all of these emotions about deployment, they should know that it's normal, Smith said.

Marines participated in an exercise where they were given scenarios and asked to identify what organizations could help. For example, a Marine expecting a child can turn to the New Parent Support Group for parenting classes.

"We hope that Marines have knowledge," Smith said. "And we want other Marines to pass [L.I.N.K.S.] on."

With L.I.N.K.S. around, Marines that are new to the Combat Center or those seeking help during a major occurrence such as deployment or relocation, will have a solid resource to help them be successful.

"I would recommend this class to others, especially if it's a Marines' first duty station," Datan said.



BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

REAGAN ROSE RICHARDS
Born on: July 20, 2013
Born to Joseph and Jaime Richards

LIAM MATTHEW FISCHER
Born on: July 19, 2013
Born to: Sean and Tena Fischer

AIDEN CHRISTOPHER KANE
Born on: July 16, 2013
Born to: Elliot and Stephanie Kane

ZANE SCOTT SARGENT
Born on: July 14, 2013
Born to: Brandon and Jessica Sargent



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SNOOZING

- ACROSS**
- Timber wolves
 - George Michael's old musical group
 - Poke with an elbow
 - Be wild about
 - Astronomical ring
 - Region containing modern-day France
 - Mild, white cheese
 - With 31-Across, "Ripostes" poet
 - Mistake catcher
 - "The Star-Spangled Banner" quartet
 - Start of long-distance dialing
 - Brittany seaport
 - Hoofing it
 - Picnic carrying case
 - See 18-Across
 - French textile city
 - Trucker's place
 - Auto executive Ferrari
 - Spitting mad
 - Owls' prey
 - Baker's no.
 - "Going Rogue" author
 - The younger Obama daughter
 - "Ali" or "Ray"
 - Something to vent
 - Taters
 - Fold, spindle or mutilate
 - Put forth as fact
 - Goes up
 - Quartet member
 - Brig structure
 - Swarm
 - "Each Dawn ___" (Cagney film)
 - Far from windy
 - Be mistaken
 - Coventry containers
 - Be a busybody
- DOWN**
- Street fixture
 - "P-U!" inducer
 - Old TV clown
 - Pasta served in soups
 - Scungilli, calamari, etc.
 - Info on an invitation
 - Linden of "Barney Miller"
 - Shakespeare title start
 - Zoo barrier
 - Fitness industry giant
 - Vibes
 - Do demolition work
 - Cinema vérité, e.g.
 - Broadway musical with the song "Will I?"
 - Highly adroit
 - Newspaper page for essayists
 - Forbidden thing
 - Radar detector
 - Yoko ___
 - Honda with a palindromic name
 - Chemicals giant
 - Like MacDonald of song
 - 1953 Leslie Caron film
 - Suffer from a charley horse
 - Noodle
 - Drink dog-style
 - Prefix with content
 - From pillar to ___
 - Some track and field events
 - Regional phrase
 - With the exception of
 - Sudden gush
 - Gondola guide
 - Place mat puzzles
 - Give off, as light
 - Actress Conn
 - Congregation's assent
 - Hawaiian tuber
 - "Happy Motoring" gas brand
 - Interval on a scale
 - California wine, for short

See answers on page A5

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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

Elliott Mills

Noosa, Australia, tank gunner, Australian Army, 25

> **The Army is the tougher**, and harder branch to join out of our military. It is kind of like the Marine Corps in the United States.

> **I love the firepower tanks** provide for ground units. I fell in love the first time I saw one fire. It's also better than working a regular civilian job.

> **Before I joined the Army**, I was a mechanic. I worked on cars for a living but it got boring and got old very fast.

> **I was 20 years old** when I joined the Army. I knew the Army would allow me to travel, so I started looking up all of my options and I thought tanks was the best one to choose.

> **I went to Kapooka, which is our version** of boot camp. I was really nervous because it was 18 weeks long.

> **After I finished Kapooka**, I went to my job-specific school for roughly five months. I went to what we call the School of Armor where we are taught the basics of becoming a tanker.

> **My job in the tank** is the gunner position. I am in charge of firing the 120mm main gun and I also have my own 7.62 coaxial machine gun.

> **The tanker positions work** like climbing a ladder. You start out as a driver, work your way to becoming a loader, then a gunner and the final and highest position is a tank commander.

> **It is pretty different when you compare** Twentynine Palms to Australia. The heat here is a dry heat compared to the wet heat back home.

> **The tank hangars we have** in Australia are a little bigger than the one we are working with here but there are more tanks to play with here.

> **There's a lot of similarities** between the Australian Army and the Marine Corps but there are also many differences. We notice the big emphasis the Marines put in the rank structure. You can really notice when you talk to them.

> **The Marine Corps has more** ranks than the Australian Army. I have been in for five years and I'm still a low rank but Marines pick up a little bit quicker. It is a much slower process in our Army.

> **We get to join at 17 years old** and our retirement age is around 60 so that is also quite different between the two services.

> **This terrain here is all desert** with no trees but back home we have quite the opposite. All we have is bush patches and trees.

> **Our training is more** of driving through the jungle and close-quarter combat. I enjoy it out here a lot. Because of the range we get to fire the main gun.

> **The Gold Eagle exercise was enjoyable.** We got to do a live-fire breach, which we don't really get to do back home. I also enjoyed working alongside the Marines, just seeing how we work together.

> **This is my first time being in the States.** We got to go to San Diego and Camp Pendleton. We were there for about five days and I have to say, I like it a little better over there.

> **We have big cities in Australia** but San Diego was different. The people are nice and obviously talk a little different than the way we do.

> **Whenever I am away from the military**, I enjoy spending time with my family. I have a little boy and a wife back home. It doesn't get better than being able to come home to them after being away for a while.

> **Another difference** is we only have to sign up for four years and after that we can take it year by year and get out whenever we'd like. Obviously it would take some paperwork but I could drop my pack right now and get out because I have finished my first four.

> **I am not sure how long I would** like to stay in yet. I'd like to become a tank commander just to say I have held every position in a tank squad and I would be able to fully understand the tank at that point.

> **Hitting trees is quite a problem** for tank drivers. I hit a couple of trees in my time as a driver. You just get yelled at a bit and try not to do it again.

> **Out of the three positions I have held**, I enjoy gunner the most. I think it's because you actually get to fire the main gun and watch the round go downrange.

> **The tanks we use here in the States** are basically the same as the ones we have back home. You guys have a couple of upgrades but other than that, we came over here and jumped right on them.

> **Our covers have patches and emu plumes.** The tradition dates back from the cavalry days. The best riders use to wear plumes in their covers. The patches represent what unit you are with. The covers are unique to us because the tankers are the only ones that get the plumes.



SERVES IN THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY AS A TANK GUNNER AND WAS GIVEN THE NICKNAME 'BATTLE TOAD' BY HIS FELLOW TANKERS.

Interviewed by Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
July 11, 2013



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1st Tanks

HOME COMING



LANCE CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ



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CPL. LAUREN A. KURKIMILIS

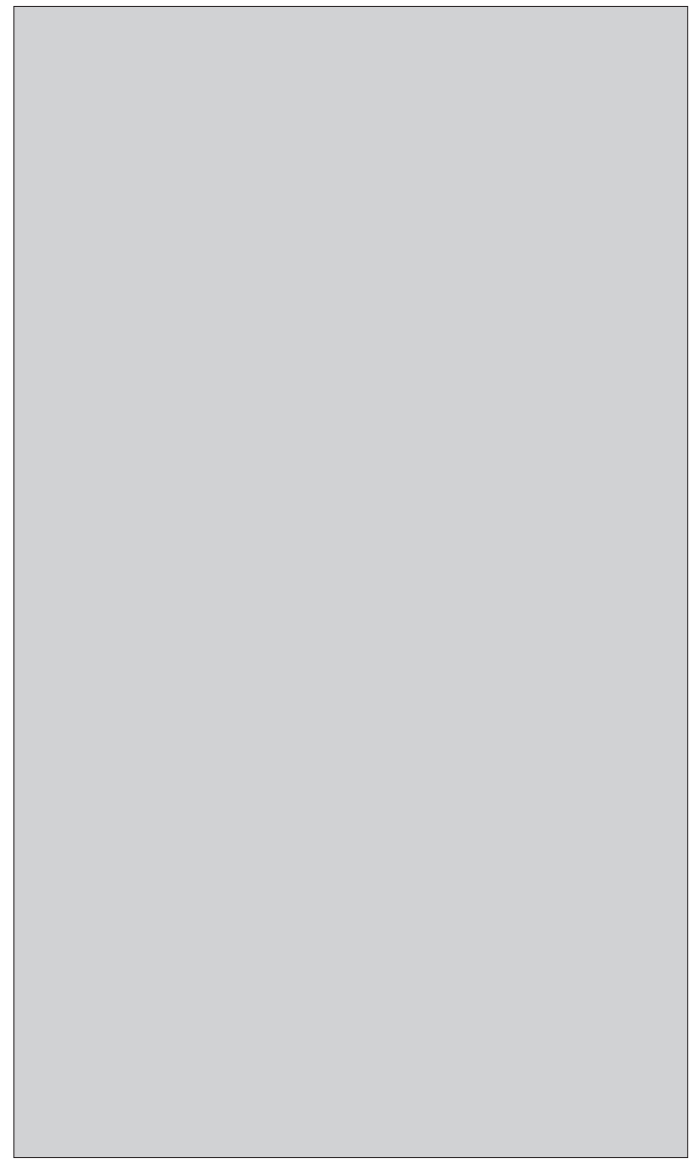
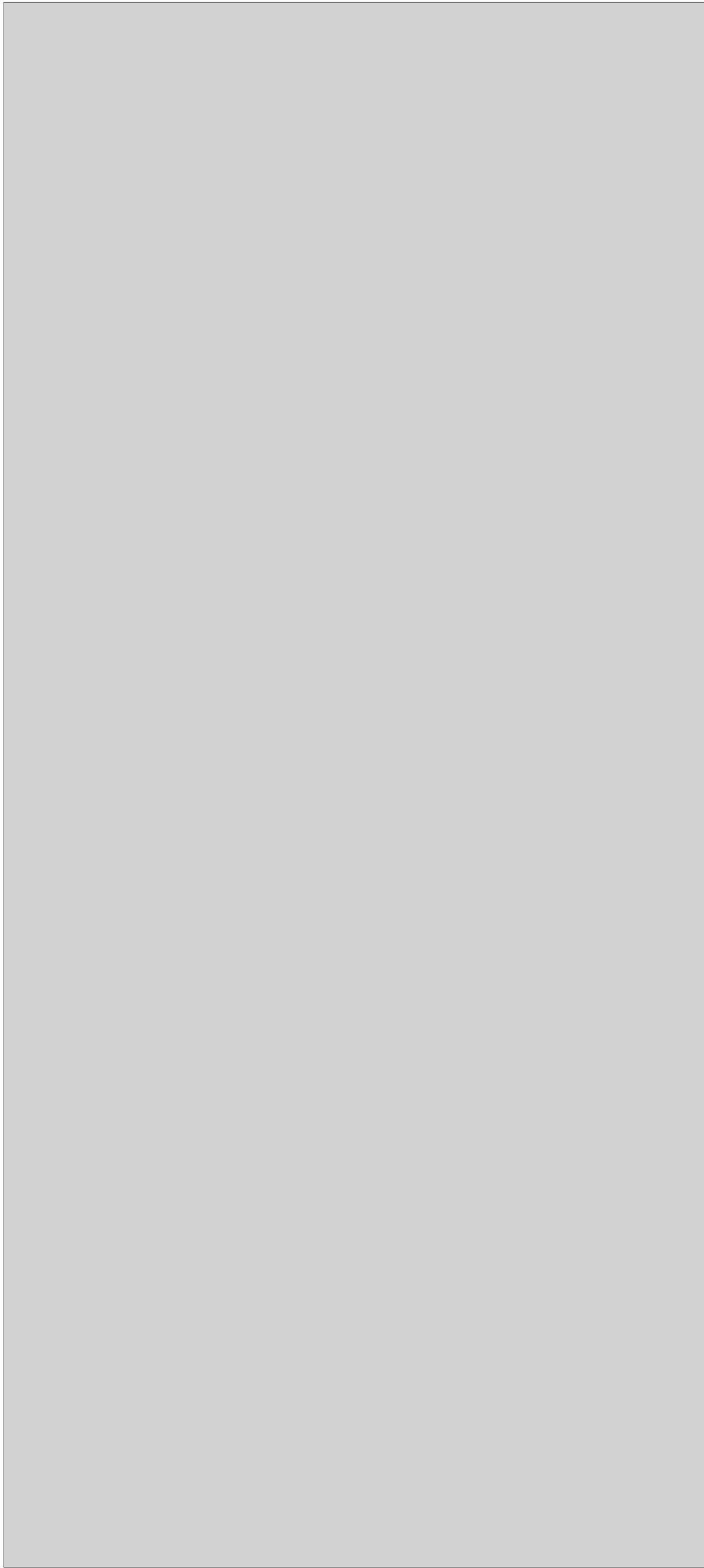
[Above] Cpl. Joshua Carnegie, tank gunner, Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, embraces his girlfriend, Lauren Griffith, at the battalion's homecoming ceremony held aboard the Combat Center July 28. The company returned from their deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

[Center] Jessica Martinez awaits the arrival of Cpl. Andrew Loya, tank mechanic, Co. D, 1st Tank Bn., at the unit's homecoming July 28.

[Left] Cpl. Philip Lim, Co. D, 1st Tank Bn., reunites with his mother, Lenet, at the unit's homecoming July 28.



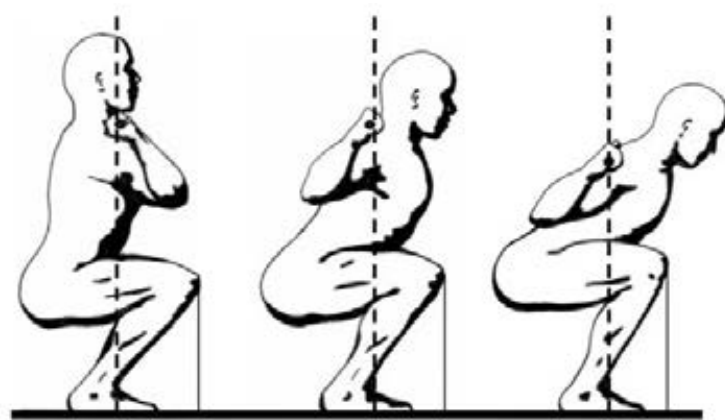
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WHAT DID YOU DO TODAY?

Whether it's a 10-mile run, walking up stairs or bending over to hoist a child into a high chair, leg strength is an important part of everyday life. According to the American Council on Exercise, working out will increase endurance, lower blood pressure, reduce bad cholesterol, boost both bone strength and cardiovascular health and burn calories.

Operation Live Well, a program designed to promote healthy habits in the military, has reached the Combat Center. Patrons are encouraged to regularly participate in physical activities. With the desert heat rising and the gyms being crowded, options can be limited when it comes to exercising but there are a variety of workouts military members and their families may do in the comfort of their own home.



Easy exercises to utilize at home



SQUAT

When a squat is executed, people should hinge their hips so that your buttocks moves backward during the downward phase of the squat. The knees should not protrude over the toes and the pressure of the squat should be on the heels instead of the toe. The depth of your squat should not go past 90 degrees.

Straight head position: Be sure to align your neck with your spine. Rounding your neck or looking down while executing a squat throws off your spinal alignment and potentially makes the exercise dangerous. Find a spot slightly higher than eye level and stare at the same spot while executing the exercise.

Chest out/shoulders back: By keeping your shoulders back and your chest out, your lower back should assume the correct natural curve.

Slightly arched lower back: Your lower back should be kept slightly arched as the squat is executed. Too much arching may hyperextend your lower back and put significant pressure on your spine. Keep your core tight by engaging your abdominals.

Athletic stance, toes pointed out: Use an athletic stance for the squat so that your knees are slightly bent, feet are firmly planted on the ground, and toes pointed slightly outwards.

Exhale up/inhale down: Breathing is important for squatting in particular because it is a challenging exercise. Improper breathing may cause light headedness, nauseous, or in extreme cases, blacking out.

Depth of the squat: The depth of the squat primarily

depends on hip flexibility. In general, your hamstrings should be parallel with the floor when executing a squat.

LUNGES

Lunges are effective and may be done anywhere and are effective. Like any other exercise, more harm than good can be the result if they are not done correctly. Your front leg should not pass the tip of your toes. Your back leg's knee should be parallel with the floor. Push off your front foot through your heel.

Body positioning: Keep your upper body straight, shoulders back and relaxed.

Head positioning: Keep your chin up. Find a place to look at, on or near the ceiling and stare at it while executing the lunge.

Execution: Step forward with one leg, lowering your hips until both knees are bent at about 90 degrees. Your front knee should be directly above your ankle and not pushed out too far. The other knee should be just above the ground, but not touching.

Completion: After executing the exercise, keep your weight in your heels while pushing back into the starting position.

CALF RAISE

Body positioning: Your upper body and arms should be relaxed and your feet should be together.

Head positioning: Your head should also be relaxed while

looking straight ahead.

Execution: When ready to execute the exercise, lift your heels off the ground slowly so that all of your weight is on your toes. Hold this position for one to five seconds.

Completion: After execution, slowly lower your heels back to the ground and repeat.

Stretching

After completing these exercises, it is important to stretch the muscles you've used. Quadriceps, hamstrings, the groin

STRETCHES

and calves are the main muscles that should be stretched after a leg workout. Stretching may increase flexibility, energy, range of motion and can cause a relaxed state of mind. It can also prevent tightening of the muscles and help avoid future injury.

REPETITIONS

Start slow: When executing the exercise count your repetitions until you have reached a point where it becomes challenging. Complete two more sets of the same number of repetitions. After doing these sets for a while, you will notice they will become easier to do. For more of a challenge, increase repetition, amount of sets or additional weight to the exercise. Hold the stretches for 30 to 60 seconds without bouncing.

For more information on Operation Live Well visit, http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2012/0812_live-well/

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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



CPL. D.J. WU



CPL. ALI AZIMI



CPL. ALI AZIMI

[Top] Marines with 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, 8th Marine Regiment, participate in a company-sized attack at the Combat Center's Range 401, July 26.

[Above] Marines with 1/9, reload their 240B machine gun at a support by fire-position during a company-sized attack on Range 401 July 26. The battalion is currently conducting the Integrated Training Exercise in preparation of their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan later this year.

[Left] Marines run for cover as they advance through Range 401 during a company-sized attack July 26.

HISTORY, from A1

when the unit would see action.

The battalion has since been deactivated and reactivated. They were reactivated in 2007 to fight in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Currently, 1/9 now finds pride in their name and fight for those who have perished while serving in the unit. To them it is more than just history. It is a reputation and a legacy, which they are honored to uphold.

"We have the legacy of the guys from Vietnam riding on our shoulders," said Capt. Juan Plascencia, company commander, Company B, 1/9. "A lot of Marines wanted to be here and be a part of the (battalion)."

The Marines of the battalion feel a sense of pride about their history and they build on it. They take the struggles the battalion has been through and find the courage to continue fighting.

"It's a responsibility that I'm picking up now, and carrying on a tradition," said Sgt. Damien Hall, headquarters platoon sergeant, 1/9. "We're picking up and carrying on a legacy of what 1/9 was and what it still is today."

The battalion finds camaraderie through suffering together. They go through continuous training in some of the harshest training environments in the country. They've made their way through

the bitter cold of Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., and taken their evolution of the Integrated Training Exercise in one of the Combat Center's hottest months. They've done it all together and that's what makes them a unit.

"With that being said, it's been the best three years of my life so far," said Cpl. Andrew Park, intelligence cell chief, Co. B., 1/9. "It's a family. It's been one training event after another, with a deployment in between."

They are a wartime unit and they know that. They remember their Medal of Honor recipients like Col. Wesley Fox who fought in Vietnam, where he saved the lives of many of his Marines while being wounded and under heavy enemy fire. They know what their predecessors have been through and want to build on it. But 1/9 is more than just the unit's history. It's something they feed off of.

"That's our only mission is to fight," Park said. "That's what we train for."

This is slated to be the battalion's last round of going in to Afghanistan to support Operation Enduring Freedom. To the Walkers, this means a lot.

"Now we're getting ready to fold up our colors as well," Plascencia said. The Marines of 1/9 will finish their training at the Combat Center and will be prepared to deploy again to Afghanistan later this year.

ATTACK, from A1

Slater, rifleman, Co. B, 1/9. "It's different from what we are used to but no matter how you look at it, training is training. It's going to be tough but we are proud because this is what everyone joins the Corps for."

The unit was formed during World War I. The battalion was active until the mid-1990s and was then deactivated for the addition of another light-armored reconnaissance battalion.

The battalion was reactivated and attached to the 8th Marine Regiment at MCB Camp Lejeune in late 2005. After one work-up cycle in April 2006, Company A deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Company A returned in October 2006 with no losses. The battalion was officially reactivated in April 2007. They then deployed as a battalion in March 2008.

"We want to refine our skills as a infantry unit," Plascencia said. "We are looking to make the last adjustments before we deploy to Afghanistan."

The battalion is preparing to deploy to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

They are a wartime unit. They may be activated and deactivated at anytime, if needed.

The Marines and sailors of 1/9 are looking to build on the foundation and tradition created by the ones who served before them. The blood, bravery and gallantry of those men set the standard for the Marines and sailors who serve with 1/9 today.

AUTISM, from A1

of military families with children who have autism," Woodson said. Integral to increasing autism treatment capability, he said, is having a large network of providers that work with autistic children.

"We continually try to improve (and) expand our network of providers," he said. "I think we have one of the most robust networks available."

Woodson said it is "paramount" for children with autism to obtain professional reassessments to ensure they get the right care, at the right time, with updated care plans.

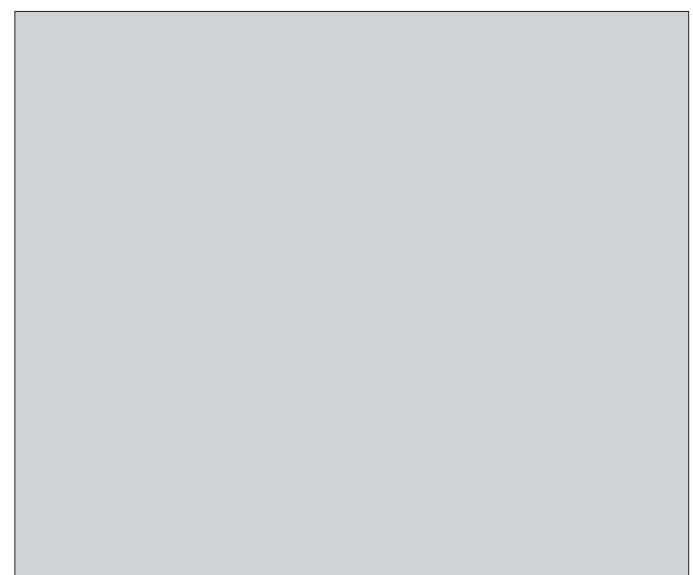
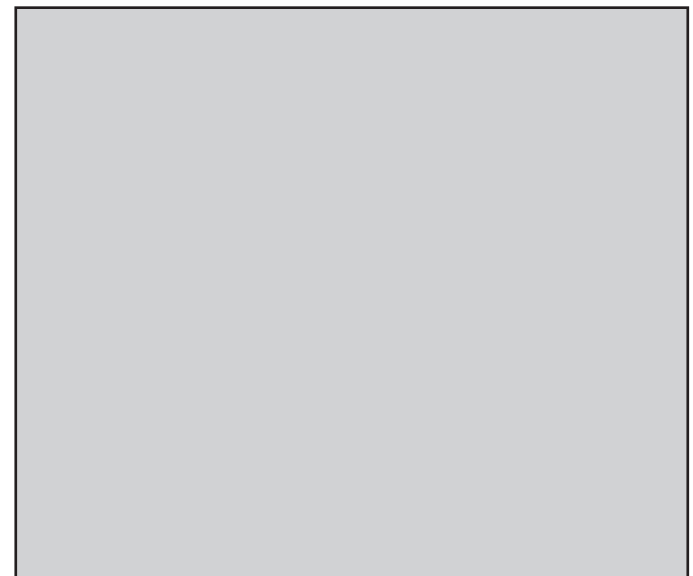
"That's what we're all about," he said. "Focusing on the child and what's best and providing the families with access to these services."



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<http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>



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



STAFF SGT. ROMEN YUREK

ONLINE MISCONDUCT

Behavior on social media sites addressed

Social media outlets like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr and numerous others are great communication tools, but their use invokes heavy responsibility for Marines and sailors. Recently, Headquarters Marine Corps' inspector general addressed this responsibility in a message to commanders and their associated inspector general offices.



MARINE COPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C. — "This is the first time I have seen the (inspector general of the Marine Corps) come down with a message addressing concerns regarding social media," said Terry Rudisill, the command inspector general for 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing.

The message was spurred by concern about complaints the office has received regarding inappropriate sites and posts on a variety of social media outlets. Over the past 10 years, Headquarters Marine Corps has dealt with complaints about social media. There have been instances of pages being removed and individuals held accountable for their activity on social media.

Some recent trends involving misconduct have revolved around opening of formerly all-male military occupational specialties to females. Numerous social media pages and comments have gained national attention due to the degrading posts about female Marines.

Online misconduct is not defined solely on these types of posts. The guidance set forth in the Marine Corps' Social Media Handbook states Marines shall not post "anything that is defamatory, libelous, obscene, abusive, threatening, racially or ethnically hateful, or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material."

Misconduct over the internet, to include

social media, can paint a negative picture of Marines to a vast audience and invite scrutiny of the Corps as a whole.

Rudisill recommends contacting the administrator of the website to voice complaints. Although many site administrators do monitor their sites for material that violates their internal guidelines, administrators may not always catch everything. By voicing complaints, users may be assisting that website and organization to ensure engagement on their page is appropriate. Many social media sites take cyber bullying and other harmful interactions very seriously.

Anyone who observes offensive, derogatory or threatening material on a website is encouraged to report the offense through the offices listed above.

Rudisill reminds Marines and sailors that they will be held responsible for their actions both on and off duty, including online activities.

Additional Social Media tips:

- Do not violate operational security by posting information like the date and time of a unit deployment or return.
- Protect personally identifiable information like your social security number.
- Be careful how much information you share online. Little pieces of information can be gathered and used to exploit you. Example: "My spouse just left me and the

kids for a six-month deployment." This tells criminals one member of the household is gone and identifies that the children may be more vulnerable. "Check out photos of the kids playing in their pool." If this was taken at home with a smart phone and the GPS feature was not deactivated, you have now given everyone the exact location of your home. "Going home to Alabama to visit family for two weeks." After this third post you have identified that one member of the household is gone for a long period of time, shared the exact location of your home and announced that the home will likely be vacant for two weeks.

• Know who you are "friending" on social media. No matter how long you have been talking to that person online, if you have not shaken their hand and looked them in the eye, you really don't know who they are.

• If you feel you are being bullied, threatened, offended or just unhappy with the content of a website, block the offender and contact that website administrator to address your concern. If any personnel aboard the Combat Center are involved or you suspect their involvement, contact one of the local inspector's offices.



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

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FEATURE | Summer Reading Program

ADVENTURE THROUGH BOOKS



DID YOU KNOW?

Children who grow up where books are plentiful go further in school than those who don't.

-Scholastic Publishing

Library offers story time for kids

The Combat Center's Lifelong Learning Library's story time is an opportunity for kids to have an early start to literacy. It teaches them that reading can be fun and engaging. It is also a chance for kids and parents to socialize and meet new friends.

Early literacy, socialization and cognitive development are big goals for the program, said Ursula Morales, program coordinator, Lifelong Learning Library.

There are three different programs for story time. They have Read and Play, which includes a short story, songs and playtime; Story hour, with more stories and crafts; and Lap time, a shorter story time. The programs give kids a chance to build social skills and associate reading books with having a good time.

"It's the highlight of their week," said Michelle Doute, nanny of two kids participating in story time. "I bring them to get some socialization and be around other children. They love the songs and stories and playing. They even ask if they can go to the library now"

It's more than just about the book for kids and parents. It's a time to network while building up social skills.

"Before story time, (my son) had no other kid inter-

action," said Susan Weldon, mom of a story time participant. "This has opened him up so much more. He's learning to share with other kids and they're teaching him a lot."

The programs also have arts and crafts for the older age groups which are built in for further engagement for the whole group.

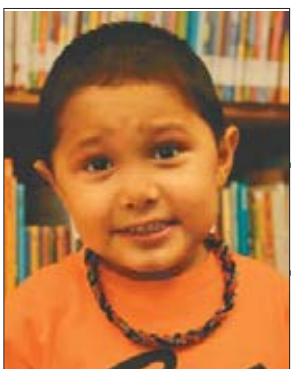
"I find that the tighter knit that the parents are, the better program you have," Morales said. "When we get a continually growing group of parents that are all like minded, I think that helps with the goal of the program. It's nice to have a great group of parents."

Story time is available at the Lifelong Learning Library and has three different sessions a week. Read and Play is Mondays for ages zero to two. Tuesday is Story Hour for ages three to five. Wednesdays are Lap time for ages zero to two. For more information on what is available at the library, call 830-6875.

My favorite book...



Jaedin Sharkey, 3
Dinosaur books, I just like big dinosaurs



Jason Cantu, 4
Llama Llama misses mamma, because its blue



Raynaldo Holtman, 2
I like firetrucks, songs and stories.



Hayden Ricks, 5
I like superhero books, there's Ironman and Spiderman, and The Hulk, and Captain America and Batman and I like the stories



Katy Rose Lemon, 3
Cat in the Hat. I like the part where everything falls down

READING
SUMMER
READER



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, now - 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

Diana Ross

Music legend performs
 When: 8 p.m., Friday, Aug. 2
 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>.

ESPN: Friday Night Fights

Primetime professional boxing
 When: 5:30 p.m., Friday, Aug. 9
 Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
 49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
 For more information, call 800-252-4499 or visit
<http://www.morongocasinosort.com>.

Kalin, Jinger, Hobson Carnival of Wonders

Companct "Carnival of Wonders" performs
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Aug 17
 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>

Paquita la del Barrio

Mexican singer/songwriter performs
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 24
 Where: Spotlight 29 Casino
 46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
 For more information, call 866-377-6829 or visit
<http://www.spotlight29.com>

Sunset Cinema

Friday, Aug 2

6 p.m. - Monsters University 3-D G
 9 p.m. - White House Down, PG-13

Saturday, Aug 3

12:30 a.m. - The Heat, R
 10:30 a.m. - Free Matinee: The Incredibles, PG
 1 p.m. - Man of Steel 3-D, PG-13
 5 p.m. - World War Z 3-D, PG-13
 8 p.m. - White House Down, PG-13

Sunday, Aug 4

12 a.m. - This is the End, R

Trio of original co-stars reunites for another comedy-espionage romp



COURTESY PHOTO

NEIL POND

"Red 2"

Starring: Bruce Willis, John Malkovich & Helen Mirren
 Directed by: Dean Parisot
 Rated PG-13, 116 min.

A sequel to the surprise 2010 hit, this comedy-espionage romp reunites the original cast of Bruce Willis, John Malkovich and Helen Mirren as a trio of elite CIA assassins forced once again out of retirement to blast the rust off their not-quite-over-the-hill stuff.

As with the first movie, which was also based on the comic-book series of the same name, much of the fun comes from the basic setup of seeing stars well into AARP range rip-roaring away in slam-bang action-y stuff typically done by actors with fewer miles on their odometers.

This time around, Willis' younger doe-eyed girlfriend (Mary-Louise Parker) gets a much bigger role, Catherine Zeta-Jones plays a sultry Soviet secret agent, and Anthony Hopkins shows up midway through the movie as a British brainiac with ties to a deadly, decades-old Cold War secret.

The movie's title is an abbreviation derived from the special-ops designation given to Willis' character, Frank Moses: "Retired, Extremely Dangerous."

Willis plays his part in the cool, collected "Die Hard" mode that he's been keeping in handy quick-release storage since the '80s. As his partner, Marvin, Malkovich is a colorful, paranoid kook. Mirren, an Oscar-winning actress, seems to relish her role as a regal British spy with a license to kill; the scene where she dispenses relationship advice to Frank over the phone while tidily pouring acid on a recently dispatched body in her bathtub is a dark-chuckle hoot.

But for all the star power of the cast, there's something about the performances that seem a bit weary and dreary, especially when compared to the sizzle of Byung-hun Lee, the electrifying young South Korean star who plays the hit man assigned to hunt Moses down, or the ice-cold, muscular menace conveyed by Neal McDonough as the corrupt C.I.A. agent also tracking Moses and his crew as they skip and quip their way through London, Paris and Moscow.

Director Dean Parisot, who hasn't left many tracks on the big screen as he's been steering TV episodes of "Justified," "The Good Wife," "Modern Family" and "Monk," jams all the pieces of this big, bang-bang jigsaw puzzle together, but not everything quite fits. Some of the pacing doesn't work, jokes fall flat, and sometimes scenes seem so jarringly out of place from what just happened seconds before that I'm still wondering if the filmmakers believed that simply seeing John Malkovich in boots, a stupid hat and shorts could somehow swipe your short-term memory clean of things you'd just seen minutes ago.

The original "Red" brought in nearly \$200 million at the international box office, so there will probably be a lot of folks who'll line up again to see Willis and Co. camp it up, shoot it up, and blow it up. But there are likely others who'll find all the blasting, booming and joking about terrorism, bombs, information leaks and torture hitting a little too uncomfortably close to home.

But if "Red 2" starts feeling too real, you can remind yourself how much of a ridiculous flight of fancy it really is. This is a movie, after all, that came from a comic book, the collective age of its main stars is over 300, and no one (not even the esteemed Helen Mirren) can shoot with accuracy from pistols in both hands, out of the open windows of a spinning car, even if it IS spinning in super slow-mo.



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

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