



OBSERVATION POST



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Combat Center sergeant major retires

Cpl. William J. Jackson
Combat Correspondent

The stands were filled with family, friends and special guests who gathered to honor Sgt. Maj. Matthew B. Brookshire, Combat Center Sergeant Major, during his post and relief ceremony at the Combat Center's Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Aug. 19. Marines from Headquarters Battalion and the 1st Marine Division Band marched in the ceremony.

Brookshire received a Legion of Merit Medal and a letter of appreciation during his retirement ceremony for his performance as the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air

I love everything about being a Marine and I love everything the Marine Corps stands for. It's the greatest honor of my life."

— Sgt. Maj. Matthew B. Brookshire

Ground Combat Center, sergeant major since Nov. 28, 2011.

"It's been great being a Marine," Brookshire said. "I love everything about being a Marine and I love everything the Marine Corps stands for. It's the greatest honor of my life."

Brookshire relinquished command by ceremoniously passing the noncommissioned officer sword to Sgt. Maj. Karl Villalino.

The passing of the sword symbolizes the transfer of the title of Combat Center Sergeant Major. The sword is a personification of Marine Corps tradition and Esprit de Corps, which Villalino will take on with his newly

See **RETIRE** page A6



Fair Winds & Following Seas

Story by
Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez

CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Sgt. Maj. Matthew B. Brookshire says a few words to guests who attended his post and relief and retirement ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Aug. 19.

Leatherneck leaves 26-year leagacy

As the senior-enlisted Marine of the Combat Center, Sgt. Maj. Matthew B. Brookshire embarks on concluding nearly three decades of experience, service and leadership in the Corps.

Brookshire's Marine Corps career began in 1987, when he left his hometown in Waynesville, N.C., to begin recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., a duty station he would later call home several times throughout his career. As he took his first steps toward a life-long career, he was unaware that he would one day take the place of the men who molded him into the dedicated Marine he became.

After achieving the military occupational specialty of 0311, infantryman, Brookshire was assigned to Company A, Marine Barracks 8th & I, Washington, D.C., where he served as a first-team leader and squad leader.

In 1992, Brookshire requested orders to the drill field. He returned to MCRD Parris Island,

but this time as a sergeant attending Drill Instructor School. His first cycle as a Drill Instructor was with Company H, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, Recruit Training Regiment.

"It was a very rewarding job," said Brookshire. "You see the transformation in recruits that culminates in the end."

It was at this time that Brookshire met Tracie, the woman that would not only become his wife, but a devoted and proactive companion throughout his journey in the Corps.

"I met my wife when I was on leave after drill instructor school," Brookshire said. "Behind every great Marine is an even greater wife."

Brookshire attributes the bold things he has done in garrison, field and foreign countries to always having someone who supports him back home.

"From being away on deployment, the field, and work, she still holds down the house and does what every Marine can hope for,"

See **LAST** page A6



Maj. Gen. Larry D. Nicholson, 1st Marine Division Commanding General, shakes hands with Capt. William J. Kavanagh, executive officer, Company E, 2nd battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, after awarding him a bronze star at the Combat Center's Range 105 Aug. 21.

'War Dog' awarded bronze star

Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
Combat Correspondent

Capt. William J. Kavanagh, executive officer, Company E, 2nd battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, was awarded The Bronze Star at the Combat Center's Range 105 Wednesday. The award was presented by Maj. Gen. Larry D. Nicholson, 1st Marine Division Commanding General.

"Education is something that goes beyond training," Nicholson said. "This Marine showed both of those qualities when the time came. This is what we need more of in the Marine Corps."

Kavanagh was deployed from early September 2012 to mid April 2013 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. During the deployment, Kavanagh set the example for Afghans and Marines by putting himself at the point of friction during numerous engagements by directing fires and leading troops.

During Operation New Hope, he demonstrated courage and judgment under fire while acting as a liaison to the Afghan Civil Order Police during the clearance of

Taliban strongholds.

His Afghan police were attacked by a platoon-sized element of Taliban fighter. He directed a scout sniper team to establish a position as he neutralized the enemy with close-air support, allowing the Afghan soldiers to resume their offensive. He repeatedly subjected himself to fire from enemy machine guns and mortars by running across exposed terrain to direct his Marines and Afghan soldiers. His actions inspired the Afghan soldiers to press the attack and seize their objectives without incurring any casualties.

"The feeling of combat is almost addictive," Kavanagh said. "There is something about knowing the person to your left and right will literally risk their life for you. This award not only represents what I did that day but what all of the Marines and Afghan soldiers did that day."

According to Nicholson, by his extraordinary guidance, zealous initiative and total dedication to duty, Kavanagh upheld the highest Marine Corps traditions and traditions of the United States Naval Services.

"There is something about knowing the person to your left and right will literally risk their life for you."

— Maj. Gen. Larry D. Nicholson

Marines awarded for life-saving actions

Cpl. William J. Jackson
Combat Correspondent

Maj. Gen. Steven W. Busby, commanding general, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, awarded Cpl. Kyle Wells, motor transportation operator, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and Cpl. Nathaniel Navarro, mortarman, Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal at the Combat Center's Flag Pole Aug. 16, for their heroic efforts in potentially saving the life of Cpl. Rebecca Fletcher, Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1, earlier this year.

In the early evening of June 7, 2013, a collision between a motorcycle driven by Fletcher and a car occurred on Highway 62. Fletcher was seriously injured and bleeding profusely from a leg injury.

Wells was the first on the scene. Within seconds, Navarro and Lance Cpl. Joshua Phelps, machine gunner, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, rushed to Fletcher's aid.

Wells instinctively used Fletcher's belt to stem the flow of blood as Navarro drove his knee into her femoral artery, further slowing the flow of blood. Phelps grabbed a stick and made an impromptu tourniquet and continued to apply pressure.

The three Marines helped lift Fletcher onto a backboard and a stretcher. She was transported via ambulance to a nearby landing zone, and then airlifted to Palm Springs, where she received medical care. The Marines' actions helped save Fletcher's life.

"This is exactly who we are after," Busby said at the award ceremony. "These two Marines here, for me, represent exactly what we're after in our (noncommissioned officers) and Marines. They applied their life-saving skills and what they've been taught in their training and saved the life of Cpl. Fletcher. They made a difference that day."

Busby also thanked Phelps, who could not attend the ceremony, after congratulating Wells and Navarro.

Combat Center SJA retires



CPL. LAUREN A. KURKIMILIS

Col. Alex J. Peterson, former Combat Center Staff Judge Advocate, retired after 26 years of faithful service to the United States Marine Corps during a ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Aug. 16. Major Gen. David H. Berger, Combat Center Commanding General, served as the retiring officer for the ceremony.

COMBAT CENTER SHOOTERS **FACE OFF**

The Combat Center is scheduled to host several shooting competitions open to Marines and sailors.

In an effort to enhance combat-marksanship proficiency aboard the base, the Combat Center is scheduled to host the Intramurals (Rifle and Pistol Competition) from Sept. 16 to Oct. 4 at the Combat Center's Marksmanship Training Unit. All Marines and sailors will have the opportunity to receive a Combat Marksmanship Course certification and annual rifle and pistol qualification for FY14.

Who: Service members and DoD employees
What: Intramurals (Rifle and Pistol Competition)
When: Sept. 16 - Oct. 4
Where: MCAGCC Marksmanship Training Unit
Why: Enhance combat-marksanship proficiency aboard the base.

Who: Anyone with base access
What: High Desert Shooting Club NRA High-Power and Long-Range Regional Match
When: Nov. 13 - 17
Where: MCAGCC Rifle Range 1
Why: Inspire interest and desire for self improvement in marksanship.

In an effort to stimulate interest and desire for self improvement in marksanship, the Combat Center will be hosting the High Desert Shooting Club, National Rifle Association High-Power and Long-Range Regional Match at the Marksmanship Training Unit. The goal is to enhance proficiency of Marines in the use of small arms by refining precision marksanship skills through advanced marksanship training and competition.

For more information, please contact the Marksmanship Training Unit at 830-6700.

FSNB gives back to community



CPL. D. J. WU

Fort Sill National Bank and the Armed Forces Financial Network donated \$3,000 to Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Twentynine Palms at the FSNB branch in Twentynine Palms, Calif., Aug. 15.

Combat Center holds Chef of the Quarter Competition

Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
 Combat Correspondent

Marine, sailor and civilian chefs from Combat Center mess halls participated in the Chef of the Quarter competition at Phelps Mess Hall Aug. 15. The Chef of the Quarter competition was the second event hosted by the Combat Center this year.

The winners of the competition were Shariff Queenan and Beto Meza, both civilian chefs aboard the Combat Center.

"This competition gives the chefs a chance to bring their skills front and center," said Master Sgt. Marianna Martinez, food service technician. "It also gives them a chance to show skills they really don't get a chance to show when they are working together on a regular day."

The competition started with seven teams. The first

day of the competition, the chefs participated in a test that focused on basic culinary knowledge. After the test, the chefs competed in a jeopardy-style competition, which also focused more in depth in culinary information. The top three teams earned a chance to compete in a cooking portion that was timed and monitored. All chefs were given the same ingredients and instructed to make three different dishes. The dishes were judged on multiple factors including taste, presentation and an explanation of how it was prepared and how the ingredients were utilized.

"This is a great competition," said Maj. Gen. David H. Berger, Combat Center Commanding General. "It not only gives these chefs a chance to show off their skills, but it gives people a chance to see that our chefs are skilled. These chefs can turn a bag of groceries into something beautiful and tasty. Not many people can do that."



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

[Far left] Beto Meza and Shariff Queenan, winners of the Chef of the Quarter competition, hold the first place trophy at Phelps Mess Hall Aug. 15.

[Left] Chefs expressed their creativity with their dishes at the Chef of the Quarter competition at Phelps Mess Hall Aug. 15.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

GABIREL KING-PICKLE
 Born on: Aug. 5, 2013
 Born to: Eric Pickle and Jessica King-Pickle

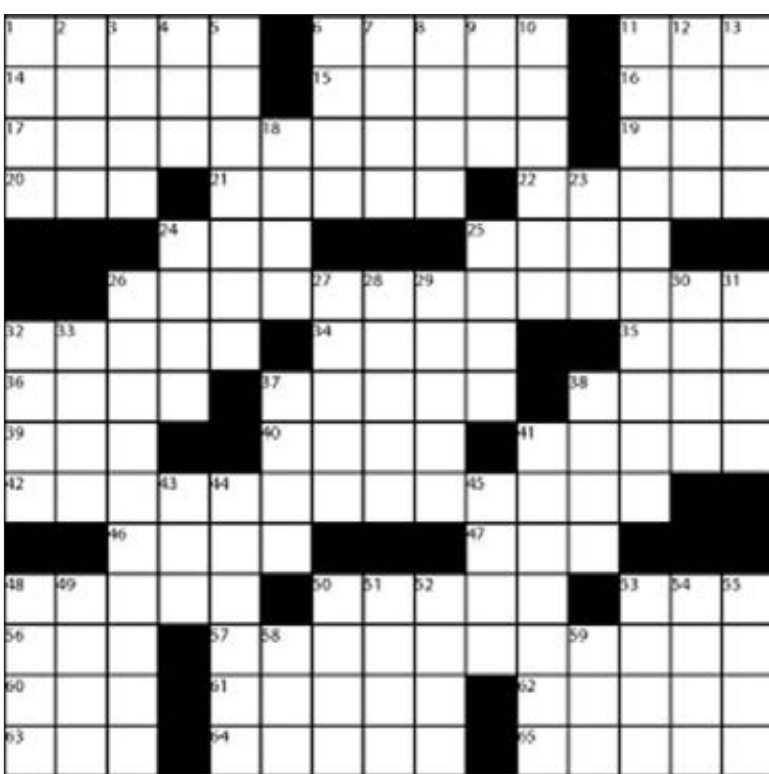
KAIDEN BLAKE ZACHARIAH PERRY
 Born on: July 28, 2013
 Born to: Jonathan Jamie Perry

JOHN ANTHONY MICHAEL WARREN
 Born on: Aug. 1, 2013
 Born to: Eric and Ashley Warren

ETHAN DARIEL GONZALEZ
 Born on: July 27, 2013
 Born to: David Gonzalez and Elisa Rosado

USE YOUR HEAD

- ACROSS**
- Doves' homes
 - Jellied dish
 - Dance like Hines
 - St. Theresa's town
 - Hard-to-find character in a book
 - Ex of Frank and Artie
 - Ice cream flavor
 - Hobbyist's purchase
 - Like some glances
 - Trifled
 - Crayola color renamed Peach
 - Evil computer in "2001"
 - Ball game delayer
 - Part of a toy construction set
 - Engraver Albrecht
 - Oodles
 - Place for a ring
 - Athenian H's
 - Does not mention
 - Slick, like a garage floor
 - Rode the bench
 - Seeks favor with
 - Atahualpa's people
 - Popular Campbell's variety
 - Castle material?
 - "Yoo-hoo!"
 - Nametag word
 - Relaxing gym amenity
- DOWN**
- Cleveland cagers, briefly
 - Horse course
 - Itsy-bitsy
 - Y sporter
 - Seaside aroma
 - On vacation
 - Kemo ___
 - Said "Not guilty!," eg
 - Mount in Crete
 - Casual talk
 - Observe intently
 - Rent-a-car giant
 - Maze solution
 - Lounge around
 - Mae West's Diamond ___
 - Emerald and ruby
 - Army units: Abbr.
 - Slovakia's capital
 - Runyon or Waysans
 - Troy, as it's also known
 - "Au contraire!"
 - Mixer for rum



- Florida islets
- Family tree listing: Abbr.
- Bryce Canyon locale
- Had liabilities
- Nothing but
- In a perfect world
- Iron man Ripken, Jr.
- Bad-mouths
- "It can't be!"
- "___ goes?"
- Happily-after link
- ___ and Span (cleanser)
- "___ No Sunshine" (1971 hit)
- Sport ___ (rugged vehicles)
- N.Y.C. cultural institution
- Love, personified
- Cravings
- Oktoberfest order
- Not-so-hot grade

See answers on page A5

SUDOKU 3000M

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

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

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 Cpl. Ali Azimi
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 Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez

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OFF-LIMITS ESTABLISHMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Tracie

Canton, N.C., Sgt. Maj. Matthew Brookshire's wife, 38

BROOKSHIRE



> **We met 21 years ago.** I was smitten with him from the very beginning. He was home on leave and I started talking to him and we just fell in love.

> **We dated for two or three weeks** and he asked me to marry him. We were married five months later and here we are now.

> **Hawaii was an experience.** We were young and got to enjoy a lot of the history and culture there. In San Diego we made some of our greatest friends but nothing beats our time here in Twentynine Palms. It has been our home more than anywhere else.

> **I received the Service to America award.** It was actually a complete surprise. I had no idea that's why we were going (to the ceremony.) He knew and it seemed like everyone in the whole building knew but me. He hid it pretty well. He took the programs off the table and everything. When Col. North started reading the presentation, it wasn't until he was halfway through his speech that I was like, "I think that's me." It was just recognition for the volunteer work I've done. I had no idea I was even nominated. It was a true honor.

> **I've gotten to learn** from others. We're all in the same situation. We're all experiencing the same feelings and we're all experiencing the same things. It's been good to reach out to other wives and have the friendship, that connection, while their husbands are gone.

> **I've also worked toward** reaching out to other areas on base like the Wounded Warrior Detachment. That's been something I've wanted to bring awareness to because some people don't even know that we have a Wounded Warrior Detachment here.

> **I think the military spouse** plays an important role because they are a representation of the Marine Corps too. They have to hold everything down. When their husbands are gone, they have to be the father and the mother while trying to hold down a full-time job or going to school. They're very special because they can do it all too.

IN 2008 TRACIE AIDED THE GOLD STAR FAMILIES OF 2ND BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT, EARNING THE 2013 SERVICE TO AMERICA AWARD.

> **Some people don't realize** how hard it can be to be a military spouse and to keep it together all while worrying and trying to do everything in daily life. It's hard but that's what makes them really strong.

> **I think people don't** realize what a sense of humor he has. He's really funny. I know a lot of people who think he's so serious all the time but he's actually a big prankster. He's funny and fun to be around.

> **Something I admire** about him is he can lead his Marines and he doesn't have to get nasty or mean. He doesn't curse. He can do all that counseling without saying a curse word.

> **My free time is spent** going to school and volunteering. I've been going to school to get my nursing degree.

> **Helping the families** of the fallen has been some of the hardest times but has given me the best of friends. Out of that tragedy came some of the greatest friendships. They've truly become family.

> **Casualty Assistance Calls Program does so much** and they do a tremendous job but there are things that they aren't able to do; one being getting them in contact with other families of those their son may have died with. I don't know how to give that kind of counseling to people. All I knew was to bring them together. They were hurting and the only thing they could do was be together. They were the only ones who knew what the other was feeling right then. It's not just that they both lost a child but that their children died next to each other.

> **I helped make arrangements** for those families who wanted to attend the homecomings their sons were suppose to be in. These parents are amazing people because in the midst of their grief, they were comforting us and they were comforting the Marines. They still do that today.

> **The secret to a successful marriage** is if you don't have communication, you don't have anything, especially when they come back from combat. You have to just wait and see when they want to communicate. They're also trying to get used to their wives again.

> **In a military marriage**, we have to be able to have patience. Patience, understanding and communication are the three main components of a successful marriage.

> **You have to network.** You have to get out and make your own life.

> **Every day is a new day;** not one is going to be the same. You have to make the best of what you have.

Interviewed by Cpl. Lauren A. Kurkimilis
Aug. 13, 2013



L.I.N.K.S. for SPOUSES

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez

Spouses receive education on Corps, Combat Center

The Lifestyle Insights Networking Knowledge and Skills organization held a class for military spouses aboard the Combat Center at building 696 Aug. 13 to educate them on what to expect from the Marine Corps way of life.

The spouses first became acquainted with each other, and then the L.I.N.K.S. trainers began their instruction. Different aspects of the Marine Corps were covered, beginning with the organization's mission

“Something we want to get across to spouses is how strong they can be,”

— Amber Bilderain

to be “a certain force in uncertain times.”

The class continued with familiarizing the spouses with Marine Corps acronyms and terminology such as PME, which means professional military education; devil dog, the famous nickname given to Marines by German forces in World War I; and chucks, the nickname for the class C service uniform.

“We want to empower spouses to thrive with the Marine Corps lifestyle,” said Amber

Bilderain, L.I.N.K.S. trainer, Marine Corps Family Team Building. “If a spouse fosters good feelings about the Marine Corps, it only makes their relationship better.”

The class also covered the different services and places aboard the Combat Center such as the New Parent Support Group, the Navy - Marine Corps Relief Society and the Career Resource Office.

“This class has definitely taught me about what the Corps has to offer, especially on this base,” said Allison Cordero, Marine spouse. “Getting here at first, it may not look like much, but there really is a lot going on.”

The spouses were also informed about the many popular recreation sites such as the Sunset Cinema, Sandy Hill Lanes Bowling Alley and Desert Winds Golf Course.

“The career resource center will help me because I’m looking for a job,” Cordero said. “And the recreational activities will help me get involved with the base.”

L.I.N.K.S., a program under Marine Corps Family Team Building, boasts a team of 55 volunteers aboard the Combat Center. In addition to an introductory class, topics such as separations during deployment, housing and

entitlements and Marine Corps functions are discussed in an open forum. Sessions for spouses are held once a month.

“Something we want to get across to spouses is how strong they can be,” said Bilderain. “They were chosen by their Marine for their support.”

L.I.N.K.S. classes organized specifically for spouses date back to 1996, when military spouses at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., came together to teach new spouses about the Marine Corps lifestyle. Over the years, the wives increased their networking and efforts. The first official session was held in 1997 aboard the Combat Center.

“I think these classes should be mandatory for any spouse,” Cordero said.

As Marine families grows, L.I.N.K.S. will be there to educate and support all additions to the Marine Corps family.



[Above] Amber Bilderain, trainer, L.I.N.K.S., Marine Corps family team building, describes the Dress Blue Alpha uniform during L.I.N.K.S. for spouses class Aug. 13.

[Right] Bilderain explains Marine Corps enlisted rank structure during L.I.N.K.S. for spouses class Aug. 13.

 Visit the official MCAGCC facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter	 The Combat Center has its own YouTube channel. Find it at http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO	 The Combat Center has its own Flickr photo and video streams. Find them at http://www.flickr.com/thecombatcenter
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L AIR F T



CLB-7, HMH-366 team up in exercise

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya

Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 7 and Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 366 extracted communication gear from the Combat Center's Observation Post Crampton July 8. The units used this extraction as a training exercise to better prepare for their upcoming deployment.

The Combat Center's G-6, Communications and Information Systems, needed the gear moved from the training area. The two units converted this request into a training exercise to enhance their skills working with one another.

CLB-7 provided a team of six Marines to support from the ground while HMH-366 provided a CH53 E helicopter for air support.

"It was good training for both units," said Capt. Molly Leblanc, pilot, HMH 366. "It was also an important mission because it would have cost a lot of money if we were not here to support them in the movement of the containers."

The two containers were located at different ends of Observation Post Crampton. The Marines with CLB-7 dropped off a small contingent of Marines at landing zone

Gunfighter to keep communication with the air support and then convoyed to the location of the containers. After reaching the training area, CLB-7 Marines unloaded their gear and started to prepare the containers for extraction.

Once the containers were ready for extraction, the Marines on the ground would contact the Marines in the air and rally at an area away from the container. Two CLB-7

Marines remained at their position on top of the container. Once the CH53E dropped its hooks and hovered over the container, the Marines would connect the hooks to the container and then move to the rally point with the other Marines. The CH53E lifted the container and it was extracted to landing zone Gunfighter.

After watching the first container extraction, CLB-7 Marines grabbed their gear and moved to the second container, repeating all of the same steps.

"It is always a mission, whether it is training or not," said 1st Lt. DeWayne Townsend, land support platoon commander, CLB-

7. "We are going to be deploying soon so it's always good to get out and do these types of (exercise). This is also the only way this equipment can be moved from here."



[Top] Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 7 attach communications equipment to a CH53E during a training exercise in the Combat Center's Observation Post Crampton area July 8.

[Above] A Marine with CLB-7 watches as a CH53E with HMH-366 extracts communication equipment from the OP Crampton training area, July 8.

[Right] A Marine with CLB-7 watches as communication equipment is taken away from the OP Crampton training area.



LIFE, from A1

Brookshire said. “Without her support, I wouldn’t be where I am.”

After a tour in Hawaii that included two deployments to Okinawa, Japan, Brookshire returned to the drill field in 1997 at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego with Company I, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, Recruit Training Regiment. Two years later, he became an instructor at Drill Instructor School, instructing warrior training and Corps values to aspiring drill instructors. He ended his time in the drill field as a Drill Master, the drill instructor that ensures all recruit battalions are consistent in the execution of close-order drill movements, an essential part of Marine Corps training and tradition.

“Just like recruits, you see drill instructors progress as well,” Brookshire said. “The product must be strong because (they train our future Marines.”

Serving as the base sergeant major was Brookshire’s third and final billet at the Combat Center, serving previously as the company gunnery sergeant for Company E, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, then being re-assigned to Company L, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, where he deployed twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“Installation of the year four years in a row speaks highly of the personnel here, and I can’t speak highly enough about everybody’s cooperation,” Brookshire said. “This is the premier training facility of the Marine Corps and it’s a great training environment, backed by a great community.”

Brookshire fondly remembers his time serving with the Marines of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment and says his most rewarding experience in the Corps was serving as the sergeant major of 2/7.

“Being their senior (enlisted) leader and seeing what they accomplished will always make (serving with 2/7) the highlight of my career,” Brookshire said.

The battalion was one of the first to deploy to Afghanistan in 2008. Brookshire claims that his two years of watching what his Marines did and how they operated in Afghanistan made them heroes in his eyes.

However, the deployment proved to be devastating for Brookshire with the loss of 20 Marines killed in action, and more than 60 wounded. According to Brookshire, their commitment to the Corps and to the mission will never be forgotten.

“Serving with those Marines was the best thing I’ve done, and how they performed was truly amazing,” Brookshire said. “That battal-

ion is what being a Marine was all about.”

According to Tracie, Brookshire’s wife, and the recent recipient of the 2013 Service to America Award for her volunteer work, the battalion was like a family to them.

Brookshire attributes his success in his Marine Corps career to the Marines that led him during his earliest years in the Corps.

“I learned that to be a good leader, you must be a good follower to start,” Brookshire said. “I’ve been fortunate throughout my career to be surrounded by good leaders, and to learn from them.”

Brookshire also believes in leading by example. In part he has achieved this by embracing his physical abilities by running several marathons throughout his Marine Corps career. He ran two while stationed at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in 1994 and 1996.

“I arrived in Hawaii and decided to do the marathon, but I hadn’t trained at all,” Brookshire said. “It was the first marathon (I had ever ran). I was hurting, but I finished it,” Brookshire said.

Later, he would go on to participate in the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington D.C. in 2006, 2010, and 2011.

“The three in D.C. I trained for, because (Hawaii) was a very hard lesson,” Brookshire said.

At that point, Brookshire’s standards for the Marines under his command came to light.

“He even signed up all of the sergeants major at Parris Island to run them,” Tracie said. “And they did.”

Brookshire has now moved to the town of Matthews, N.C., to teach at Weddington High School as a Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer’s Training Corps instructor, a long-time aspiration of his that began when he was in high school and met a Marine mentor before enlisting.

“I was taught by Master GySgt. Fred Smith, a great leader,” Brookshire said. “He set that example for me and it’s why I wanted to join (the Marine Corps).”

Now, it is time for Brookshire to take charge as a teacher.

“When I was in high school I did JROTC and I enjoyed it,” Brookshire said. “Now that the option to teach came up, I took it.”

As Brookshire moves on to the next chapter, he will always remember what the Corps has taught him, the same way the Marines that served with him will remember the lessons he has imparted upon them.

“I have enjoyed every day of my 26 years in the Marine Corps, and every day at the Combat Center,” Brookshire said. “There’s no greater honor to me than being a Marine.”

RETIRE, from A1

appointed duties.

“I’m also about the mission and today’s mission is to honor Sgt. Maj. Brookshire and Tracie,” Villalino said. “Thank you for the opportunity. I want to thank the Marines and sailors for service to their country and I look forward to visiting every section and tenant unit out here in the next couple of weeks.”

Spectators gathered, before and after the ceremony, to congratulate Brookshire on his 26 years of dedicated service. Brookshire and his wife, Tracie, will retire to Charlotte N.C., where he will continue to serve in the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program.

“From all of us, Matt and Tracie, who are wearing the uniform and who have benefited from your unselfishness, I thank you on all of our behalf,” said Maj. Gen.

David H. Berger, Combat Center Commanding General. “I’m not sure those high school students at that JROTC unit have any idea of what they are getting, but the rest of us do. They’re going to be better students and better human beings from it. From all of us, Semper Fidelis.”

Brookshire also received “thank you” letters from President Barack Obama, Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James F. Amos and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett, who came to show his support for his fellow sergeant major and long-time friend. As he finished his speech, Brookshire took a moment to speak to his wife for her years of support.

“Tracie, we were married 20 years ago,” Brookshire said. “I love you and thank you for all that you have done; you’re what made me successful. Behind every good Marine is a great woman – and I have the greatest.”

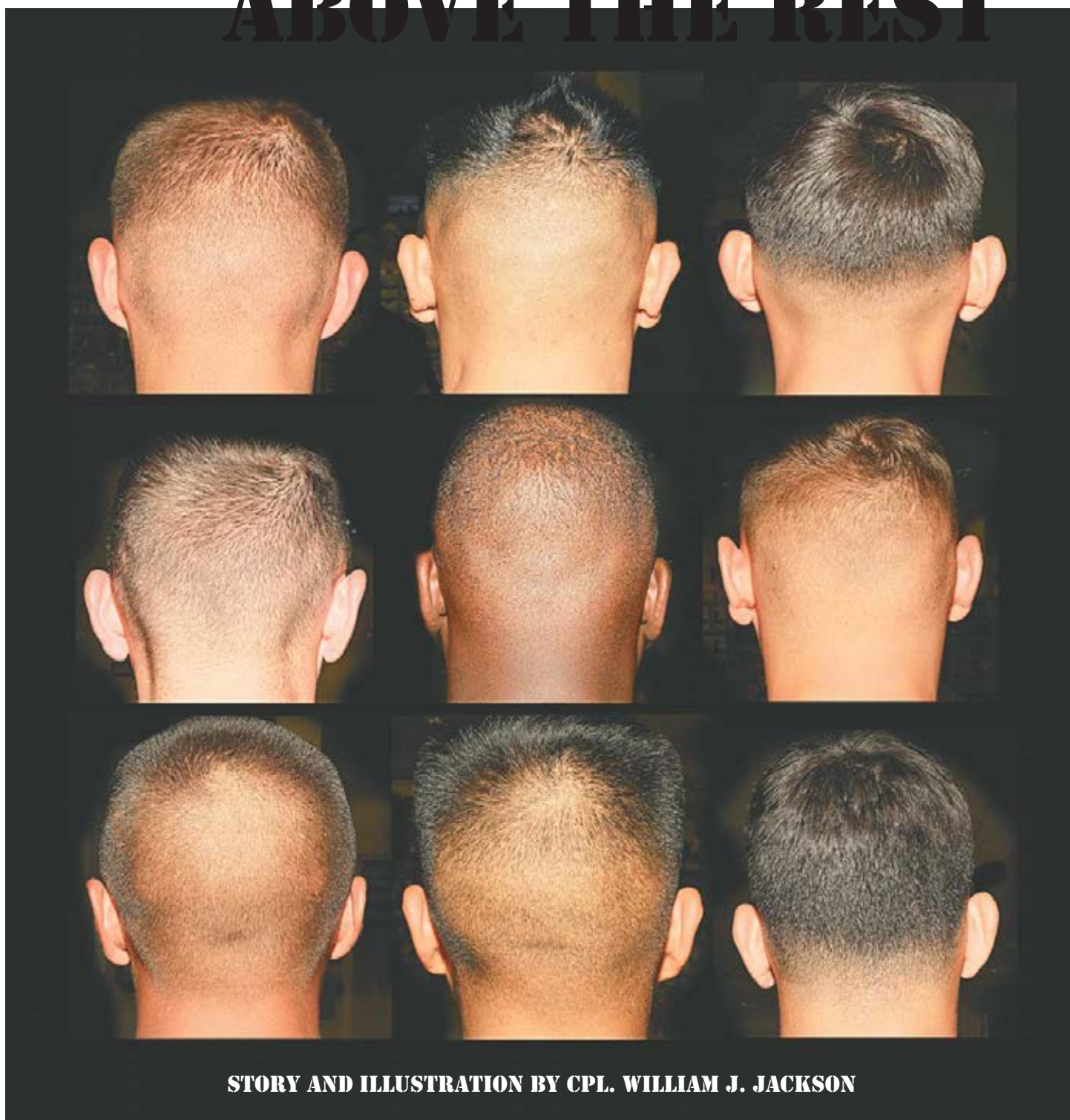
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A CUT ABOVE THE REST



STORY AND ILLUSTRATION BY CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Marines express themselves one haircut at a time

Marines have been nicknamed based on their appearance, fighting spirit and events throughout history. These nicknames include leatherneck, devil dog and jarhead, a prominent term depicting a short haircut. Their demeanor, pride and uniformity has given rise to the history and lore Marines are known for.

A Marine's haircut can set him apart from service members in any military branch of service. It's also one of the few forms of individuality a Marine can have, while staying in regulations. Over the years, Marines have been recognized by the nickname jarhead.

At the beginning of recruit training, one of the very first things to go is any kind of haircut. A shaved head stems a recruit's individuality, forcing him to abandon his sense of

individualism and allowing him to learn to see his platoon as a singular entity.

Once they earn their Eagle, Globe and Anchor, they can finally wear a Marine's haircut and as they begin to see the Marine Corps outside of the recruit depot, they start to understand that, according to the trained eye, a Marine's haircut comes in many different forms.

To the world, it's overlooked. To Marines, it's individuality.

Marines may shave their heads or wear high-and-tights in the beginning of their careers but as time goes by, some take on the shape of high fades, which may eventually become medium fades and some medium fades become low fades. The lines of the Marine Corps uniformity become blurred and a glimmer of the individual peeks through.

SHAVED

The shaved head is a powerhouse symbol for Marines. Reserved, for the most part, for drill instructors, motivators and perhaps a few who may be going bald. It bolsters their hard-charging attitude in their daily appearance. They can look sharp and maintain the high standards set forth by their peers and superiors. They may have to allow time for daily maintenance, but on the upside, they don't have to pay for a haircut every week and their hair, or lack there of, they will be fresh everyday.

HIGH-AND-TIGHT

The high-and-tight is traditional sign of motivation in the Corps. Whether worn by a Marine who has been in for three months or 30 years, those who show off this haircut are, in a sense, good to go; a lead-by-example type of Marine. Marines say that perception is reality and this haircut influences others to perceive a high-and-tight as a no-nonsense hard charger.

HIGH FADE

The high fade, much like its cousin the high-and-tight, can be one in the same, but for schoolhouse Marines at the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, it's a slight slip into self expression and a Sunday tradition to wait in line all afternoon to have a barber fix them up. Students still maintain their Marine Corps motivation when they sport this haircut, especially when coupled with a prominent eight-point cover tan line.

MEDIUM FADE

It's the most common and easiest fade to style and maintain. Marines flock to their favorite barber to keep up with their weekly medium fade, maintaining the status quo for the general population of Marines; not too high not too short by any means.

LOWFADE

Marines learn to fade in the field for upcoming deployments; the easiest style to execute is the low fade. However, the low fade is the least common haircut a Marine will get. It's typically reserved for those nearing their end of active service or those who are just getting out of the field for weeks on end. These haircuts enter most Marine's style during extensive field exercises or deployments. It can also become a reflection of their time and experience in the Marine Corps.

Whether or not a Marine chooses a high-and-tight or a low fade, he's representing his individuality in a sea of "MarPat" utilities. It's a small, yet significant way, to set himself apart.



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 p.m.
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.

Monty Python's SPAMALOT

When: 7 p.m., Fridays & Saturdays, Aug. 23 - Sept. 21
Where: Theatre 29
73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
For more information, call 316-4151
or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

Lower Desert

Jeffrey Osborne

American funk R&B singer performs
When: 9 p.m., Friday, Aug. 23
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
For more information, call 800-252-4499 or visit
<http://www.morongocasinosort.com>

Heart and Jason Bonham

Led Zeppelin Experience concert
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 24
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>

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>

Ted Nugent

American rock legend performs
When: 9 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 30
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, Aug 23

6 p.m. - Despicable Me 2 3-D, PG
8:30 p.m. - Pacific Rim, PG-13
Midnight - The Conjuring, R

Saturday, Aug 24

10:30 a.m. - Free Matinee: Cars 2, PG
12:30 p.m. - Turbo 3-D, PG
4 p.m. - Despicable Me 2 3-D, P
6:30 p.m. - Grown Ups 2, PG-13
9:30 p.m. - The Conjuring, R

Sunday, Aug 25

12:30 a.m. - R.I.P.D. 3-D, PG-13
12:30 p.m. - Despicable Me 2, PG
3 p.m. - Pacific Rim 3-D, PG-13
6 p.m. - R.I.P.D. 3-D, PG-13
8:30 p.m. - Red 2, PG-13

Low-flying Disney underdog saga has too-familiar feel



COURTESY PHOTO

NEIL POND

"Planes"

Starring: Dane Cook, Stacy Keach & Julia Louis-Dreyfus
Directed by: Klay Hall
PG, 91 min.

Disney's new yarn about a little underdog airplane with big dreams feels at times like the studio just strapped some wings onto another movie.

That movie would be "Cars." In fact, one of the producers is digital-animation guru-exec John Lasseter, who directed both "Cars" and its sequel, and "Toy Story" and its sequel, for Pixar. (Disney purchased Pixar in 2006; Lasseter now heads the creative divisions of both merged companies). And "Planes" even reveals, on a placard, before the opening scene comes into view that we're in "The World of Cars," a bustling alt-universe where people don't exist, but mechanized vehicles have personalities, ambitions, "facial" features, and the voices of Hollywood stars.

In this case, we have the spunky, propeller-driven crop duster, Dusty Crophopper (Dane Cook), whose day-to-day job spreading mulch is enlivened by his aspirations to compete in an airplane race around the world.

Dusty is prepped for the contest by Skipper (Stacy Keach), a crusty U.S. Navy WWII fighter; Chug, an airstrip fuel truck (Brad Garret); and Dottie (Teri Hatcher), a detail-obsessed forklift. Dusty has a big problem though: He's afraid of heights.

Once he's cleared for take-off with the big boys of international air racing, our little crop duster meets up with even more colorful characters. El Chupacabra (Carlos Alazraqui), Mexico's greatest aerial racer, provides many of the movie's best comedic moments, including an amusing reworking of the '70s disco hit "Love Machine."

Bulldog (John Cleese) is a British plane that has trouble

keeping the traditional English stiff upper lip when he gets emotional. Julia Louis-Dreyfus provides the voice of a sleek Canadian competitor, Rochelle, a bit of an inside joke for "Seinfeld" fans. During a segment that recalls a scene from "Top Gun," you'll hear two actors from that '80s classic, Val Kilmer and Anthony Edwards, as the fighter jets.

Dusty runs into trouble when the race's cocky star flier, Ripslinger (Roger Craig Smith), panicked at the prospect of losing to the rival "farm boy" airplane "built for seed, not speed," resorts to dirty tricks.

Like most Disney flicks, "Planes" has both humor and heart. But this project, done not by the company's legendary film division but instead by its DisneyToons (video) department, feels somewhat like it started out with only half hopes of becoming a "real" Disney movie. (It was originally planned as a direct-to-DVD release, but later deemed good enough for theaters).

There's just something about "Planes" that never quite, well, takes wing. For all its scenes in the air, so much of it seems to be back on the ground — and the highway. When the airplanes are about to take off to begin their big race, the grandstands are packed with little automobiles, cheering wildly for their propeller-nosed cousins. The storyline of an international marathon race follows the setup of "Cars 2."

And one recurring character, Dusty's biggest fan, is a German car that literally morphs into an airplane by sliding a pair of wings onto its hood.

Thanks again for the reminder, Mr. Lasseter. Yes, you made "Cars" and "Cars 2." And now you've made "Planes" ... by putting some wings onto some cars. We get it.

Even more importantly, I suspect you hope the "it" that people who see "Planes" get is loads of spin-off merchandise: plane-themed toys, trinkets, apparel and who-knows-what else. Those things will likely be just as important as the box office to the bottom line of this little movie that sputters as it tries to soar above its own been-there, done-that, toy-story roots.



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

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Arts & Crafts



[Above] Rachel McArthur, 7, draws during Summer Craft Day, hosted by the Lifelong Learning Library, Aug 15. Arts and crafts activities included making felt aprons, owl puppets and butterflies out of paper towels.

[Center] Savannah, 5; Madeline, 7; and Ella Snyder, 9; make crafts during Summer Craft Day. Craft day is an event that the library holds every year.

[Right, top] Emma Faruk, 5, takes parts in the Lifelong Learning Library's Summer Craft Day.

[Right, Bottom] Kids took part in making crafts at the Lifelong Learning Library's Summer Craft Day.

Lifelong Learning Library hosts Summer Craft Day

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez

Children of all ages aboard the Combat Center enjoyed a day of arts and crafts at the Lifelong Learning Library Aug. 15 during the library's Summer Craft Day.

The annual event brings children and their parents together for different art activities using a variety of craft materials provided by the library.

"It's a great way to get a sense of community before school starts," said Ursula Morales, program coordinator, Lifelong Learning Library. "It is nice to see parents out here having a productive day with their kids."

The arts and crafts activities included making felt aprons, owl puppets and butterflies out of paper towels.

"I love community events like this," said Amanda Weyer, Marine spouse. "We've been here almost four years and the kids really enjoy it."

Glitter, markers, strings, beads, crayons and paper filled every table as the dozens of children in attendance let their imaginations

flow. Finished works of art were proudly displayed at the front table.

"I think it's fun to do arts and crafts," said Gracie Weyer, 10, Condor Elementary School student. "Coloring is my favorite part."

This summer's arts and crafts day has come and gone, but the Lifelong Learning Library will always be open to those aboard the Combat Center.

"We've been doing this for a number of years and it's always had a great response," said Morales. "It keeps the kids entertained and focused in a productive manner."

As children prepare for the upcoming school year, the Lifelong Learning Library will remain their go-to place for education and fun.

The Lifelong Learning Library offers several programs for children, such as a read and play every Monday and lap time every Wednesday for children up to two years old, as well as story time every Tuesday for children ages three to five.

For more information, visit the Lifelong Learning Library located at building 1524, or call (760) 830-6875.