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HQBN SERGEANT MAJOR RETIRES

Cpl. Lauren A. Kurkibilis
Combat Correspondent

Sgt. Maj. Scott Cooper passed on the non-commissioned officer's sword, to Sgt. Maj. Abel Leal, marking the relief and appointment of duty as sergeant major of Headquarters Battalion, Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, during a ceremony held at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Grey Field Nov. 1.

Following the exchange of responsibility, Cooper was formally retired by Lt. Col. Michael Bowers, HQBN com-



CPL. LAUREN KURKIBILIS

Sgt. Maj. Scott Cooper, former Headquarters Battalion sergeant major, prepares to relinquish command during a post and relief ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Nov. 1.

manding officer, after 24 years of faithful service to the Marine Corps.

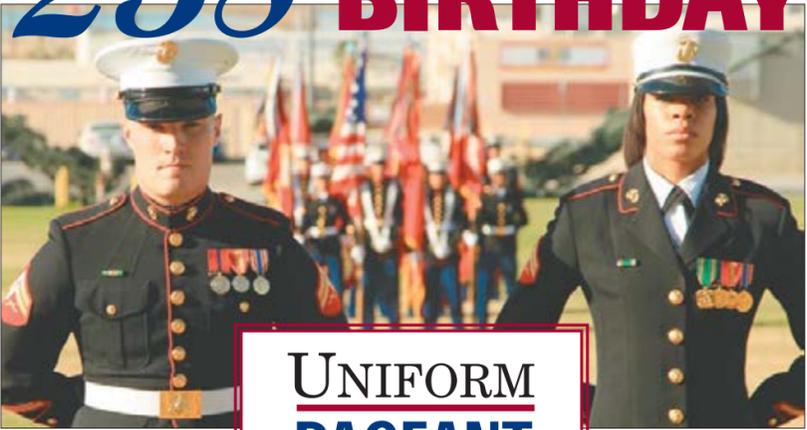
"I am truly honored to be able to retire such a stellar Marine as Sgt. Maj. Cooper," Bowers said. "As he is on to bigger and better things, he will be missed here aboard the Combat Center."

Cooper took a minute to thank his fellow Marines, friends and family members for attending the ceremony and he also took a moment to express his confidence in the Marine taking his place in Headquarters Battalion.

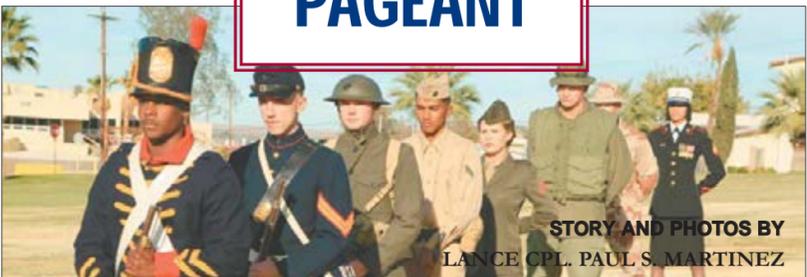
"I have complete faith in Sgt. Maj. Leal's ability to take on Headquarters Battalion," Cooper said. "These

See **RETIREMENT** page A5

238th MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY



UNIFORM PAGEANT



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LANCE CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ

[Top] Cpl. John Dolezal, military working-dog handler, Provost Marshal's Office, and Cpl. Heidi Young, supply and administration specialist, Headquarters Battalion, showcase the modern-day Marine Corps uniforms during the Marine Corps Birthday Uniform Pageant at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Nov. 7. **[Above]** Marines with HQBN showcase Marine Corps uniforms spanning different time periods during the Uniform Pageant at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Nov. 7.

Combat Center celebrates history, traditions

Marines, sailors, veterans, friends, and family of the Combat Center experienced the history of the Marine Corps during the 238th Marine Corps Birthday Uniform Pageant at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Thursday.

The birthday pageant is held to showcase the different uniforms Marines wore during the various conflicts the Marine Corps has fought in throughout its existence, and to celebrate the Marine Corps birthday.

The first uniform showcased was that of the Continental Marines in the midst of the American

Revolution in 1776.

"It's definitely an honor to portray the first uniform ever worn by Marines," said Lance Cpl. Thomas Salukombo, administration clerk, Headquarters Battalion.

Generations of Marine Corps uniforms paraded onto the field. From The War of 1812, the American Civil War, the Spanish-American War, Banana Wars, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam War, Operation Desert Shield, and the uniforms worn today. The uniforms were

See **PAGEANT** page A5
For more photos see page A6

COMBAT CENTER HOSTS MULTICULTURAL CELEBRATION DAY

Cpl. Ali Azimi
Combat Correspondent



The Marine Corps is a melting pot of different cultural identities which come together to form a single fighting force. Diversity throughout the Corps provides insight into cultures that Marines may otherwise know nothing about.

This diversity is something to celebrate and Combat Center Marines did so with the first Multicultural Celebration Day in 13 years at the Hashmarks Club

It's an honor to share your culture with other people. That's what life is about, sharing.

- Lance Cpl. Thomas Salukombo

Staff NCO club Nov. 1.

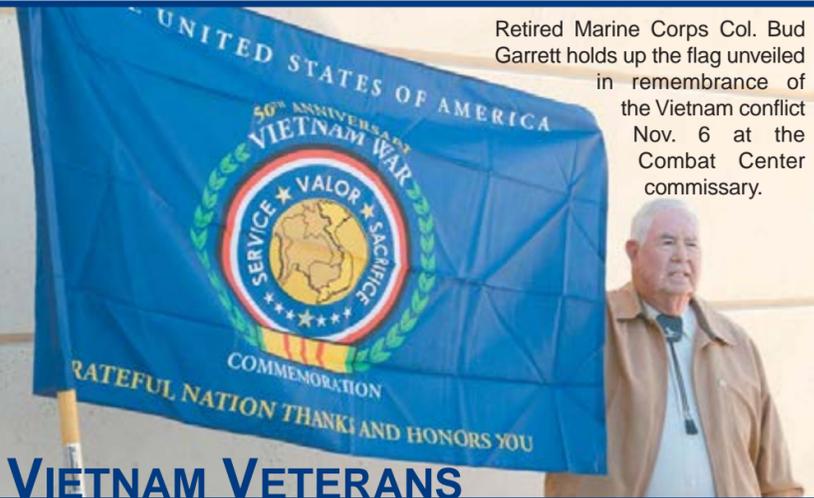
"We wanted to have a day to represent the diversity and the vast amount of cultures the Marine Corps has," said Gunnery Sgt. Jesse Brown, equal opportunity advisor, Headquarters Battalion. "As much as we are the same, we are all different. We need to respect each other's diversity and cultural backgrounds."

The event brought together Marines with backgrounds from countries around the world to share their culture with everyone in attendance.

Displays representing the different cultures lined the walls of Hashmarks, while Marines who represented each culture stood behind the tables to talk about their heritage and offer additional knowledge on their country.

"It's an honor to share your culture with other people," said Lance Cpl. Thomas Salukombo, who represented Congo, a nation of Africa, at the event.

See **CULTURE** page A5



Retired Marine Corps Col. Bud Garrett holds up the flag unveiled in remembrance of the Vietnam conflict Nov. 6 at the Combat Center commissary.

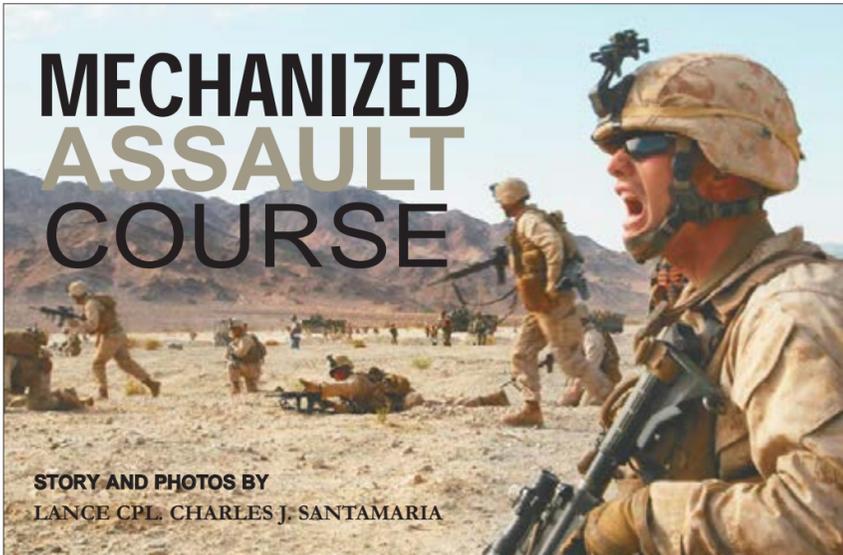
VIETNAM VETERANS HONORED DURING CEREMONY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. CHARLES J. SANTAMARIA

The Combat Center's commissary honored Vietnam veterans during a flag unveiling ceremony for the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam war Wednesday. Col. Bud Garrett, (ret.), the event's guest speaker, unveiled the new flag. This flag commemorated the war and the sacrifices made by those who served.

The Headquarters Defense Commissary Agency ensured that commissaries on military bases across the DoD participated in the

See **VETERAN** page A5



MECHANIZED ASSAULT COURSE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LANCE CPL. CHARLES J. SANTAMARIA

'Dark Horse' Marines conduct MAC on Range 210

A thunderous roar echoed through the desert as a line of tanks and Assault Amphibious Vehicles rolled through the terrain, lifting debris, crushing rock and tactically advancing toward the objective. The other Marines were on the offensive as they patiently waited in the rumbling assault vehicles for their chance to take on the rugged terrain of Range 210.

Marines with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, participated in the Mechanized Assault Course on Range 210, Sunday. I Company ran the assault phase of the exercise with three platoons supported by tanks, AAVs and artillery.

The MAC began with an assault phase where Marines had to push through a mount town and take control of the area.

"The mission today was to clear the east side of the town after the squads dismounted from a simulated AAV insertion and dismount (exercise), while keeping suppressive fire on the enemy to advance," said Cpl. Kevin Michael Brown, squad leader, Co. I, 3rd Bn., 5th Marine Regiment.

According to Brown, the AAVs were effective method of transportation for Marines into the town.

"The AAV is a great vehicle, they can fit about 12 Marines with full gear and are fast on different terrain," Brown said.

After the town was captured, Marines then began the defensive phase where

See **MAC** page A5



[Top] Cpl. Coby Troyer, squad leader, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, leads his Marines during the Mechanized Assault Course at Range 210, Nov. 3.

[Above] Marines with 3/5, walk toward Assault Amphibious Vehicles during the MAC exercise at Range 210 Nov. 3.

Hey Combat Center fans!

Let us know what you think of the Observation Post and what you'd like to see more of with a quick survey at:

surveymonkey.com/s/9CVHK2R

RED RIBBON WEEK



CPL. D.J. WU

Military working dog Cortez, Provost Marshal's Office, jumps through a window obstacle during a K9 demonstration at Yucca Mesa Elementary School during Red Ribbon Week, Oct. 30.

K9 demos for local schools

Cpl. D.J. Wu
Combat Correspondent

Marines with the Combat Center Provost Marshal's Office K9 unit visited more than a dozen schools in the local community, educating students on what law enforcement does at the Combat Center during this year's Red Ribbon Week.

Red Ribbon Week is an annual awareness campaign designed to educate children on living a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. This year's Red Ribbon Week ran from Oct. 25 to Oct. 31.

Schools throughout the Morongo Basin invited Combat Center PMO to educate their students on aspects of law enforcement and engaging them with a K9 demonstration.

"It really gives the kids appreciation of what police officers and the military do to protect us," said Matt Gay, principal, Yucca Mesa Elementary School. "The students have been learning different things about living a healthy lifestyle all

week. Some days classes were on the dangers of drugs and days like today, it was about law enforcement and K9. We're just grateful to have these guys out here."

The Combat Center's K9 unit uses demonstrations to reach out to the community and show the students that they are out protecting them and doing their best to take care of potential criminals.

"We love coming out and doing this for the kids," said Sgt. Lee Bartholomew, military working dog trainer, PMO. "It gives us a chance to show the kids what we do up close and to answer questions that they have."

Red Ribbon Week is not only about being drug free. It also teaches students about violence prevention and the dangers of alcohol and tobacco.

"Red Ribbon Week is an important program," Gay said. "It's important that we instill these values in our kids early and to keep the education going throughout middle and high school."



Senior Veteran's wife speaks

Written by
Ginny Cisneros

During the Vietnam war, our Marines once again left for another conflict such as Korea. We were very young when my husband fought the Korean War. This time it was Vietnam. For most of us we were much older and facing another separation from our husbands. In our family, the children were grown up, the oldest one in college, a couple in high school and the two younger ones in elementary school.

Once again, the fear of war was upon us.

When I was a young girl, I saw our military come home after the second world war. Family members and friends returned after being gone three and four years, fighting the wars in the South Pacific and Europe.

I began to see women change into another breed of women. Not "just a house wife," but women taking full responsibility of their families as homemakers and in the workforce. Not realizing that the biggest challenge would be when their husbands and sons would finally come home.

Some didn't come home. Some men came home with broken spirits and bodies. Some marriages were shattered. For many the scars of war were to remain with them forever.

Now, here I was experiencing all the anxieties they felt as their husbands left and when they returned. I was one of the lucky ones. My husband came home to us. Physically, he was fine. Mentally, the perils of war gave him more than his share of pain. As we did after the war in Korea, we worked on what was before us; love for each other and our family and being grateful to the almighty for all our blessings.

The years seemed to pass by quickly. We found ourselves in our eighties! My mighty warrior and I so very thankful to have each other; still laying down and getting up, perhaps a little slower but we are nevertheless, thankful that our beloved Marine Corps is nearby.

Many of the senior veterans' wives have survived the perils of war and are now facing the perils of age and illness. Being caregivers for their ailing warriors, they are still the wife by the side of their Marine. Yes, as the years crept up, even though they survived the wars, their Marines' health has taken its toll. I received this message years ago... A veteran is someone who at one point in his life wrote a blank check made "payable to the United States of America for the amount of 'up to and including my life.'" In my book, the wife co-signed that check!

As we celebrate the 238th Marine Corps Birthday, with hugs and wishes for a happy birthday to all senior veterans' wives, we salute you!

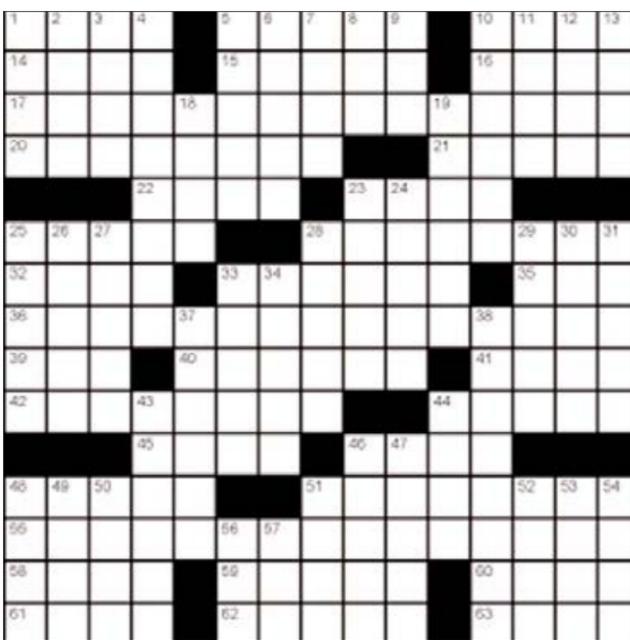
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CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

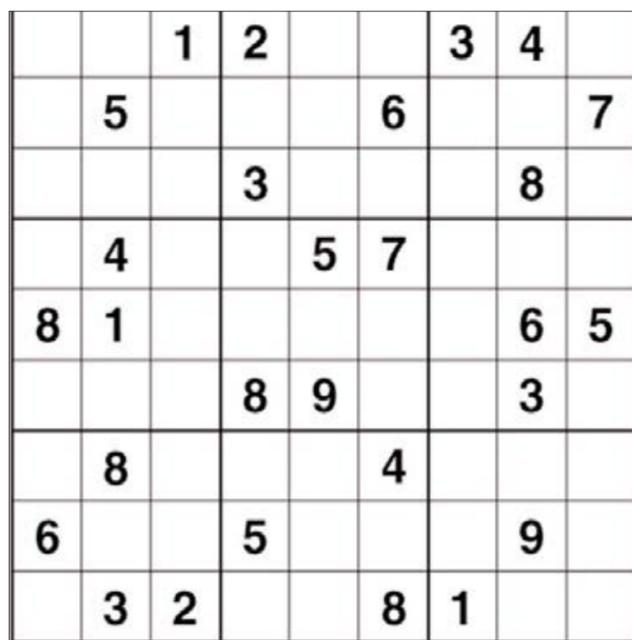
- ACROSS**
- Italy's capital
 - The real ___
 - Directions word
 - Peak of the peak
 - Stag
 - Pennsylvania port
 - Spanish-American poet's sonnet elements
 - Coined word?
 - Indy 500 trouble
 - War god
 - Like 22 and 24
 - ___ Drew (detective)
 - Less plausible, as an excuse
 - Help with the heist
 - Shampoo oil
 - ___ Paulo, Brazil
 - Physical therapy job opportunities
 - More than -er
 - Guitarist Segovia
 - Long-term spy
 - Cut it out
 - Gives a five, maybe
 - At hand
 - Assist in a crisis, with "out"
 - Tiny
 - Fabled race winner
 - Whips up some stew
 - Textbook chapter
- DOWN**
- Rub
 - October birthstone
 - Computer list
 - Gets the lode out
 - Hesitant remark
 - Santa ___
 - Pen pals?
 - ___ roll
 - "What?"
 - Benefits from an error
 - Humorist Bombeck
 - Little white lies
 - "Entertainment Tonight" alum John
 - Well-ventilated
 - "The ___ Cometh"
 - Split to be tied?
 - Nonverbal feedback
 - Did a new parent's job
 - Lower
 - Cardinal flats
 - Oslo sight
 - "This ___ happening?"



- Birdie beater
- February 14 purchase
- Post-revolution group
- Call for some Chinese food, say
- Flip-chart homes
- Early Beatles hit
- Chesapeake Bay features
- Comie Rudner
- Western capital
- Curvy
- Blue books?
- Lion's pride
- In the same family
- tree
- Horse's gait
- ., sometimes
- Senator's possession
- Sushi-bar selections
- Past
- Dandy

See answers on page B6

SUDOKU 3081D



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 - 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.
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- In Yucca Valley:**
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- 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

Marine

Tun Tavern, Penn. military branch, 238

CORPS



- > **I've been around** for quite some time, 238 years to be exact. I've seen just about everything.
- > **How many people** can say they were born in a tavern and then almost immediately set sail for the Bahamas? Not many. I'll never forget it. Led by Capt. Samuel Nichols, we watched the sun rise as we took the Redcoats by surprise. They never saw us coming.
- > **As a young Corps**, I was really active and grew quickly. In 1812, I had 578 active-duty Marines.
- > **My roots** can be traced back to the British Royal Marines. I know, back in the day, our countries didn't always get along and they did burn down almost every public building in Washington, D.C., but the British Royal Marines chose not to burn down the Marine Barracks, out of respect. We've come a long way since then and I've greatly outgrown my ancestor in size, at nearly 25/1, but wounds healed, and today we work closely together. They even come over here to train with my Marines in exercises like Black Alligator.
- > **I've been in every** American war since the day I was born. I guess they just want to keep me in the starting line-up. I've mounted more than 300 assaults on foreign shores from the tropics to the Arctic.
- > **When I'm at war**, I do not choose to retreat. It even

shows in my emblem, designed by my 7th Commandant, Brig. Gen. Jacob Zeilin. My Eagle, Globe and Anchor has been around since 1840 and stands for country, world-wide service and naval tradition. If you notice, it does not have a shield because I prefer to be on the offensive, rather than retreat or hide.

> **I'm definitely more** of a dog-person. My Marines are often referred to as, "Teufel-hunden," or "Devil Dog." During World War I, the Germans gave them that name, because of the constant barks and howls the Marines echoed on the battlefield as they viscously attacked them. We revere the hound so much that in 1922, Brig. Gen. Smedly Butler enlisted the first bulldog into my ranks. To this day, we still maintain the tradition of enlisting select "Devil Dogs."

> **238 years** may sound like a long time, but when I think about it, it's just a drop in the bucket compared to how long I intend to stick around. As long as they still want me, I'll be here.

> **I wouldn't say** I'm fashion savvy, but I make sure my guys and gals go out looking sharp. It's actually a written rule. It has nothing to do with the newest trend or egomania, it's about pride. They have pride in the way they look, which is an extension of their pride in the way they act and live as Marines.

> **When I throw a party**, I go all out. What better way to celebrate your birthday than with a formal ball? It's a time for everyone to get out of their daily grind, have a good time and remember that they all share something very special. My Marines work hard every day of the year, they deserve to take part in nothing less than a grand celebration.

> **The other branches** of the Department of Defense are my family. They may do things a bit different, but I think because we are family, we know we all fight for the same cause. The Navy is my brother. When I was young, I used to serve as his security guard and I was smaller than him too! Seriously though, the Navy is always by my side when I go to war, just as any good brother should be.

> **Picking who I am** most proud of is like picking a favorite child. You can't say which one has done better or out-shined the rest. While some have achieved more accolades than others, every last one made sacrifices to serve my mission throughout the years, no matter what that mission has been. I would say that my most important responsibility to these brave men and women is to forever preserve the legacy of those who have given their lives for my cause.

Written by Cpl. Lauren Kurkimalis
Nov. 5, 2013

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RETIREMENT, from A1

Marines are in good hands,”

Although Leal spent the weeks prior to his official appointment visiting different HQBN units, he expressed his excitement in meeting the rest of the battalion and leading the Marines to success.

Leal is an assault amphibious vehicle crewman by trade and most recently served at 1st Marine Regiment as the Headquarters Company 1st sergeant. He served on the drill field at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif. and has deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, the Mediterranean, and the West Coast of Africa.



CPL. LAUREN KURKIMILIS

Sgt. Maj. Scott Cooper, former Headquarters Battalion sergeant major, receives his retirement colors during a post and relief ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Nov. 1.

VETERAN, from A1

anniversary event.

“The event is happening in commissaries worldwide to commemorate the Vietnam conflict for veterans who served during that time,” said Jeane Halterman, commissary officer.

The event’s guest speaker, Garrett, served in the Vietnam conflict and explained the hardships of fighting in Vietnam. He also thanked the commissary for their gracious gesture.

“The design of the flag came together fantastic,” said Garrett. “The symbolism in the flag design was very significant to the events and sacrifices of the veterans who served.”

The new flag will be hung in the commissary on base, showing respect to these veterans of the Vietnam conflict.

“It’s nice to be able to walk down the street with a Marine Corps cap and hear people say ‘thank you for your service,’” Garrett said. “It feels like it’s finally coming full circle because people who served in Vietnam were really looked down upon during the time. The flag and events like this, 50 years later, is a great come around for the appreciation of those who sacrificed so much.”



LANCE CPL. CHARLES J. SANTAMARIA

Retired Marine Corps Col. Bud Garrett speaks to a crowd Nov. 6 during a ceremony at the Combat Center commissary to commemorate the veterans of the Vietnam conflict.

PAGEANT, from A1

proudly showcased, reflecting the deep history of the Marine Corps and the men and women of different eras who answered their nation’s call.

“This pageant is about our history, and I think things like this make us appreciate the Marine Corps more,” Salukombo said. “Every day, we Marines add to that history.”

Spectators also got a first-hand look at the uniforms of female Marines from WWI, WWII, and modern day. Their

uniforms and roles in the Marine Corps evolved over time as well.

Maj. Gen. David H. Berger, Combat Center commanding general, reflected on the meaning of the Marine Corps birthday, and how Marines, despite where they may be, find the time and resources to celebrate another year in the Corps.

“I have celebrated the Marine Corps birthday in many different places,” Berger said. “Including on a ship, in the Philippines, in Korea and twice in Okinawa. I have seen Marines in Iraq that managed

to find steaks and celebrate their birthday in Fallujah.”

The pageant proved to be an event where Marines and veterans took pride in their history, one that is composed of honor, courage, and commitment.

“At this time every year, we take a moment to remember those before us,” Berger said. “We remember why we are Marines, and that when our nation is in a tough spot, they’re going to send us first. It will always be that way. Happy Birthday Marines, and Semper Fidelis.”

MAC, from A1

Marines occupied fighting positions to defend against any follow-on attacks from the enemy. The exercise prepared Marines to clear an area alongside AAVs, while maintaining artillery and vehicle support.

Tactical Training Exercise Control Group Marines evaluated the exercise throughout the duration, making the assault course more realistic.

“The evaluators put the Marines in the scenario and really

Painted the picture of the assault by describing where fire was coming from and putting pressure on us,” said Cpl. Colby Troyer, squad leader, I Co., 3/5.

Marines with I Co., 3/5, conducted the MAC training to support the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit scheduled to deploy next year. The vehicle dismount and insertion drills conducted will supplement the unit’s purpose as a Battalion Landing Team participating in the 31st MEU’s mission as a forward-deployed crisis response force.



LANCE CPL. CHARLES J. SANTAMARIA

Cpl. Colby Troyer, squad leader, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, reloads during the assault phase of the Mechanized Assault Course on Range 210 Nov. 3.

CULTURE, from A1

“That’s what life is about, sharing.”

In addition to the displays, the clubs lunch options changed to a selection of cultural foods, ranging from Filipino cuisine to Hispanic and Japanese foods.

This may have been the first Multicultural Celebration Day in 13 years at the Combat Center, but it isn’t planned to be the last.

“This was my first one here,” Brown said. “Next year, we plan on doing it bigger and better.”

The display at the Multicultural Celebration Day in Hashmarks Staff Club, represents the “proud Hispanic heritage” that Combat Center Marines carry with them Nov. 1. The celebration of individual cultures gave Marines a chance to share unique aspect of their lives.



CPL. ALI AZIMI



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

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Check the Observation Post Classified section

See page B2 for Sunset Cinema movie schedule



TUN TAVERN: Birthplace of the Marine Corps

Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez
Combat Correspondent

The year is 1775. On Nov. 10, Men of different ages and occupations gathered in a dusty, candle-lit bar to listen as two individuals offered them a chance to be the first of a new breed fighting for independence. A breed that would be known as the United States Marines. As the men prepare to answer this call to arms, more join them within the walls of this place, known as Tun Tavern. Located in Philadelphia, this establishment played an integral role in not just the birth of the Marine Corps, but the early days of the United States.

In the year 1685, Samuel Carpenter, a Quaker colonist from England, built a brew house in Philadelphia. This tavern, located on the waterfront at the corner of Water Street and Tun Alley, was named the Tun Tavern, reflecting the old English definition of the word "tun," translating to barrel. Popular beer made the tavern a well-known spot among the colonists.

In 1732, the St. John's No. 1 Lodge of the Grand Lodge of the Masonic Temple held its first meetings in the tavern. Founding father Benjamin Franklin was the Lodges' third Grand Master. Today, the Masonic Temple of Philadelphia recognizes Tun Tavern as the birthplace of American Masonic teachings.



In the 1740s, Tun Tavern was expanded with the addition of a restaurant that became a success, and was patronized by notable Americans such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. In 1747, the St. Andrews Society was founded in the tavern to become a charity dedicated to assisting poor immigrants from Scotland.

In 1756, then Col. Benjamin Franklin organized the Pennsylvania Militia at Tun Tavern. This regiment of soldiers was gathered to take action against the Native American uprisings against American colonies. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and other members of the Continental Congress later met in Tun Tavern to prepare for their declaration of independence from the English Crown.

On November 10, 1775, the Continental Congress commissioned Samuel Nicholas to raise two battalions of Marines. That very day, Nicholas went to Tun Tavern and appointed Robert Mullan, then the tavern proprietor, the honor of becoming the first U.S. Marine recruiter. Men flocked to the tavern to take up arms as the first Continental Marines fighting for their new country in the American Revolution. Both the Marine Corps and the tavern were celebrated during this relationship.

In 1781, Tun Tavern burned down. Interstate 95 now runs through the original location. Today, a commemorative marker stands on the street where Tun Tavern once stood, denoting its immortal place as the birthplace of the United States Marine Corps.



Lance Cpl. Dre Gosha, administration clerk, Headquarters Battalion, wears a World War II-era uniform during the Marine Corps Birthday Uniform Pageant Nov. 7. Marines before him wore this uniform during famous battles such as, Midway, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Guam, Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Each battle was won with frontal assaults and close combat against fortified positions. Marines once again met the challenge.

Lance Cpl. Matthew Dechoudens, food service specialist, HQBN, dons the Spanish-American War-era uniform at the uniform Pageant Nov. 7. During the war, Marines routed the Spanish forces and destroyed their water supply and achieved the Marine Corps' victory, within four days of landing at Guantanamo Bay. The war lasted a total of four months.



Cpl. Grace Miller, air support systems operator, HQBN, wears the WWII-era female Marines' uniform during the Pageant Nov. 7. The Marine Corps sent out a call for women to join its ranks. They served as mechanics, paymasters, cooks, musicians and parachute riggers.



Pfc. Joshua Narain, ammunition technician, Center Magazine Area, HQBN, wears the World War I-era Marine Corps uniform during the Pageant Nov. 7. Marines proudly fought and earned the nickname of "Teufel-hunden," or "Devil Dog" during this war. President Woodrow Wilson called it the war to end all wars. His prediction was wrong, but nevertheless Marines have always been there to fight for right and freedom.



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

For local entertainment see our LIBERTY CALL section on page B2

THE MEANING BEHIND THE MARINE CORPS' HYMN

The Marine Corps Hymn was adopted as the official hymn of the Marine Corps in 1929 during Gen. John Lejeune's tenure as the Corps' 13th Commandant. When The Marines' Hymn is played, Marines stand at attention as a gesture of respect, expressing reverence in their fellow Marines, their Corps, their country, their heritage, and their hymn.

The Mexican-American War began in 1845. In September 1847, U.S. Marines and Army troops battled Mexican forces in Mexico City. It was during the Battle of Chapultepec when American forces captured Chapultepec Castle, a site known as the Halls of Montezuma.

MARINES' *Hymn*

Marines maintain a forward-deployed presence around the world, particularly in places where conflict has been known to arise. Even in peacetime, Marines uphold mission readiness by maintaining the 11th, 13th and 15th MEUs on the West Coast; the 22nd, 24th and 26th MEUs on the East Coast; and the 31st MEU based out of Okinawa, Japan.

The Marine Corps' role is to be a fighting force always ready for crisis. As our nation's first responder, the Marine Corps is uniquely suited to meet today's and tomorrow's security challenges. Marine Expeditionary Units train rigorously prior to deployment, to serve as a forward-deployed, flexible, sea-based Marine Air-Ground Task Force capable of conducting amphibious operations, crisis response, and limited contingency operations. Marines also maintain a global presence as U.S. Embassy security guards in 125 countries.

From the
Halls of Montezuma

To the shores of Tripoli

We fight our country's battles

In the air, on land, and sea;

First to fight for right and freedom

And to keep our honor clean;

We are proud to claim the title

Of United States Marine

Our flag's unfurled to every breeze

From dawn to setting sun;

We have fought in every clime and place

Where we could take a gun.

In the snow of far-off Northern lands

And in sunny tropic scenes;

You will find us always on the job

The United States Marines.

Here's health to you and to our Corps

Which we are proud to serve;

In many a strife we've fought for life

And never lost our nerve.

If the Army and the Navy

Ever look on Heaven's scenes,

They will find the streets are guarded

By United States Marines.

During the First Barbary War in 1805, Marine Lt. Presley O'Bannon and eight other Marines led a band of mercenaries to conduct a surprise attack that began the Battle of Derna, on "the shores of Tripoli." The battle was a major victory in the conflict.

Personal integrity, strong moral character and adherence to ethical principles define honor. Marines have been present in every American conflict to date. Notable Marines and units, such as Lt. Gen. Lewis "Chesty" Puller, recipient of five Navy Crosses, and the 5th and 6th Marine Regiments, known for their tenacity during the Battle of Belleau Wood in World War I, remain revered by Americans and foreign militaries alike for their distinguished display of honor.

Marines are proud to be the nation's elite fighting force. The title of "Marine" is earned and never given and will stay with a Marine for the rest of their life. The Marine Corps is often seen as a brotherhood between all generations, past and present.

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>



Maj. Melissa Wright began her day like many moms. She got her kids ready for school and arrived to work by 7:30 a.m. She spent her lunch working out with her shop, completed her daily Marine Corps tasks, and then dismissed her Marines for the evening. Wright then returned home to cook dinner and spend time with her family. When she crawled into bed at night, she knew what to expect the next day. That comfortable lifestyle came to a screeching halt when Wright got news that flipped her whole world upside down.



LANCE CPL. RYAN COLEMAN

Lance Cpl. Ally Beiswanger
Defense Media Activity

Maj. Melissa Wright was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2009. After radiation, chemotherapy and a mastectomy, Wright is now cancer-free and expecting her first child this April. Throughout her battle, Wright remained positive and was an inspiration to her Marines.

Wright had just returned from a deployment to Afghanistan with Combined Joint Task Force 82. Shortly after her homecoming, she received news that she was pregnant. Her husband's, her stepchildren's, and her own joy was short-lived, however, because a few weeks later, an ultrasound revealed she had lost the baby. Wright's body thought she was still pregnant and continued to produce hormones until she went through a procedure to return her body to normal. But Wright's body was far from normal. While in the shower one night, Wright had a random thought to do a self-breast exam. "All of a sudden in my right breast, I felt a giant lump," Wright said. "It was the size of a giant chocolate Cadbury egg — that is what I

stay in regulation. Wright said she felt very lucky to have the support from her Marines during this rough time in her life.

Marines from her shop would call and text Wright to ask if she needed anything and to check up on her. Staff Sgt. Zane L. Perry, a Marine who took over for Wright when she was away from work, says he saw a lot of ambition from her. Her positive attitude raised the spirits of the shop greatly.

"I think the cancer made her stronger," Perry said. "She never showed weakness and I knew she was tired from all the chemo, but you could never see it at work. Her determination to get better was such an eye-opener."

After six months of treatment, the chemo shrunk the tumor but Wright still had to undergo a mastectomy. The following spring, she went through radiation treatment. The endless treatments and surgeries left her body and spirit beaten down. She wouldn't have been able to fight as hard as she did without the support from her family. While keeping the strength and tenacity of a Marine, Wright was able to power through her treatments.

"It was very painful," Wright said. "I had so much blood drawn and chemicals injected that I had to have a port surgically placed in my upper chest, instead of needles going into my arms. I looked like a Borg from Star Trek."

In order for her skin to stretch for future reconstructive surgeries, Wright had to get saline injections into her right chest. She said she would scream out loud and curse from the pain as she felt her skin stretch.

"I eventually ended up listing chemo treatments on the same 'to-do' list as my grocery shopping list, or buying socks for my step-son," Wright said. "I just accepted it and made it part of my life."

During her chemo treatments, Wright would sit in a recliner for three hours with her husband by her side. They'd watch TV together and he'd stay with her while she slept. Caleb Wright said he felt privileged to be there to help someone he loves.

"I wanted to make sure she didn't feel alone through the process," he said. "It's really important to have someone there to grab a blanket or get you a glass of water or to just be quiet and listen."

A BODY REBUILT

In December 2011, just five months after her last reconstructive surgery, Wright deployed to Afghanistan. Even though she was ecstatic that the cancer was gone, Wright said she felt very unhappy with her body and wanted to make a change.

She met many motivated Marines who encouraged her to exercise every day and she began using the "Insanity" workout program. She worked out and lost fat, but still felt out of shape. Wright said she became depressed with her body's appearance. The

"Insanity" program caused her irradiated skin to break blood vessels and she dreaded more reconstructive surgeries.

Wright returned home to North Carolina in 2012 and decided to contact Marine Corps Community Services. Their staff at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., showed her the weight room and how to use it. For 12 weeks, Wright participated in a light-weight circuit and felt stronger, but still couldn't do a single pull-up. Wright believed that if she could get in shape, she wouldn't have to get more reconstructive surgeries. She decided to push it to the next level.

"I think we all assume that someday we will be in the best shape of our life and have a six-pack and do pull-ups," said Wright. "I learned you have to make that day happen."

Wright hired an online personal trainer and received explicit instructions every month on what weights to lift, what cardio to do, and what food to eat. She was required to e-mail pictures each week for feedback.

Wright heard of a bodybuilding competition that MCCA was holding on June 1, 2013. She had only three months to prepare if she was going to sign up, but with the warrior mindset, she knew she could take on the challenge.

"The Marine Corps has helped me find my calling in life, sent me to law school, and let me travel around the world," Wright said. "I wouldn't have been able to beat breast cancer if it weren't for the Marine Corps. I owed it to the Corps to be in the best shape of my life and so I did it."

Because of the self-discipline and determination that her weight trainer encouraged, Wright was able to walk across the stage of the Camp Lejeune Base Theater in a bikini in front of hundreds of Marines. That's not the only thing she accomplished, though. Wright took her first Marine Corps physical fitness test of the year on June 17, 2013 and went from struggling to attempt a chin up to completing nine overhand pull-ups.

A NEW LIFE

Wright planned to train for upcoming competitions, like a national competition held in Las Vegas, but her plans made a complete 180 in August when she received exciting news. Wright is expecting a baby this April, which is great news that her and her family weren't expecting. She said the whole family is overwhelmed with joy and the pregnancy means so much to her. Maybe waking up in the middle of the night to a crying baby won't seem so bad after everything she's overcome.

"This pregnancy means that I have beaten cancer, met the Marine Corps standards of pull-ups, and walked across a stage in the best shape of my life," Wright said. "I won, and I am not done yet."



COURTESY PHOTO

thought immediately."

The next week Wright went to the Naval Health Clinic in Cherry Point, N.C. The doctors were concerned and sent her to see multiple doctors over the next month and a half.

On April 9, 2009, Wright received news that drastically changed her life.

"I found out I had a very aggressive form of breast cancer and it's something they call Estrogen-positive," Wright said. "Because I was pregnant, the tumor grew from very small to very large in a short period of time. Doctors told me I most likely would have died after giving birth. I looked at that, I guess, as a mixed blessing," Wright said.

A FIGHT WORTH FIGHTING

During the next 15 months, Wright endured countless sessions of chemotherapy, surgeries, and radiation. She was forced to adapt to a new routine.

Wright went through chemo treatment on Monday, was nauseous and bedridden for the rest of the week, and returned to work early in the morning the following Monday. She then worked for the next two weeks before the process began again.

Wright remembers the feelings of nausea, the burning chemicals running through her body, and the constant pain. The radiation caused all of her hair to fall out and she had no eyebrows. She kept up the Marine Corps standard. She bought wigs to



COURTESY PHOTO

Maj. Melissa Wright sits on her motorcycle during her deployment in Afghanistan in December 2011 with the Marines who motivated her to exercise again. Wright said these Marines from Camp Leatherneck's "Regional Contracting Center" were very supportive and helped her run well and get healthy again.



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.
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.
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 (760) 363-3343.

A Christmas Carol

Classic seasonal story performed live
When: 7 p.m., Fridays & Saturdays, Nov. 15 - Dec. 14
Where: Theatre 29
73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
For more information, call (760) 316-4151

Low Desert

Craig Ferguson

Comedian performs
When: 9 p.m., Friday, Nov. 8
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
For more information, call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinosort.com>

Moonwalker

The ultimate Michael Jackson Experience
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 9
Where: Spotlight 29 Casino
46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
For more information, call 866-377-6829 or visit <http://www.spotlight29.com>

Theresa Caputo

Spiritual Medium takes the stage
When: 9 p.m., Friday, Nov. 15
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>

Ne-Yo

Grammy award-winning star performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 16
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>

Sunset Cinema

Friday, Nov. 8

5 p.m. - Free Admission Saving Private Ryan, R
9 p.m. - Gravity 3-D PG
11:30 p.m. - Rush, R

Saturday, Nov. 9

10:30 a.m. - Free Admission Planes, PG
12:30 p.m. - Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 2 3-D, PG
3 p.m. - Gravity 3-D, PG-13

5 p.m. - Free Admission Platoon, R

8 p.m. - Baggage Claim, PG-13
10 p.m. - Don Jon, R

Sunday, Nov. 10

12:30 a.m. - Machete Kills, R
12:30 p.m. - Hotel Transylvania, PG
3 p.m. - Free Admission Acts of Valor, R
5:30 p.m. - Captain Phillips, PG-13
9 p.m. - Machete Kills, R

Monday, Nov. 11

1 p.m. - Don Jon, R
3:30 p.m. - Free Admission Flags of Our Fathers, R
6:30 p.m. Gravity 3-D, PG-13

Tuesday, Nov. 12

7 p.m. - Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 2 3-D, PG

Wednesday, Nov. 13

5 p.m. - Rush, R
8 p.m. - Don Jon, R

Thursday, Nov. 14

5 p.m. - Hotel Transylvania, PG
8:30 p.m. - Prisoners, R

(760) 367-3577 For Advertising

Johnny Knoxville takes his 'Jackass' show on the road



COURTESY PHOTO

NEIL POND

"Bad Grandpa"

Starring Johnny Knoxville
Directed by Jeff Tremaine
R, 92 min.

After its debut in 2000 on MTV as a half-hour series of candid-camera pranks, rude n' crude practical jokes and outrageous, knuckleheaded, often dangerous stunts, "Jackass" became a pop-cultural rocket ride for head hoax-master Johnny Knoxville and his motley crew of cutups, spawning several TV spin-offs and three movies.

Now Knoxville is back in a fourth, reprising a character that will be familiar to fans who made his franchise first a cult hit and then a much broader commercial franchise.

In "Jackass Presents: Bad Grandpa," transformed by facial prosthetics, layers of makeup, grey hair and pastel polyester pants, Knoxville, 42, plays a randy octogenarian on a cross-country road trip with his grandson. The "grandpa" character had made appearances in skits and stunts in his previous movies and on the TV series.

This movie, however, expands the typical "Jackass" format of disconnected kamikaze skits by concocting a plot throughout which Knoxville's "Irving Zisman" and his young charge, Billy (9-year-old Jackson Nicoll, terrific) spring a variety of hidden-cam pranks on unsuspecting people—just like in the previous movies and TV show. (Knoxville, one of the screenplay's six writers, reassembled his "Jackass" team of director Jeff Tremaine and producer Spike Jonze for this project.)

Just how funny—or not—you find it all will depend on how far "Jackass" antics of yesteryear tended to move the needle on your

personal laugh-o-meter. If you guffawed before at the Jackass-ery of people being surprised, shocked or angered by being prodded beyond their comfort zones, you'll probably guffaw again at these shenanigans in a funeral home, doctor's office, convenience store, bingo hall, restaurant, biker bar, wedding reception, and all-male strip club, where Knoxville's character lets it all hang out in his tighty whities (which aren't quite tight enough, as it turns out); and as Irving and Billy bring a bumping, grinding grand finale to a kiddie beauty pageant.

Be warned: Knoxville has a thing for body parts, and body functions, that you'll never, ever, see on "America's Funniest Home Videos."

So, on the other hand, if you don't think there's anything funny about an 87-year-old man who appears to get, ahem, a delicate part of his anatomy stuck in a soda vending machine, and the reactions of the people around him when he asks for their help in extracting himself—well, maybe this isn't your kind of flick.

When "Jackass" launched on TV, its format was a brash, gonzo, in-your-face update on "Candid Camera," the 1960 series that pioneered the idea of putting ordinary people in outlandish situations, then showing how they reacted. Now, more than a decade later, the idea not so brash or so gonzo, especially since Sacha Baron Cohen and his "Borat" movies have taken the idea to such scatological, wrecking-ball extremes.

Knoxville's a funny guy, willing to go a long, long way for a laugh, and this is a funny movie ... sometimes. But the gags are hit and miss; the ones that fall flat seem to be weighed down by the contrivance of the plot, which makes everything feel overly forced, especially when you see how much fun the crew seems to be having in the behind-the-scenes outtakes during the credits.

Those three minutes of pull-back-the-curtain docu-giggles suggest "Bad Grandpa" would have been better if it had dropped the whole plot charade, invited the audience in on the joke from the beginning, and let good times roll.

Ah, yes, just like the good old-fashioned, hit-and-run "Jackass" days of yore.

Looking for the right job for you?



Check the Observation Post Classified section

Flash Mob

thrills LITTLETON MESS HALL

Photos by LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

Staff members at the Combat Center's Littleton Mess Hall jumped out from behind their counters in costumes as a part of a flash mob during lunch hours Oct 30. The staff danced to Michael Jackson's, "Thriller".

The flash mob was kept a secret by the staff and caught the Marines and sailors at the mess hall by surprise. Before conducting the flash mob, the staff practiced the routine for two months. They also had a volunteer who choreographed the dance.

According to the staff of Littleton, this was the first flashmob that has taken place at one of the Combat Center's mess halls.



CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

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

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