

Operational Pause educates Marines

Cpl. Charles Santamaria
 Combat Correspondent

Whether it's in the seat of a vehicle, out in the field, on a forward operating base in Afghanistan or day-to-day life stateside, safety comes first. Twice a year, an operational pause is held for Marines and sailors aboard the Combat Center to receive classes on safety and also guard them against common mistakes that can change their lives.

During the operational pause, Headquarters Battalion hosted a series of classes at the Sunset Cinema Tuesday and Wednesday. The goal of

"I learned a lot from each one and thought the drunk driving portion had a lot of impact."

— Lance Cpl. Kristian Bandeira

the operational pause was to inform Marines of programs on base and prevent accidents by implementing safety measures taught at the forum.

"It was a pretty long set of classes," said Lance Cpl. Kristian Bandeira, administration clerk, Headquarters Battalion. "But I learned a lot from each one and I thought the drunk driving portion had a lot of impact."

A portion of the class was dedicated to the dangers of drunk driving which featured a speaker who was involved in an accident of the same nature.

"No matter what the thought process was or if anyone convinced me

See PAUSE, A6

Practicing Base Safety



See B1 for full story



CPL ALI AZIMI

A Marine with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marine Regiment, fires the M136 AT4 rocket launcher during exercises conducted by the company at Range 104, April 11.

3/4 remains technically, tactically proficient

Cpl. Ali Azimi
 Combat Correspondent

Marines crossed over the berm with their rifles in hand. They provided suppressive fire as two Marines with M136 AT4 rocket launchers followed them. The team leader checked the area behind them to make sure it was clear, and on the order, they fired the rockets. Each shot fired echoed across the range, the first as the rocket was fired and the second as it hit its target, causing sound waves to reverberate against the mountains in the distance.

Marines with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, were evaluated on their proficiency while using the M136 AT4 at Range 104, April 11. According to leadership in the company, they felt it was important to keep Marines trained in the weapon system.

"It's pretty important that Marines be able to do this without a whole lot of warning," said 1st Lt. Allan Wiltshire, platoon commander, 2nd Platoon, 3/4. "We wouldn't do this in a normal setting. It does not happen every day, but in the event that they would need to know what to do, they can fall back on this training."

To begin their training, the Marines went through the technical aspects of the munitions and then entered a dry-fire exercise. After firing a few dummy rounds, their dry-fire progressed into

live-fire. They shot the rockets at targets ranging up to 200 meters away.

"It's not something I get to do often, so when I get to I like to take advantage of that," said Cpl. Adam Ferretti, infantryman, 3/4. "It's a good feeling to know that I can defend the country with a rocket."

The AT4 is commonly used to pierce armor, but during operations in Afghanistan, Marines have used this tool in their arsenal only when needed and in a versatile manner.

"[This round] penetrates armor," Wiltshire said. "The Taliban is not currently using armor, so we use it for a hardened structure. They are able to make pretty thick mud walls and mud huts."

More than 100 Marines with the company were on the range, either to fire or as evaluators. Although, the weapon is commonly used by infantry assaultmen, every infantry Marine was evaluated on their abilities, regardless of their billet.

"These systems are organic to our unit," Ferretti said. "Being proficient is important to any mission that we are going to have to do. If the person that is designated to use the weapon goes down, someone else has got to be able to pick it up and use it."

The battalion is scheduled to be disbanded at the end of May. Their Marines will be reassigned to new units carrying on the training 3/4 has put them through to their new battalions.

"It's a good feeling to know I can defend the country with a rocket."

— Cpl. Adam Ferretti

Combat Center recognizes volunteers

Lance Cpl. Kasey Peacock
 Combat Correspondent

Jessica Arthur, family readiness officer, Marine Corps Air Ground Task Force Training Command, hosted the second Installation Volunteer Appreciation Ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, April 9.

The ceremony honored Marines, sailors and spouses who volunteer through specific units and organizations affiliated with the Combat Center.

To be recognized, volunteer coordinators with the base units and organizations submitted recognition requests to Arthur. Those volunteers were then recognized with certificates during the ceremony.

"There were over 500 people submitted for recognition, and we presented 154 to those who were

"All our volunteers ... are true patriots and I can't thank them enough."

— Col. James B. Hanlon

able to attend the ceremony today," Arthur said. "The Combat Center couldn't run as efficiently without all of the volunteers we have who donate their time. Our quality of life would be detrimentally affected if we didn't have this caliber of volunteers aboard the base."

During the ceremony, each volunteer was recognized with a certificate handed to them by Col. James B. Hanlon, Combat Center chief of staff, and behalf of Maj. Gen. David H. Berger, Combat Center Commanding General.

"Although we are only recognizing the volunteers for roughly an hour during this ceremony, their contributions deserve constant and continuous recognition," Hanlon said. "All our volunteers, whether they're service members, spouses, retirees or civilians, are true patriots and I can't thank them enough."

Aside from the base units, Combat Center organizations including Religious Ministries Directorate, Armed Services YMCA, The Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills organization, Navy Marine Corps Relief Society, American Red

See VOLUNTEER, A6



Cpl. Paul Kelley, military policeman, Provost Marshal's Office, Headquarters Battalion, braces himself during bite work drills with military working dog Cchaz during the 3rd Annual Woof Walk in Pioneertown, Calif., April 12.

Marines make first appearance at Pioneertown Woof Walk

Story and photo by **Lance Cpl. Kasey Peacock**

PIONEERTOWN, Calif. — Combat Center military policemen demonstrated the capabilities of their working dogs during the 3rd Annual Woof Walk at Pioneertown, Calif., Saturday.

The Woof Walk is an annual event designed to raise awareness for the Morongo Basin Humane Society by inviting animal lovers to participate in the walk. During the event, various contests were held as well as resource booths to get involved with the Humane Society, and demonstrations from the Committed Canine Dog Service and Marine Corps working dogs.

"It is always a great opportunity for us when we can get out into the community and demonstrate what our dogs are capable of," said Cpl. Paul Kelley, military policeman, Headquarters Battalion. "The training is always two fold. We get to come out here and put on a good demonstration for the community, and we also get more training time with the dogs. In this field repetition is important, and we are always training."

The demonstration began with basic obedience commands to reassure the public that the dogs are well trained. It continued with a basic obstacle course to show the importance of physical fitness for the dog and the handler.

The final part of the demonstration displayed the dogs bite work

See WOOF WALK, A6



CPL ALI AZIMI

Car Show brings community together

Cpl. Ali Azimi
 Combat Correspondent

Car and motorcycle lovers have always had a bond between one another. They share a love for the mechanical marvels they own and maintain. The Combat Center brought these people together for a day to share their passion.

The first Chief's Show and Shine Car Show was held at Hashmark's Staff Noncommissioned Officer Club's parking lot Saturday. The show brought together not only a mix of car and motorcycle enthusiasts, but a taste of old and new designs.

According to Col. James B. Hanlon, Combat Center chief of staff, his love for cars is what inspired the idea of the car show.

More than 30 Combat Center service members and community members entered the car show, which was judged by the audience as they examined the vehicles and entered

their favorites on their ballots.

The show was filled with a wide range of cars and bikes, from old muscle cars to shining corvettes and customized Harley Davidsons. But whatever their choice of vehicle, they were brought together by their common bond.

Robert C. Jennings, a Texas native, is a retired master sergeant with more than 20 years of service under his belt and '72 Chevelle convertible in his garage.

His love for cars started at an early age. Jennings took the drivers education course when he was 14 years old and received his license. His first car was an old '56 Chevy. His love for cars continued after he joined the Marine Corps and also connected him to his fellow Marines.

"I've been stationed at several stations and there are always a group of Marines that are into trucks, cars, or motorcycles," Jennings said. "We would get together after duty hours,

See CAR SHOW, A6

Condor Elementary students receive honorary awards

Story and photo by **Lance Cpl. Kasey Peacock**

Condor Elementary School staff honored students kindergarten through sixth grade with performance and achievement awards during a ceremony at the school aboard the Combat Center, April 11.

Awards are presented to the students every trimester, and range from various accomplishments including honor roll, writing, perfect attendance, personal success, respect and more.

Along with the certificates, students also received gift cards to various diners in the Morongo Basin.

"My son received an award for honor roll and the Really Outstanding Condor Kid (ROCK) award," said Gunnery Sgt. David Edger, transportation section chief, Marine Corps Logistics Operations Group. "I'm just really proud of him because I know how hard he works. He always pushes 100 percent, doesn't let anything get him down, and strives to accomplish great things."

As the awards are presented every trimester, the students who don't receive awards have time to assess what they need to work on, and strive to achieve excellence for the next term.

"I set a goal for myself to get on the honor roll and I achieved that today," said Julian Chenier, 11. "I worked really hard on my own and also had a lot of help from my family. My goal for the next semester is to be on the high honor roll, and achieve straight A's."

The trimester awards, which are given three times during the school year, are a good way to help teachers motivate their students to achieve higher academic and behavioral goals, according to Paul Gattuso, principal, Condor Elementary School.

"Our students here face unique challenges with parents sometimes being deployed,"

Gattuso said. "On top of everything they may be going through at home, it shows true resiliency and adaptability on their part to earn these achievements."

The school prides itself on its students, and describes them as 'condorific', which is a word created to describe their unique abilities and drive to become better people.

With the final trimester underway, students have one last opportunity this year to set the bar high, and achieve their goals.



Paul Gattuso, principal, Condor Elementary School, awards Kendrick Hudson, 12, with a People Respecting Others award during a ceremony at the school, April 11. "Our students here face unique challenges with parents sometimes being deployed," Gattuso said. "On top of everything they may be going through at home, it shows true resiliency and adaptability on their part to earn these achievements."



Advertising Consolidated Casting Tour coming to Combat Center

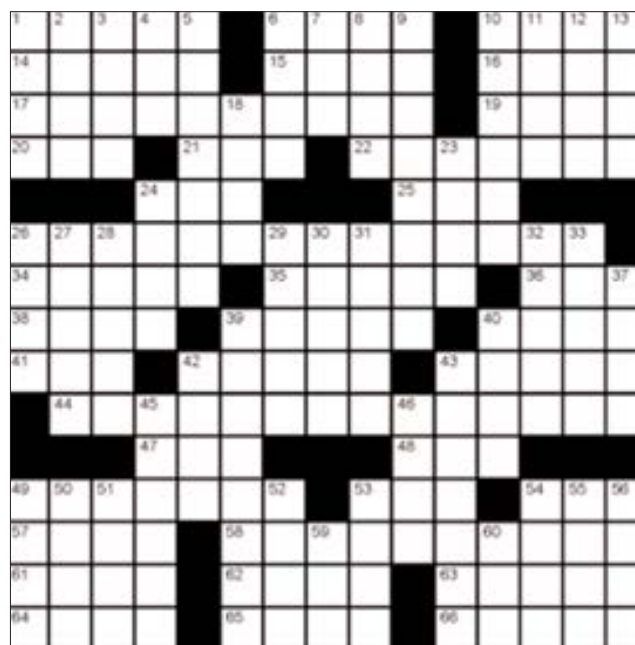
Marine Corps Recruiting Command is seeking quality Marines of all ranks, military occupational specialties, ethnicity, gender and background whom will best represent the face of the Marine Corps to the nation. Furthermore, MCRC is requesting the support of local unit commanders to find the most qualified and diverse group of Marines and allow their participation. The intent of the on-site casting is to conduct a pre-screening of Marines who are interested in participating in advertising projects. This will be held at the MCX 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. April 25. If a Marine is selected by MCRC for a particular advertisement, a MARADMIN will be released requesting approval from their commands as well as instructions for completing the command screening form. For more information, contact Capt. Wesley Jagoe (703) 432-9434/ (703) 432-9033 or via email at wesley.jagoe@marines.usmc.mil. Tour information, pre-screening forms, casting guide and point of contacts can also be found on www.mcrf.marines.mil/casting.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

<p style="text-align: center;">HAYLEE RAE GRANADOS Born on: March 15, 2014 Born to: Gerardo and Rachel Granados</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LILY ANN OLSON Born on: March 16, 2014 Born to: Donald and Meghan Olson</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PEYTON AVERY PROSE Born on: March 19, 2014 Born to: Nathaniel and Ashley Prose</p> <p style="text-align: center;">JETHRO DOUGLAS COLLINS Born on: March 26, 2014 Born to: Douglas and Madison Collins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BERKLEY RUTH HORNBAKER Born on: March 26, 2014 Born to: Zach and Christen Hornbaker</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOLA RAE WAGNER Born on: March 29, 2014 Born to: Ryan and Danielle Wagner</p>
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“BREAKFAST TABLE”

- Across**
- 1 State whose capital is Boise
 - 6 Social slight
 - 10 Latest crazes
 - 14 Scary creature
 - 15 South American nation whose capital is Lima
 - 16 One of the Great Lakes
 - 17 They're dyed in the springtime
 - 19 Bird that's a symbol of peace
 - 20 ___-cones
 - 21 Down in the dumps
 - 22 Pushed (aside)
 - 24 Pig's place
 - 25 Put on TV
 - 26 Totally crushed
 - 34 Person who goes on yelp.com, e.g.
 - 35 Tempts
 - 36 Actress ___ Marie Saint
 - 38 From the top
 - 39 Military clothes, for short
 - 40 Use scissors
 - 41 Greek letter
 - 42 Leaps
 - 43 Flair
 - 44 "Let's raise our glasses..."
 - 47 Computer key
 - 48 Attorney's field
 - 49 Winning game after game
- Down**
- 53 Quick punch
 - 54 ___-mo camera
 - 57 Inflict upon
 - 58 Actor with a "six degrees" game named for him
 - 61 ___ Office (president's workplace)
 - 62 Dutch cheese
 - 63 Use one end of a pencil
 - 64 Politician ___ Paul
 - 65 Not daughters
 - 66 Car body flaws
 - 1 "Beware the ___ of March"
 - 2 James of "Rebel Without a Cause"
 - 3 "Are not!" retort
 - 4 Burning
 - 5 Not very good, like a movie or hotel
 - 6 Went quickly
 - 7 Positive's opposite: abbr.
 - 8 Desire
 - 9 Parts of some city roads
 - 10 Indiana Jones's hat
 - 11 Three in ___
 - 12 Go headfirst into the water
 - 13 Future flower
 - 18 Sunbeams
 - 23 Some pens or lighters



- 24 Gumbo or goulash
- 26 College org.
- 27 Porch, like the one on "The Golden Girls"
- 28 Devoured
- 29 San Antonio's most famous building
- 30 Gas station features
- 31 Came up
- 32 African nation whose capital is Nairobi
- 33 Bad things
- 37 In ___ (sulking)
- 39 Treats with icing
- 40 Store (away)
- 42 "No way, ___!"
- 43 Pierced
- 45 Said again, like astory
- 46 Actor Thicke
- 49 Scent
- 50 Astronomical wonder
- 51 ___ impasse (not moving)
- 52 Try again with
- 53 Slim ___
- 54 Look over quickly
- 55 Show set on an island
- 56 Small bills
- 59 President Martin ___ Buren
- 60 "We ___ Family"

See answers on page A7

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	8							9

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- 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.

- In Twentynine Palms:**
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 - 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

Daniel MULVIHILL

Chicago, Ill. tactical safety specialist, 7th Marine Regiment, 67



>**My neighborhood in Chicago** wasn't the best place to be, even back in the 1950s. I joined the Marine Corps in June of 1964 because I knew it would benefit me to get out of Chicago. At the time, the Marine Corps was a safer place to be than inner-city Chicago.

>**I signed up and became** a radio operator. It was funny because I finished basic training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, and then moved a few buildings down for communications school.

>**My first unit was** 1st Reconnaissance Battalion. It was a scary thought at first. I wanted to be a grunt, but not a super grunt.

>**In 1965, we found out** we were heading to Vietnam. Pretty much the whole 1st Marine Division was packing up and heading to Vietnam at the time. I remember it was close to 25 ships that picked us all up in Long Beach, Calif., and shipped us off.

>**I had only done** three or four patrols before me and my guys ended up in the battle for our lives. 18 of us went in, 12 of us survived. Our platoon sergeant, Jimmie Howard, received the Medal of Honor, four of our guys received Navy Crosses, and 13 of us received Silver Stars.

>**One of our guys** ended up writing a book on the battle called Hill 488. It was interesting for me to read because everyone has a different perspective on combat. Everyone sees it in a different way.

>**I tried to live my life** after that in honor of the ones that didn't make it out with us. I always felt guilty that I survived and they didn't. I have learned to live with it, and have tried my best to be a respectable person.

>**In 1968, I ended** up getting out of the Marine Corps and pursuing a career. After doing that for about 15 years, I was 38 years old when I decided I wanted to get back into the Marine Corps.

>**Me and my wife** used to joke about me getting back into the Marine Corps, but I

never really thought it would happen. I got around to talking to a recruiter and I ended up back in the Marine Corps as a 38-year-old lance corporal.

>**A lot had changed** in the 17 years I was out, but a lot was the same as well. The second time around I ended up getting into recruiting and was able to work out of Chicago.

>**I enjoyed recruiting.** I was recruiting all kinds of different people including my own son.

>**After recruiting for** many years, I wanted to get back to the fleet. When I got back, I was with 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and it wasn't long before I realized my age was catching up with me. I was undergoing knee and shoulder surgery, and ended up transferring and becoming the Marine Liaison at the Naval Hospital on base.

>**While I was there** I did several different things. My most memorable was working deceased affairs. It was a great honor for me to put Marines back in their uniform for their last trip home after paying the ultimate sacrifice.

>**I ended up retiring** from the Marine Corps and continued working at the Naval Hospital as a Department of Defense employee.

>**In 2005 my family** was hit pretty hard with a tragedy. My only son was killed in a vehicle accident on Interstate 15. He was rear-ended by a woman who was speeding and not paying attention.

>**After that incident** I couldn't work around dead bodies at the hospital anymore, so I ended up filling the safety position with 7th Marine Regiment.

>**During that time, my** wife Kathleen was my rock. She has always supported me being a Marine, and gives back to the Marines herself working at the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital.

>**What happened to my son** has greatly impacted my passion and reasoning for getting into safety. I try extremely hard to express to these Marines and sailors here the importance of safety. If I can get at least one Marine to turn the cellphone off when he is driving, or get Marines to have a plan when they are going out, I feel like I'm making a difference.

>**I get teased a lot** about my age and get the question, 'Are you going to retire?' a lot. To me, it reverts back to Vietnam. I survived that, and I owe it to Marines who didn't. I would rather be here doing my best to stress the importance of safety to these Marines, than be home sitting around.

MULVIHILL IS A RETIRED MARINE WORKING AS THE SAFETY SPECIALIST WITH 7TH MARINE REGIMENT. HE IS A VIETNAM WAR VETERAN WHO EARNED A SILVER STAR DURING A BATTLE THAT MADE HIM AND HIS COMPANY KNOWN AS THE MOST HIGHLY DECORATED SMALL UNIT IN THE HISTORY OF THE MILITARY.

Interviewed and photographed by Lance Cpl. Kasey Peacock April 16, 2014



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

Night of music features Combat Center Color Guard

Story and photo by
Cpl. Ali Azimi



Marines with the Combat Center Color Guard right face during a symphony at the University of Redlands April 12. The symphony was held in honor of service members and the upcoming 70th Anniversary of the landing at Normandy, also known as D-Day.

REDLANDS, Calif. – June marks 70 years since the Normandy landing during World War II. Also known as D-Day, it was a decisive battle during the war that struck a blow to German forces, which they never recovered from. To pay tribute to the thousands of lives lost during the landing, the University of Redlands held a symphony to honor service members and the anniversary.

The Combat Center Color Guard was featured during the symphony held at the university to honor the service members, April 12.

“This is the final concert of our 2013-1014 season,” said Paul Ideker, president, Redlands Symphony Association. “We are very pleased to be a part of this very important celebration of an important part of our history.”

More than 1,000 people stood as the color guard entered the auditorium. The Marines were first

introduced then walked in step in front of the audience. As the first note of the national anthem was played, the Marine Corps colors were slightly lowered to allow the United States flag to fly higher to

“We thought this would be a wonderful time to say thank you to the armed forces.”

– Jon Robertson

signify the Marine Corps’ allegiance to this nation.

After the ceremony, the Marines were then invited to stay for the performance by the Redlands Symphony. The music was specially chosen to fit the theme.

“All of the music is depicting what occurred during World War II,” said Jon Robertson, music director and conductor, Redlands Symphony. “We thought this would be a wonderful time to say thank you to the armed forces who sacrifice so that life can be better for us.”

Approximately 80 musicians played song to commemorate the sacrifices made by service members of that era.

“It’s a very sobering kind of thing,” Robertson said. “It’s not about joy or sadness, its about gratitude, about being thankful. That’s a very wonderful emotion because it allows you to look at the past and also look at the future.”

With the music of the orchestra still lingering in the air, the Marines left the concert with the appreciation and thanks of those around them.

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CDC hosts Superhero Support Group event



PHOTOS BY CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

[Above] Jovani Deleonguerrero, 7, son of Staff Sgt. Rodney Deleonguerrero, explains to the crowd why he's tired of having super powers during the Superhero Support Group skit hosted at the Child Development Center, Wednesday. The event not only presented a skit performed by the children, but also artwork the children created together throughout the year.

[Below] Maj. Gen. David H. Berger, Combat Center Commanding General, observes models of art made of marshmallows and uncooked pasta that were done by children who attend CDC programs during the Superhero Support Group event hosted at the CDC, Wednesday. The event was part of a month-long celebration known as Month of the Military Child.



Cpl. Charles Santamaria
Combat Correspondent

The Child Development Center's Youth and Teens program hosted the Superhero Support Group event in the Mustang Room of their main building, Wednesday. The event was part of a month-long celebration known as Month of the Military Child.

The scene opened with a group of superheroes who wouldn't normally be in the same room together. A boy with super speed, a girl with super strength, another who could fly, and two heroes who had the abilities of a cat and dog, all in a room with a doctor who could relieve them of their 'burden,' which in this skit, was their powers themselves. Children played the roles of people who were fed up with having their super powers due to the frustration of never being appreciated for the good they do.

Participants took the roles of superheroes who were considering getting rid of their powers. The skit also explored the stresses of being a superhero and what exactly defines someone as a hero.

"The theme of our piece for the Month of the Military Child celebration was art and creativity," said Monica Romero, program manager, Youth and Teen, CDC. "The focus of the event was to celebrate the month-long celebra-

What we're doing isn't just a program to do homework after school. We're doing activities that are enriching children's minds and experiences."

— Monica Romero

tion, invite the parents, school district and the community to highlight all the things that we do here at the CDC."

The event also featured an intermission which allowed the viewers to step into another room and view artwork done by the students throughout the year.

"It's important for people to see that what we're doing isn't just a program to do homework after school. We're doing activities that are enriching children's minds and experiences," Romero said. "The skit was a way to expose the children to the art of theatre which is remembering lines of dialogue and playing the role of the characters portrayed. We also staged some of the artwork the children made throughout the year to showcase what they made together."

Maj. Gen. David H. Berger, Combat Center Commanding General, also observed the children's artwork and watched the skit performed by the youth.

The banter between the characters developed into a conversation of what a hero is and how just having an extraordinary power does not make a person one. The doctor in the skit then experienced who heroes were, such as firefighter, police officers, teachers and service members in the military.

"I'm very grateful that he took time out of his schedule to come see what we do and support the positive things we're doing with the children. It shows that he knows we're here and that it's important," said Axel Tayson, program assistant, Youth and Teen, CDC. "The kids rocked the house and I couldn't be more proud of them for putting on such a great show."

Opening events like this to the school district allows for more insight on what the CDC does for children and opportunities where both entities could work together to create a continuity of education.

"This is what I love to do," Tayson said. "When the parents see what their kids are accomplishing, it gives them peace-of-mind because they know that we are doing positive things with a child's time here."

The CDC has been hosting events during the month of April in honor of military children. The Youth and Teen programs appreciate military children every day with what they do with the kids afterschool.

"We are also a family here," Romero said. "The kids build relationships with the staff and their peers in a place where they come to every day and it gives them a sense of belonging and that's important all year long."

Relax with the paper

Wednesdays and
Saturdays
with the Hi-Desert Star
Thursdays with
The Desert Trail
Fridays with
The Observation Post



Month of the Military Child

VOLUNTEER, from A1



LANCE CPL. KASEY PEACOCK

Tina Martinez, volunteer, shakes hands with Col. James B. Hanlon, Combat Center chief of staff, while receiving an award during the second Installation Volunteer Appreciation Ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, April 9.

Cross and Retired Activities Office were also recognized for their volunteer efforts.

“It feels nice to be recognized, even though I don’t volunteer to be acknowledged,” said Kristina Nanninga, L.I.N.K.S volunteer. “Giving back is a great feeling. It drives me to want to be a better person, and makes my husband proud.”

After the ceremony, food and beverages were provided to all of the volunteers and their guests, allowing time to reflect on all they have given back to the Combat Center community.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact your unit’s FRO for more information on getting involved and giving back to those who serve.

CAR SHOW, from A1

on the weekends and work on each other’s cars.”

Years after his retirement, this connection between him and car lovers continued. He entered his ’72 Chevelle into the car show and in the process met many like-minded car lovers.

Under a canopy at a table filled with families, the chief of staff sat down across from Jennings. A conversation was sparked between the two strangers as two motorcyclists roared their engines in the background. The conversation between the two was fluid. It transitioned between the Corps and their vehicles. Coincidentally, Hanlon, who had entered his ’71 Plymouth Roadrunner, was parked only two spots away from Jennings’ Chevelle.

“I like old cars. I like to work on them; I like to drive them and I like to hang out with other car folks,” Hanlon said. “I like hanging out with people who have pride and joy working on cars, new and old,

pristine and needing work.”

The spectacle of shining motor vehicles not only brought out car and bike lovers, but families as well. In addition to the many cars and bikes, the parking lot also hosted a stage with live music by Walla, concession stands, a rock-climbing wall, moon bounces, raffles and contests for families to enjoy.

Kids transitioned from eating snow cones to climbing a tank and then aweing in front of Ford Mustangs, Corvettes and Harley Davidsons.

“Since this was the first time we’ve done this, we wanted to build an event around it,” said Kathryn Crank, marketing director, Marine Corps Community Services. “It’s a great opportunity for the Marines and the community to come together.”

Following the Chief’s S&S Car Show is the Commanding General’s Car and Bike show scheduled for September, once again bringing together the car and bike lovers of the community.

WOOF WALK, from A1



LANCE CPL. KASEY PEACOCK

Cpl. Paul Kelley, military policeman, Provost Marshal’s Office, Headquarters Battalion, is removed from a vehicle by military working dog Cchaz during a demonstration at the 3rd Annual Woof Walk in Pioneertown, Calif., April 12.

capabilities. The Marines equipped themselves with bite suits, and demonstrated various circumstances to the audience where the dogs would be needed to subdue a suspect.

“These dogs are truly fantastic,” said Daryll Thomann, retired K-9 police officer. “A lot of people don’t know the capabilities of these dogs and the hard work that goes into training them. I really enjoyed seeing the Marines put on the show.”

While the event is open to the public, this rendition was the first time Marines were invited to be a part of it.

90% of the adopted animals find new homes with Combat Center Marines and sailors, according to Mimi Mitz, presi-

dent, Morongo Basin Humane Society.

“We wanted to invite them out here to do the demonstration to show our appreciation for what they do, as well as thank them for providing homes for our rescued pets,” Mitz said.

After the demonstration, Marines allowed the audience to wear various pieces of the bite gear to give them a better understanding of the weight and consistency of the gear.

“I think having the Marines here was a big hit with this event,” Mitz said. It was the first time we invited them out, and the people really enjoyed their demonstration. We look forward to having the Marines out here again next year.”

PAUSE, from A1

to drive that night, ultimately, it was my decision and it was a mistake,” said Kelly Narowski, safety speaker and presenter. “I tell my story to prevent someone else from making the same mistake as I did.”

Narowski also covered other examples that featured celebrities and athletes who were involved in drunk driving incidents. She expanded upon all aspects of driving safety and also went over the effects of brain and spinal injuries. The classes as a whole covered many aspects of a Marine’s life and how to be safe and prevent poor decisions.

“Each class had its own focus and it never got too dull because the topics were different,” Bandeira said. “I found out a bit more about what other Marines have gone through in certain situations and I feel a little safer know-

ing what programs are available to me.”

The classes also went into detail about topics such as hazing, sexual assault prevention and response, domestic violence, equal opportunity, operational security, traumatic brain injuries, family child and development services, and more information for Marines to be better equipped to deal with an array of dilemmas that may occur. Speakers also understood the importance of what they were saying.

“As United States Marines you stand for what’s right in the world,” Narowski said. “I want you all to love yourself enough to make the right decision and keep yourselves, fellow Marines and others safe.”


Narowski’s true story of how drunk driving affected her life, further highlighted the importance of her message by showing how a bad, split second decision can change someone’s life forever.


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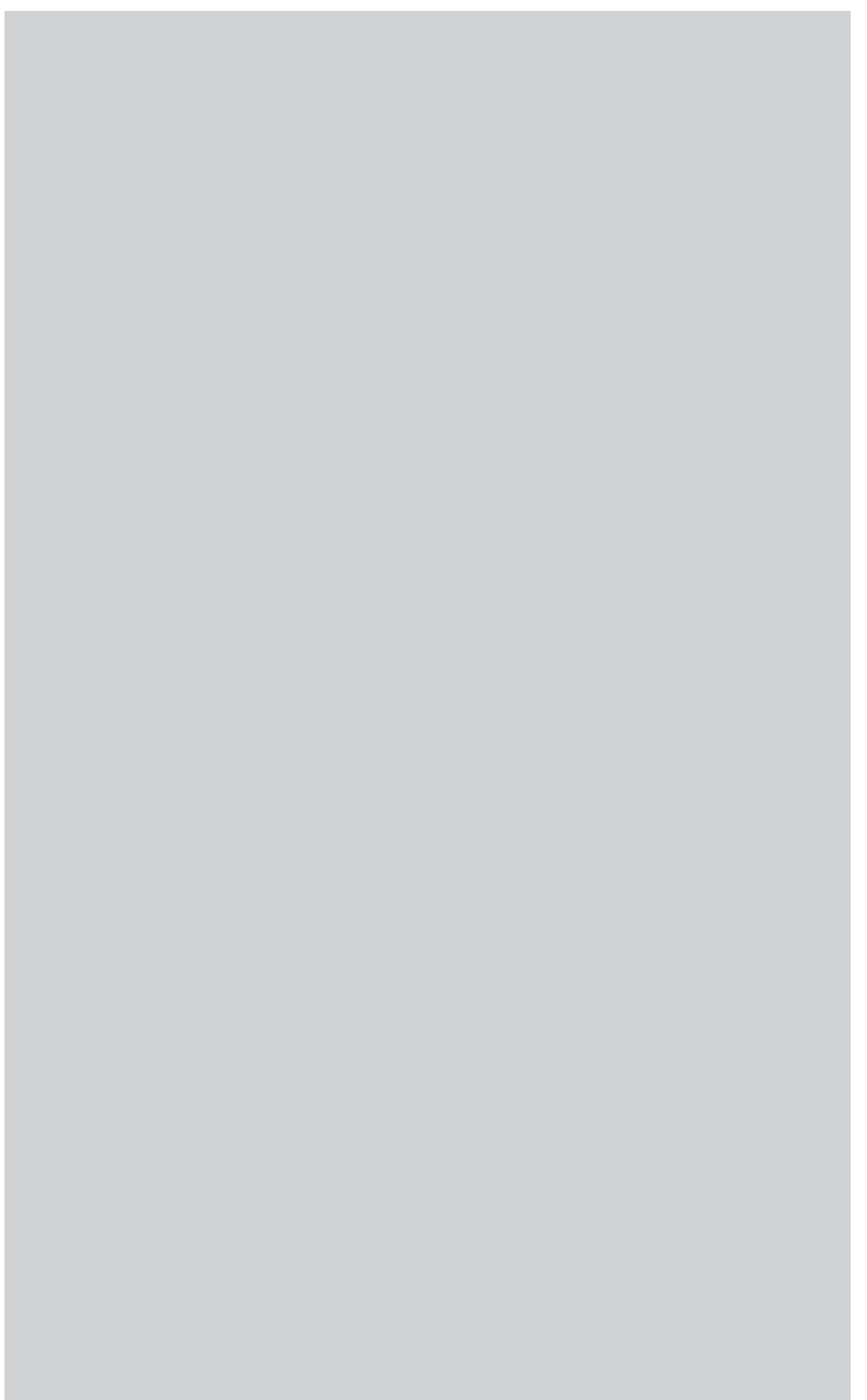
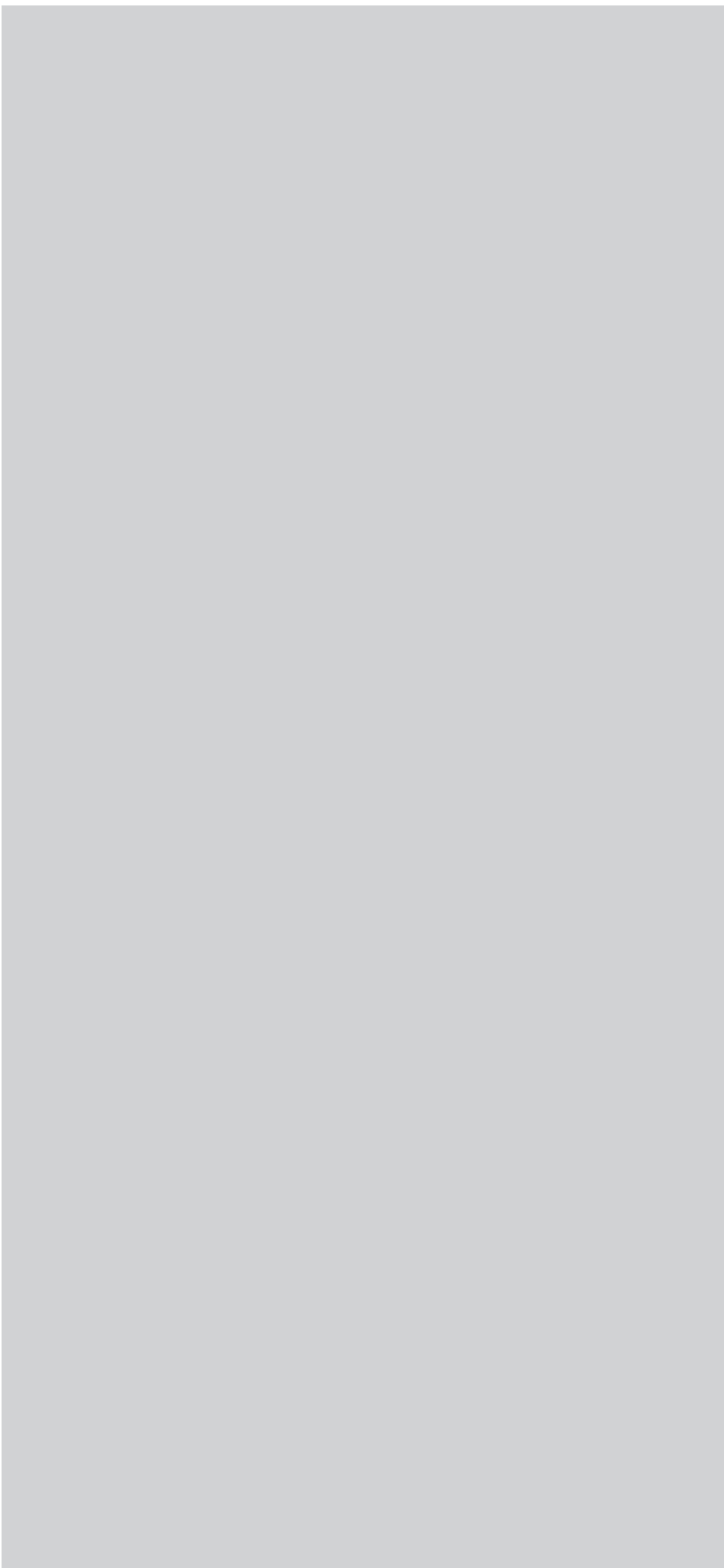
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Jane Wayne Day

Spouse event offers look at Marine life

Story and photos by **Cpl. Charles Santamaria**

A group of participants lined up in front of the rope climb portion of an obstacle course ready to attempt to reach the top. A participant nervously stepped to the obstacle as she gripped the rope with both hands and prepares for the challenge. She leaps from the ground and shoots her hand up to grip the rope again. Her leg vigorously swung in a circle as she wrapped the excess rope around her ankle and presses on the rope with the opposite foot to stop from sliding. Suddenly she froze before furthering her climb and there was silence. A Marine jumped onto the rope next to her's and climbed to equal height to talk her through the next steps to continue. The Marine was her husband and the climber was a participant in 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment's Jane Wayne Day, which began at the Obstacle Course April 11.

The event is designed for Marines and their spouses to spend a day together, experiencing a snapshot of what units do for training. 2/7's Jane Wayne Day consisted of a run through the obstacle course, a course of fire on a shooting range, a trip to the Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer, and a presentation of vehicles used by the Marine Corps today.

"I really appreciated all the work the family readiness officer and the command put into making today happen, because I know they put a lot of work into it," said Sharon Berg, wife of Lance Cpl. Phillip Berg, machine gunner, 2/7. "I had a great time with the obstacle course and I couldn't wait to shoot."

Approximately 75 participants, including Marines, spouses and family members, participated in the day-long event as a way to spend time with family and give them a taste of what Marines do.

"The goal of the event was to keep every part of it fresh and interesting so that family members can experience what their loved ones do," said Diane Durden, family readiness officer, 2/7. "Putting on a flak and Kevlar, they can do that at home, but going to the range, being in the environment, even just eating the same military rations a Marine would in the field, gives them just a little bit more of an understanding."

Some spouses used the day not only to experience a piece of the Marine



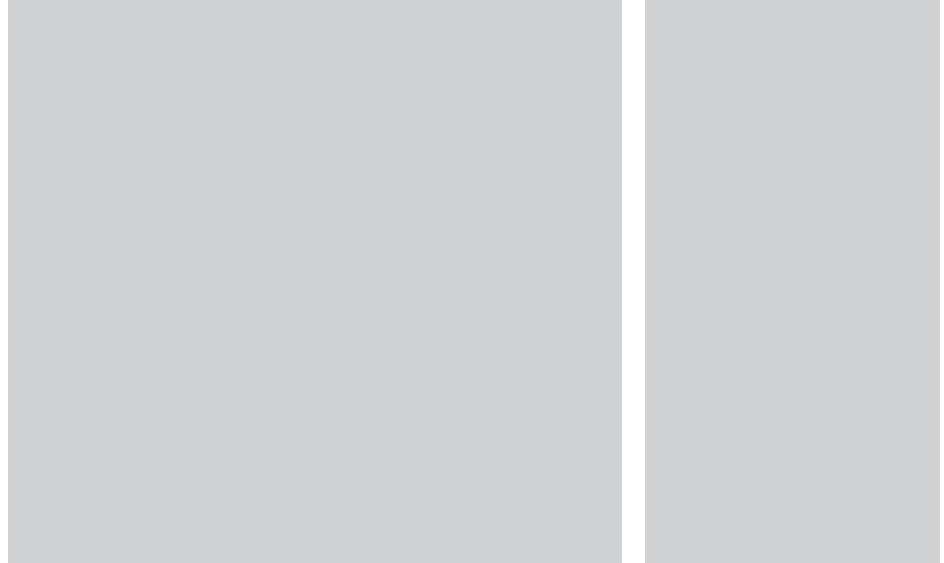
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SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

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

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



[Above] Staff Sgt. David Romero, infantry unit leader, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, shows his wife, Nataly Romero, the proper technique for climbing a rope on the obstacle course during 2/7's Jane Wayne Day, April 11.

[Below] Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ron Forristal, battalion gunner, 2/7, gives family members an orientation of the combat optics used for the M16 and M4 rifle during 2/7's Jane Wayne Day, April 11.



Corps, but to show their loved ones what they can do. "I'm really into fitness so the obstacle course was enjoyable for me," Berg said. "It was also an opportunity to try and impress my husband even if he was there when I needed his help on each obstacle."

Marines volunteering to help organize the events see the value of families and spouses participating in the small pieces of their Marine's day-to-day life.

"Events like this are good for wives and families to see what Marines do and it's great because even doing a small part of what we do creates moments they can spend together," said Pfc. Wilbert Morales, rifleman, 2/7.

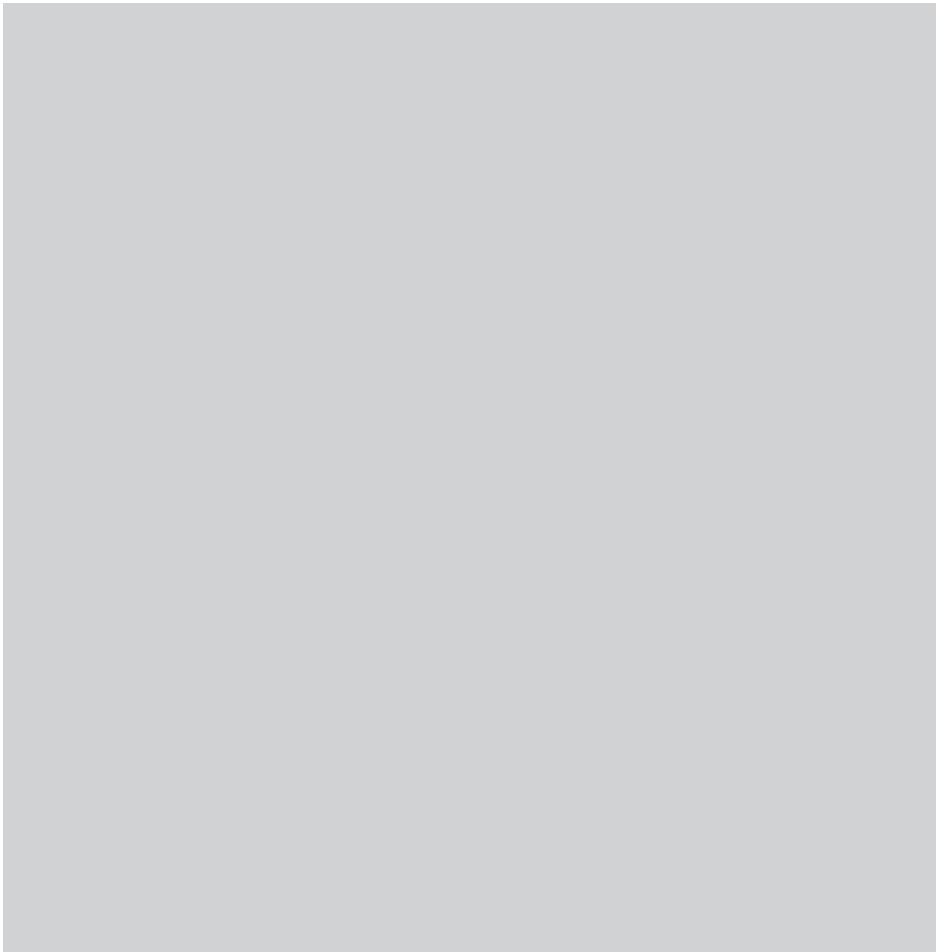
At the end of the day, all participants were awarded certificates of completion signifying what family members and spouses had accomplished.

"Each Jane Wayne Day will be new and different," Durden said. "2/7 has a great group of Marines and family members who are very close. I think the most important part of today is families having fun and reinforcing the support system we want to help build."

[Left] Sgt. Dale O'Connor, machine gunner, 2/7, coaches Katherine Dale on a course of fire during 2/7's Jane Wayne Day, April 11. Approximately 75 Marines, spouses and family members participated in the day-long event.

LOOKING
for local
entertainment?

See page B2 for our
LIBERTY CALL
section





Combat Center battles war on traffic safety

Fifty stars and 13 stripes were carefully folded and a single bugle somberly bellowed "Taps" across the Saints Peter and Paul Cemetery in Springfield, Pa. A Marine handed the nation's colors, folded in to a neat triangle, to Christina Formosa. As she clutched it tight to her chest, she placed her hand among the red, white and yellow flowers, atop the coffin of her husband, Master Gunnery Sgt. Nick Formosa and after 28 years of marriage, she bid her final farewell to the love of her life and a Marine whose life was taken too soon.

Story by **Cpl. Lauren A. Kurkimillis**

Formosa ran the Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer aboard the Combat Center, which aided in the safety of Marines conducting convoys while deployed to combat zones in the Middle East, and was developing its program of instruction, when his life was tragically ended by a man whom he had never met on July 27, 2007. While riding his motor cycle down Highway 62, a man, who was under the influence of methamphetamines, veered his pickup truck across three lanes and struck Formosa. In an instant, a man who dedicated his life to his family and to the Corps was gone.

"It was a pretty horrific thing," said Bob Piirainen, traffic safety manager, Combat Center Safety Office, "The damage to Nick's bike was so bad that the only way to recognize it was by the two flags he flew on the back; the Marine Corps and the Prisoner of War flags."

Piirainen rode motorcycles with Formosa, and just like all those who ride together, they were bound by the unspoken fraternity of motorcyclists everywhere.

"It's tough when we lose one of (our own)," Piirainen said. "Whether it's by their own doing or at the hand of somebody else, when one of us goes, it's truly a tragedy. It really hits home."

Piirainen has worked for the Combat Center's Safety Office for the past 18 years, and has 36 years of experience as a motorcycle rider. The loss of Formosa hit home not only because of their shared friendship, but because Piirainen and his colleagues at base safety are dedicated professionals, who are fiercely passionate about what they do for those aboard the Combat Center. For the staff of the Combat Center Safety Office and the command of each and every unit aboard the installation, the safety of the Marines, sailors and civilians is paramount and even one life lost is one life too many. The safety office and military leadership are pushing the envelope with regard to safety training aboard the base by not only offering numerous training programs but also a high standard of quality for the training offered.

Within the past five years, the Combat Center's Safety Office has received more than 11 awards and special recognitions from the National Safety Council, the California Motorcyclist Safety Program and the Commander in Chief. This is for the multiple areas of training they provide, to include their traffic safety programs.

"We have attacked traffic safety aboard (the Combat Center)," said Dave Horn, safety director, Combat Center Safety Office. "(Combat Center Base) Safety identified the necessity for heightened training with regard to traffic safety and the command has fully supported it."

Combat Center safety identified the necessity for heightened training with regard to traffic safety and the command has fully supported it."

— Dave Horn

The safety office offers a wide variety of traffic and motor vehicle safety classes to the Marines and sailors aboard the Combat Center. Some are mandated and some are offered as additional training opportunities.

The Alive at 25 Defensive Driving Course is required by all military personnel under the age of 26 and must be taken within the first 60 days of duty at Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif. This training establishes and reinforces a positive attitude towards driving, clarifies individual responsibility, and educates Marines on the correct responses of routine and emergency driving situations.

The Basic Rider Course is designed to provide new motorcycle riders with the basic principles and skills of riding necessary to obtain a motorcycle endorsement on their state of California operator's permit or their own state operator's permit, and is required for all Marines and sailors who plan to purchase or operate a motorcycle, regardless of their intent to register the motorcycle on base.

"I oversee and teach the Basic Rider Course, Advanced Rider Course, Dirt Bike Course, (All-Terrain Vehicle) course and the Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Course," Piirainen said. "I also oversee the driver-improvement course, also known as Alive at 25, the remedial driver's course, for those who get tickets on base or in town, and the off-duty recreation program."

Since 2009, the Combat Center's Safety Office has trained approximately 27,100 personnel in the Alive at 25 Course and 2,325 personnel in the Basic Rider Course.

"It's not that we just teach the class and then go home," Piirainen said. "We do this because we love it."

Outside of these scheduled courses, Piirainen fits in time to discuss safety with units that have recently returned home from deployment.

Since 2009, the safety office has briefed 8,344 personnel on vehicle and motorcycle safety, 8,985 personnel during safety stand-downs, and 4,676 personnel during Back in the Saddle Training.

"The things I coach Marines on are the dangers of drinking and driving but not just them drinking and driving, but how to defend against other people who are out there drinking and driving," Piirainen said. "If they are on their cell phone or distracted in any other way, they can easily get hit or killed. We help them to understand that they are held accountable on the base just as much as off the base. The biggest thing I try to convey is that they are touchable outside the gate."

On numerous occasions, in times of need, Piirainen has invited Marines to come over and has educated them on how to make repairs to their bikes and coach them on how to keep their bikes in good shape.

"When I do that, I can talk to them, motorcycle rider to motorcycle rider and try to get them to understand exactly what is at risk when they are out there on the road," Piirainen said.

The staff of the Combat Center Safety Office and the leaders of each command have dedicated their time, energy and passion toward keeping the Marines and sailors of the Combat Center safe by empowering them with knowledge and resources, Horn said.

"Bottom line, we can't hold the hand of every Marine out there driving, and we can't protect them from the negligence and irresponsibility of other drivers," Piirainen said. "What we can do is teach them how to be defensive drivers and how to make the right decisions that could keep them alive."



COURTESY PHOTO



COURTESY PHOTO

[Top] Master Gunnery Sgt. Nick Formosa lost his life July 27, 2007, when he was riding his motorcycle down Highway 62 and was struck by another driver. In an instant, a man who dedicated his life to his family and to the Corps was gone.

[Above] Christina Formosa, wife of Master Gunnery Sgt. Nick Formosa, bids her final farewell to her husband of 28 years at Saints. Peter and Paul Cemetery in Springfield, Pa., following his untimely death in 2007.

[Below] Marines and friends remember Master Gunnery Sgt. Nick Formosa through a memorial on Highway 62. Formosa's tragic death reiterated the importance of traffic safety programs aboard the Combat Center.



CPL. LAUREN A. KURKIMILLIS

Liberty Call



Combat Center Events

La Quinta Country Club Easter Feast

La Quinta Country Club is hosting Marine families for an Easter feast. Transportation will be provided. Register at mccs29palms.com.

When: April 20

Where: La Quinta Country Club

For more information, call 830-5086

Family & Marine Safety Fair

This informational event will help increase safety awareness of military families. K-9 demonstrations can be seen, do-it-yourself child ID kits and more.

When: April 28

Where: MCX and PMCU Bank Parking Lot

For more information, call 830-5086

We Salute You Celebration

This family-friendly concert will feature artists Brett Eldridge, Craig Morgan and Shuggah Pies. Food concessions and other activities will be available on site.

When: May 17

Where: Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field

For more information, call 830-5086

Coping with Work and Family Stress

This workshop will cover a wide range of active coping skills and ways to make better use of social networks.

Where: Bldg. 1530, Classroom 303

When: Tues. 2 - 3:30 p.m. and Thurs. 9 - 10:30 a.m.

For more information, call 830-5035

For more events, visit <http://www.mccs29palms.com>

Sunset Cinema

Friday, April 18

3 p.m. — **Free Admission** Puss in Boots, PG

4:30 p.m. — **Free Admission** The Dark Knight Rises, PG-13

8 p.m. — Mr Peabody and Sherman 3-D, PG

10 p.m. — 300: Rise of an Empire, R

12:30 a.m. — 3 Days to Kill, PG-13

Saturday, April 19

10 a.m. — **Free Admission** Planes, PG

12:30 p.m. — Muppets Most Wanted, PG

3 p.m. — Tyler Perry's Single Mom's Club, PG-13

5:30 p.m. — 3 Days to Kill, PG-13

8:30 p.m. — Need for Speed, PG-13

11:30 p.m. — Divergent, PG-13

Sunday, April 20

12 p.m. — Son of God, PG-13

3 p.m. — Mr. Peabody and Sherman 3-D, PG

5:30 p.m. — Need for Speed 3-D, PG-13

8:30 p.m. — Divergent, PG-13

Monday, April 21

12 p.m. — **Free Admission** The Nut Job, PG

2 p.m. — **Free Admission** The Book Thief, PG-13

4:30 p.m. — **Free Admission** Iron Man 3, PG-13

7 p.m. — 300: Rise of an Empire, R

Tuesday, April 22

4:30 p.m. — **Free Admission** The Wolverine, PG-13

7 p.m. — Son of God, PG-13

Wednesday, April 23

4:30 p.m. — **Free Admission** Man of Steel, PG-13

7:30 p.m. — 3 Days to Kill, PG-13

Thursday, April 24

4:30 p.m. — **Free Admission** Amazing Spider-Man, PG-13

7:30 p.m. — Need For Speed, PG-13

High Desert

Nunset Boulevard

The Little Sisters of Hoboken return in a brand new show.

When: 7 p.m., April 25 through May 24

Where: Theatre 29

73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.

For more information, call (760) 316-4151

Low Desert

Robin Thicke

Grammy nominee singer performs.

When: 8 p.m., Saturday, May 3

Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino

84245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio, Calif.

For more information, call 800-827-2946

Mariachi Divas

Grammy award-winning mariachi group performs.

When: 3 p.m., Sunday, May 4.

Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa

49500 Seminole Dr., Cabazon, Calif.

For more information, call (800) 252-4499

or visit <http://www.morongocasinosort.com>



Marvel's red white & blue hero confronts contemporary enemies

NEIL POND

"Captain America: The Winter Soldier"

Starring Chris Evans, Scarlett Johansson, Robert Redford and Samuel L. Jackson

Directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo

PG-13, 135 min.

Thawed out from his Rip Van Winkle-like cryogenic hibernation, experimentally enhanced WWII U.S. Army super-soldier Capt. Steve Rogers — a.k.a. Captain America (Chris Evans) — now adjusts to the modern world. His Nazi-hunting days are behind him, but he's still serving his country on missions for S.H.I.E.L.D., the global protection conglomerate, with his sexy crime-fighting partner the Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson), a former Soviet agent.

But maybe Cap's not so free of his past, after all. A legendary, near-indestructible assassin rumored to be almost 100 years old, with a Hannibal Lector-like muzzle on his mouth and a gleaming robotic arm, is out to get him. And he smells a rat inside his own organization; could the high-ranking S.H.I.E.L.D. operative Alexander Pierce (Robert Redford), now running the World Security Council, have anything to do with it? Paranoia is everywhere. "Don't trust anybody," his wounded leader,

Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson), warns him.

A brawny blockbuster-formula movie with the brains of an espionage thriller, "Captain America: The Winter Soldier" recalls vintage '70s spy romps but resonates with contemporary issues about military might, black-ops government conspiracies, historical cover-ups, war, peace and privacy in this digital era.

Sibling directors Anthony and Joe Russo stage the action with gusto and a real sense of the changing scale and proportion needed for fight sequences that take place in a variety of settings, ranging from the claustrophobic confines of a crowded elevator to the expanses of a colossal cargo ship, and eventually taking flight into the sky itself.

Savvy fans who keep up with the Marvel Comics universe will enjoy watching for the obligatory cameo from founder Stan Lee, and staying for the after-credits surprises — both of them — about where the ever-expanding franchise will go next.

"How do we know the good guys from the bad guys?" the Cap's new ally, Sam Wilson/The Falcon (Anthony Mackie), asks in the middle of one particularly rousing, action-y moment. It's a good question, then and now. Who can you trust?

At least in this movie, you can always trust the guy with the shield and the star — the guy who says, "The price of freedom is high, it always has been." He's been one of the good guys for a long time.

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



Sergeant returns to Sangin, leads Marines in fight

Cpl. Joseph Scanlan
Combat Correspondent

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SABIT QADAM, Afghanistan – Four years ago, Sgt. Troy Garza, then a fireteam leader with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, deployed to Sangin, Afghanistan. By the end of the deployment, his platoon was rendered nearly combat ineffective due to the number of casualties they sustained.

With fearsome prior experience, Garza returned to Sangin in March 2014 and is currently serving with Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment.

Garza was raised in Harlingen, Texas, by a father who served 22 years as an infantryman in the Army. Following high school, Garza pursued a college education at The University of Texas-Pan American. He had intentions of earning a degree and working a normal, “9-to-5” job, but he had a change of heart after his sophomore year.

“One day I just wasn’t satisfied with where I was at with my life,” Garza said. “I was doing fine in school and I had a job working at a bank, but I wanted to accomplish a lot more than where I was headed. I continually saw things on the news about the war, and it made me want to be out there like my father was.”

Garza enlisted as an infantryman in the Marine Corps during December 2008, and left for recruit training two months later. Following recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, he underwent training at the School of Infantry – West at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., and proved his tenacity, motivation and leadership skills when he graduated as a squad leader. These qualities didn’t fade when he arrived at 3rd Bn., 5th Marines.

Garza earned a position as a fireteam leader and was meritoriously promoted to lance corporal shortly after arriving to the unit. As a junior Marine with no

prior combat experience, he fearlessly led his fire team when the battalion deployed to Sangin, Afghanistan, in 2010.

“Before we deployed, our battalion commander told us to prepare for one of the craziest battles that we would ever be involved in,” Garza said. “Sure enough, during the first two weeks we sustained nine casualties.”

Their mission was to clear all of Sangin in order to give the local populace freedom of movement and clear the region of any Taliban. At times, Garza and his platoon couldn’t move more than 100 meters outside their patrol base without getting pinned down by enemy fire. Improvised explosive devices and small-arms fire were a constant threat, but the Marines relentlessly continued with their mission.

The number of casualties the unit was sustaining slowed after their first two weeks in Sangin, but they continued to occur at a steady rate. By the end of the deployment, 28 Marines were killed in action and more than 200 wounded in action.

“A lot of times, I think about that deployment and realize how lucky I am to have survived it,” Garza said. “We had the most casualties the Marine Corps had seen since the war began.”

Rather than letting the deployment have a negative impact on him, Garza only grew stronger. Upon returning from the deployment to Sangin, he completed the Infantry Squad Leaders Course as a lance corporal and earned a meritorious promotion to corporal. He deployed in support of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal for his actions on the MEU.

His attitude didn’t change once he returned from his second deployment. Garza became a Marine Corps Martial Arts Program instructor and earned a meritorious promotion to sergeant before receiving orders to 1st Bn., 7th Marines, for his third deployment.



CPL. JOSEPH SCANLAN

Sgt. Troy Garza, squad leader, Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, is currently deployed to Sangin, Afghanistan, for his second time. Garza first deployed to Sangin with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, in 2010.



CPL. JOSEPH SCANLAN

[Above] Sgt. Troy Garza, right, squad leader, Co. C., 1/7, directs his squad to a firing position during a live-fire exercise at Range 400 at the Combat Center, Jan. 22. The battalion conducted company-size attacks on the range for the second live-fire event of their Integrated Training Exercise.

[Below] Sgt. Troy Garza, then a fire team leader with 3/5, talks to an Afghan child during his first deployment to Sangin, Afghanistan, in 2010. During his first deployment in Sangin, the battalion sustained more than 200 Marines wounded in action and 28 Marines killed in action, which rendered them almost combat ineffective. Now Garza is deployed to Sangin again, this time as a squad leader with C Co., 1/7.



COURTESY PHOTO

“When he first came to us, the platoon was lacking experience,” said Staff Sgt. Roberto Ramirez, a platoon sergeant with Company C, and a native of Chicago. “He passed on to the Marines all of his knowledge from his past experiences and made my job a lot easier.”

After rigorous predeployment-training exercises in Yuma Proving Grounds, Ariz., and the Combat Center, Garza arrived in Sangin, Afghanistan, for his second time March 2014.

“It’s a lot different coming to Sangin this time because last time I was here, the Marines were the lead element,” Garza said. “We were the ones out fighting every day and the Afghan National Army was in support of us. Now it’s completely different. The ANA are patrolling and fighting every day and they are coming to us for support.”

Charley Company’s mission is to transfer full security responsibility of Forward Operating Base Sabit Qadam to the ANA. The Marines are currently manning security posts along the perimeter of the FOB until the transition occurs.

“The sergeants are the main effort on this FOB,” Ramirez said. “They run the entire guard force and quick reaction force, and that’s a huge responsibility. I work the night shifts, so when I’m resting during the day, Sgt. Garza is in charge of the entire platoon. I feel very lucky to have him and I’m glad he came to this battalion because he is a huge asset.”

Following his current deployment, Garza plans on becoming a combat instructor at The School of Infantry. He also plans to make a career out of the Marine Corps.

“I love being the individual who leads Marines into combat,” Garza said. “I get a huge sense of accomplishment after leading a squad of Marines to different objectives, successfully completing an infiltration mission, or maintaining a defensive position for five days with minimal food, water and rest. There aren’t a lot of people I know that can say they can do that.”

“One more thing I love about my job is that no matter how miserable something is, how much pain I’m in, or how challenging something is, I have Marines to the left and right of me who are feeling the same way, and we go through it all together,” Garza added.

MARINE vs. Food



Coyote Grill hosts burrito challenge

Story and photos by **Cpl. Charles Santamaria**

Three burritos lay on trays, each stuffed with every ingredient the employees of the Coyote Grill can put on their standard order. The tortilla shells that kept the contents together were at maximum capacity as challengers prepared themselves for what was to come. Before they knew it, each contestant had their own tray before them. Once they heard, "Go!" the participants gripped their burrito and began chewing for time to win the food challenge.

The Coyote Grill restaurant, along with Marine Corps Community Services' Food and Hospitality, hosted the Marine vs. Food event in the establishment's main dining area, Tuesday. The event had both Marines and civilians compete in the competition held in celebration of the restaurant's recent re-opening which overhauled the previous restaurant with a new name and logo.

"There was no time limit for the challenge, all contestants got the same burritos and it all just came down to who can finish all the burritos first," said Amber Broz, Food and Hospitality, MCCA. "I was starting to feel bad for some of the contestants who couldn't finish and just wanted the ordeal to end so I decided to end it after the three-minute mark."

The restaurant was recently opened again after the revamping of the menu, interior design, and name which began approximately two years prior. Each of the

three burritos weighed in at approximately one pound for a combined weight of almost three pounds for each participant to eat. Contestants considered the effects that this challenge would have on them.

"All I can think of is all the sit-ups, pull ups and running I'm going to be doing to work these burritos off," said Sgt. Demichael Riley, unmanned aerial vehicle operator, Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle 1.

The event had six contestants and three burritos each. John Rivera, stockroom clerk, Sodexo, Phelps Mess Hall, won the event after finishing all three of his burritos in one minute and three seconds. The other five competitors were stopped at approximately three minutes with none of them eating even two burritos.

"There was really no way to prepare for it," Riley said. "Regardless of any doubts, I'm going in there and giving it the best I got."

The winner of the event received a 100 dollar gift card to spend. With the opening of the Coyote Grill, Food and Hospitality now aims to continue holding events for other establishments on base.

"For Coyote Grill we will begin staying open later and we have already begun opening on Saturdays and Sundays," Broz said. "We will continue to listen to suggestions and requests to make the Coyote Grill and establishments like it better."



[Left] Competitors take their first bites of the burritos presented to them for the Marine vs. Food event hosted by Marine Corps Community Services Food and Hospitality division at the Coyote Grill, Tuesday. Each participant had one burrito of chicken, beef, and pork.

[Top] Competitors take their final bites before the coordinator stops the timer at three minutes during the Marine vs. Food event hosted by MCCA Food and Hospitality division at the Coyote Grill, Tuesday. The fastest time for all three burritos was one minute and three seconds.

[Above] Three burritos lay on a tray ready for a contestant to consume during the Marine vs. Food event hosted by MCCA Food and Hospitality division at the Coyote Grill, Tuesday. Each burrito weighed approximately one pound.

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WeekINPhotos

11th Marine Expeditionary Unit



PHOTO BY CPL. DEMETRIUS MORGAN



PHOTO BY CPL. JONATHAN R. WALDMAN



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[Above] A Marine with the Maritime Raid Force, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, collects information from a role-playing detainee during a Visit, Board, Search and Seizure training exercise as part of Amphibious Squadron Marine Expeditionary Unit Integration Training (PMINT) off the coast of San Diego, April 11. PMINT was the first at-sea event in the 11th MEU's predeployment training program during which the unit conducted training operations alongside the Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group.

[Top, right] Marines with the MRF, 11th MEU, board a vessel during a Visit, Board, Search and Seizure training mission as part of Amphibious Squadron Marine Expeditionary Unit Integration Training (PMINT) off the coast of San Diego, April 11.

[Bottom, right] A UH-1Y Huey with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 163 (Reinforced), 11th MEU, supports a Visit, Board, Search and Seizure training mission during Amphibious Squadron Marine Expeditionary Unit Integration Training (PMINT) off the coast of San Diego, April 11.

