

# MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS OBSERVATION POST

July 18, 2014

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Vol. 58 Issue 28

## Marines serve community

**Cpl. Charles Santamaria**  
Combat Correspondent

Combat Center Marines arrived at the Little Church of the Desert for an opportunity to give back to community. They worked tirelessly, cleaning the dining hall, preparing the tables, and readying the kitchen for more than 100 members of the Twentynine Palms Calif. Community. With smiles on their faces and sincerity in their hearts, the Marines fed their community and helped spread charity and kindness throughout Twentynine Palms.

Marines with 1st Tank Battalion volunteered to assist the Food for Life Ministry in serving members of the community at the Little Church of the Desert, July 12.

As soon as the doors opened at three in the afternoon, the Marines began serving meals and desserts to the crowd. Marines volunteering looked forward to helping the local community in any way possible.

"Seeing the smiles on people's faces is what it's



CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

Cpl. Robert Poehlmann, fiscal non-commissioned officer, 1st Tank Battalion, serves a bowl of beans to Sgt. Maj. Brian A. Priester, 1st Tank Battalion Sergeant Major, during a Food for Life event hosted at the Little Church of The Desert, Saturday.

all about," said Cpl. Robert Poehlmann, fiscal non-commissioned officer, '1st Tanks'. "It's my first time doing the event but I would recommend any Marine interested to volunteer because it's a blessing to be able to help."

Robert Harris was the president who started the food event approximately 11 years ago. He began in the kitchen alone, serving people in the community once a month, but as the program grew, Food for Life Ministry began serving food more frequently.

"We just celebrated our 11th anniversary in March of this year," said Shirley Johnson, program operation coordinator, Food for Life Ministry. "Robert took ill and passed away. Since then, we have aimed to carry on his legacy. It gets challenging."

See TANKS page A2

## NAVAJO CODE TALKERS



## Marines learn history through presentation

**Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez**  
Combat Correspondent

Combat Center Marines received a special opportunity to learn their Marine Corps history as it was retold by the Dine Navajo Code Talkers at the Protestant Chapel, July 11, 2014.

The Dine Navajo Code Talkers are a New Mexico-based group dedicated to the education and preservation of the Navajo Code Talkers History. Their visit was hosted by the Armed Services YMCA.

Three code talkers, Bill Toledo, Robert Walley, and Alfred Peaches, gave their accounts of life as a code talker during World War II, and their experiences during battles in the Pacific Theater.

"It was very surreal to see our past in front of us," said Pfc. Caulleen Alexander, student, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School. "It was interesting to know how small [the Navajo code] started but how influential it became."

The group had been traveling to military installations across the nation to share their story, and the Combat Center ASYMCA reached out to the group to bring them to the Marines aboard the base, according to Anita Neu-Fultz, executive director, ASYMCA.

"I believe that the young Marines need to hear their

See NAVAJO page A7



PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ

[Top] Sgt. Jake Smith, data chief, Marine Corps Logistics Operations Group, shakes hands with Bill Toledo, Dine Navajo Code Talker, after a presentation at the Protestant Chapel, July 11.

[Bottom] Bill Toledo, Dine Navajo Code Talker, shares his experiences in World War II during a presentation at the Protestant Chapel, July 11.

## Marine Corps' Top Shot

Every week, thousands of fans vote for the week on the best photograph, posted on the Corps' facebook page.

This weeks top shot comes from Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort.



CPL. SARAH CHERRY

Lt. Col. Kevin T. O'Rourke relinquished command of Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 533 to Lt. Col. Alvin Bryant in a change of command ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C., June 19.



CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

Military working dog, Colli, maintains a bite after Cpl. Paul Kelley, working dog handler, Provost Marshall's Office, jumps into the pool during an aquatics aggression class at the base training tank, Saturday.

### K-9 conducts aquatic aggression class

**Cpl. Charles Santamaria**  
Combat Correspondent

The handler lets go of the tightly threaded, black leash, letting the full force of Baby, a military working dog, come upon Cpl. Paul Kelley, military working dog handler, Provost Marshal's Office. With one furious leap, Baby pushes Kelley into the pool with her teeth firmly clamped onto the arm of his bite suit. Her jaw remains locked down as her handler maintains control with verbal commands and escorts the simulated perpetrator out of the pool.

Combat Center Provost Marshal's Office, K-9 Division, conducted an aquatics aggression class at the base training tank, Monday. The training session involved the dogs getting accustomed to swimming and maintaining focus on a simulated target while in water.

"How quickly a dog gets accustomed to training in and around

See K9 page A7

# This Week in Combat Center History



SGT. CHARLES LUEDKE

Sgt. Phil Valdez, Company C, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, aims in on a battle site zero range with his newly issued M16-A2 service rifle.

**Reprinted from the Observation Post  
Vol. 28, Issue 28  
July 13, 1984**

## 1/4 receives M16-A2 rifle

**Story by** Sgt. Charles Luedke

The Marine Corps' newest combat rifle, the M16-A2, is being issued aboard the Combat Center with Marine infantrymen from 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, receiving the first 606 weapons.

The new rifle is an improved version of the M16-A1 rifle, which was adopted by the Marine Corps in 1967.

The M16-A2 rifle might be new to the Marines but not to their Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Charles J. Pyle, because he helped develop the new rifle while serving as an infantry weapons officer at Headquarters Marine Corps.

"While working at Headquarters Marine Corps, I helped design the rifle with Maj. Dave Lutz," said Lt. Col. Pyle. "I came up with the ideas and Maj. Lutz did the technical work."

"There have only been a few times in the last 200 years that the Marine Corps has had an impact on the development of a rifle," he continued. "The M16-A2 is the result."

"My idea of the most important change is the burst control device. That and the new compensator keeps the rounds down on the target and the troops from wasting ammunition."

Improvements in the weapons include: redesigned, interchangeable handguard halves; muzzle brake compensator to reduce the rise of jump of the muzzle when fired; a burst control device that limits automatic fire to three rounds per trigger pull; adjustable rear sight providing a finger-operated knob for windage and elevation; a brass deflector to prevent hot brass cartridge casings from hitting left-handed shooters in the face; and a stronger barrel reinforced with additional metal and a change in the twist ratio of the bore.

The M16-A2 rifle weighs 7 pounds and has a maximum effective range of 800 meters.



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### "A LITTLE R&R"

#### Across

- 1 Very soft, as a sound
- 6 Health resorts
- 10 Uncooked
- 13 North of the Irangate scandal
- 14 Angel's instrument
- 15 Sport played on horseback
- 16 Fancy car
- 18 Actor Sharif
- 19 Peaks: abbr.
- 20 Lays out by the pool
- 21 Donate some money
- 23 Cleaner scent
- 24 Actress Keaton
- 25 Sweet and kind
- 28 Excursion on the water
- 31 Go \_\_\_ for the ride
- 32 Niagara \_\_\_
- 33 Highway: abbr.
- 34 Brothers and sisters, for short
- 35 Word with tread, wind or steel
- 36 Play to the camera
- 37 Christmas \_\_\_
- 38 There are four in most rooms
- 39 Bite down on
- 40 Trash pickup, electric, water, etc.
- 42 Wind \_\_\_
- 43 Clock sounds

44 Billy who sang "Piano Man"

45 Good pitch

47 Guy

48 From \_\_\_ Z

51 Worked with a certain tool

52 Kind of tournament

55 Valuable rocks

56 "What \_\_\_ is new?"

57 Actor Hirsch

58 Marry

59 "\_\_\_ we forget"

60 Calendar squares

**Down**

1 Take the shape of

2 Oodles

3 Societal problems

4 Zero

5 Giving a quiz to

6 Blazed, like the sun

7 Gives a salary to

8 Semicircle

9 Some restaurant dishes

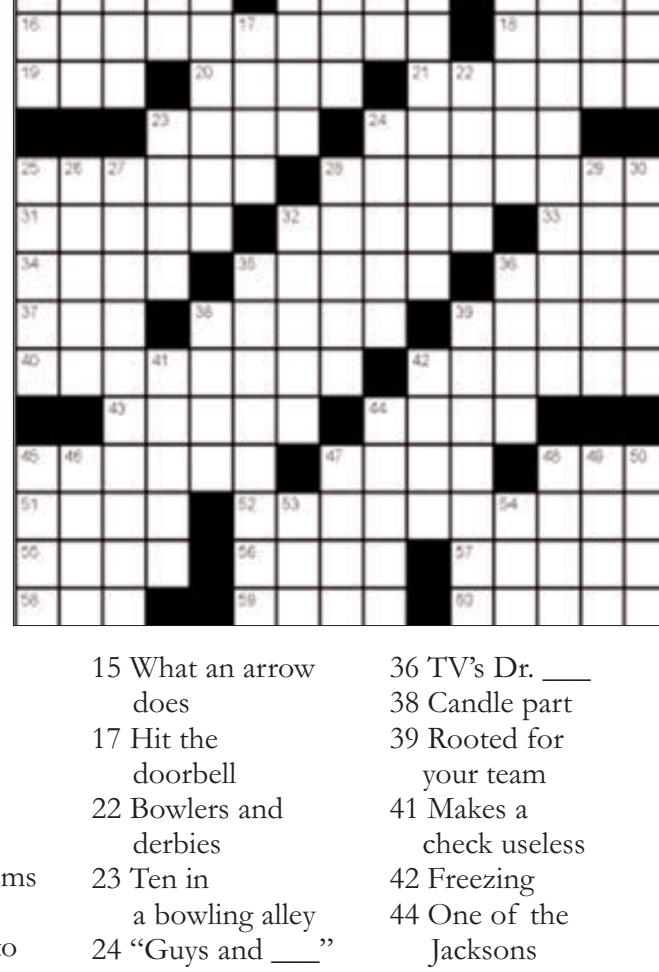
10 Children's show

from 1953

to 1994

11 Jai \_\_\_ (fast-moving sport)

12 Tattered



15 What an arrow does

17 Hit the doorbell

22 Bowlers and

derbies

23 Ten in

a bowling alley

24 "Guys and \_\_\_"

25 Beer amounts

26 Existing

27 He played Mr.

Brady on "The

Brady Bunch"

28 Fancy dances

29 "Who's there?"

response

30 Easter candy

32 Nail \_\_\_

35 "Holy" fish

36 TV's Dr. \_\_\_

38 Candle part

39 Rooted for

your team

41 Makes a check useless

42 Freezing

44 One of the Jacksons

45 "The \_\_\_ must go on"

46 Ripped

47 "No \_\_\_ no fuss"

48 Not much

49 Scrabble piece

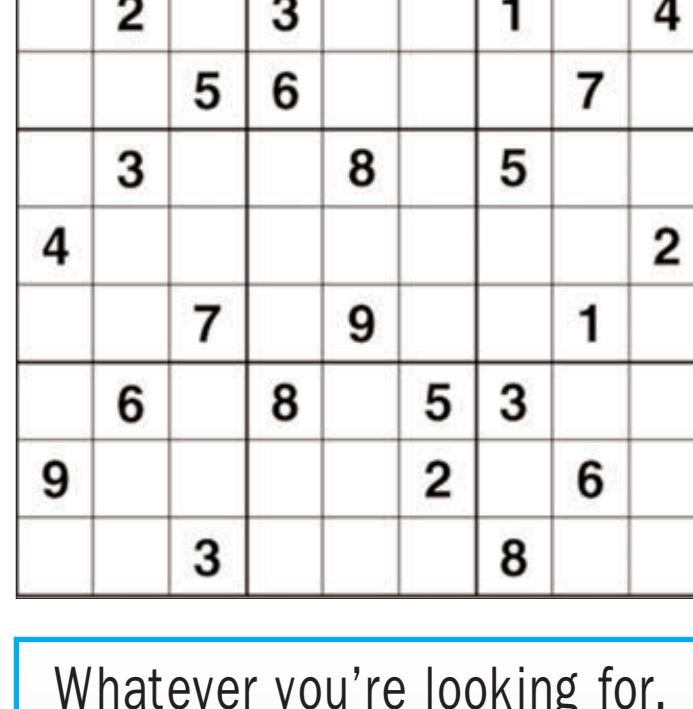
50 Small bills

53 "Bravo!"

54 Grandma, in

Germany

### SUDOKU 333 D



Whatever you're looking for, you can find it in the

**Observation Post Classified section**



### OBSERVATION POST

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- Club San Diego, 3955 Fourth St.

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- STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.

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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

# Paul

**San Antonio, Texas**, Combat Correspondent, Headquarters Battalion, 20

# MARTINEZ

MARTINEZ HAS SPENT THE LAST YEAR AS A COMBAT CORRESPONDENT FOR THE COMBAT CENTER. HE IS A RISING JOURNALIST AND IS MOVING ON TO CAMP LEJEUNE AS PART OF THE GROUND-COMBAT ELEMENT INTEGRATED TASK FORCE.

> **I consider myself** somewhat of a movie buff.

> **What I love** about movies is how every movie explores a different world or idea of somebody's fantasy.

> **When I was a kid**, what I always thought were cool were actors.

> **It wasn't because of how** much money they make or how famous they are, but they look like they have a lot of fun. They experience so many different things.

> **As I got a little bit older**, I got more attached to the idea of joining the military.

> **Its funny**, it's not really similar to being an actor, but in the military I too get to experience a lot of different things.

> **My favorite too movie is** Wolf of Wall Street. In my opinion any collaboration between the actor Leonard DiCaprio and the director Martin Scorsese is going to be a success.

> **I enjoy reading** anything from comic books to things that would be considered regular books.

> **Spiderman is my fictional hero**. He's a young guy who didn't really get a grip on life until he had a life-changing event.

> **One of the things I love about him** is he lives by the philosophy, "With great power comes great responsibility."

> **I just feel that I may be a young guy**, but if I have the power I have a responsibility to do something, whether it's for the betterment of fellow Marines or my family.

> **I reach my two-year mark** in September. Somehow, someway, I've been selected to be a part of the Ground-Combat Element Integrated Task Force for duty as a Combat Correspondent.

> **It was really a surprise initially**. I've only been here a year and I'm already going through a (Permeant Change of Station.)

> **It's defiantly a good feeling**. I'm the guy that, if presented the opportunity, I accept it and embrace it for what it is. That's the mentality I have with this.

> **The thing about Twentynine Palms is**, being a premiere pre-deployment training facility, you get so many different units, both American and foreign, training bilaterally here.

> **I've had the opportunity to work** with units all over the Marine Corps and even some outside, such as the British Royal Marines.

> **A while back I got to work with them**, which is something I've always wanted to do.

> **They're cool**. They called me things like, "lad" and "mate." I took them as compliments. But I could see that they're just like us and they respect the warrior ethos.

> **I really enjoyed the fact** that I was able to work with them and that was only because they came here.

> **Twentynine Palms has taught me** to be somewhere so hot yet still thrive. It's definitely a unique place and I truly believe that only the Marine Corps would choose to call it home.

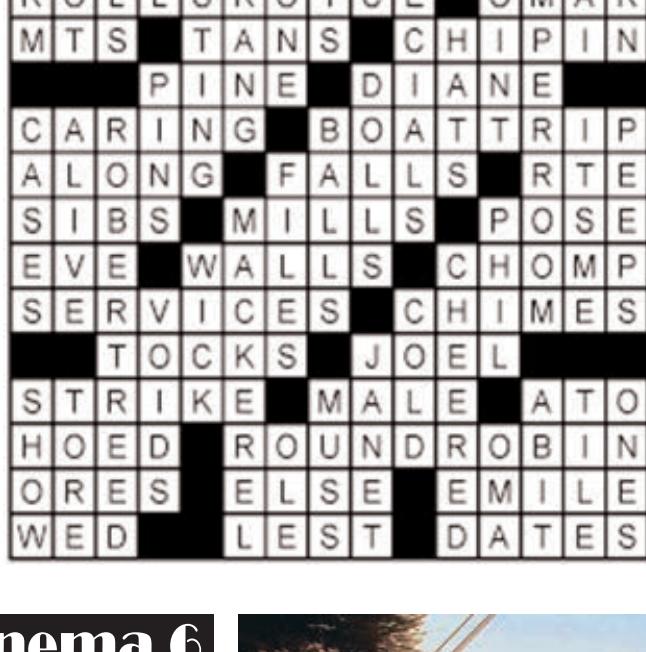
> **I'm proud to say that** I've spent an entire year here as a Marine. I think a lot of people look down on it because of what they hear. Unless you actually experience it, you'll find out there is a very active community both on and off base. If you have the resources, you can travel and have fun.

> **You can go somewhere** and bum yourself out over it or you can take the opportunity presented to you.



Interviewed and photographed by the Public Affairs Office, July 16, 2014

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9	5	8	7	3	2	4	6	1
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# Paws to Read

Story and photos by  
Cpl. Charles Santamaria

The children sat outside anxiously waiting for the beginning of the presentation. A dog appeared at the corner of the field and received the command from his handler to attack. A Marine stood on the other end of the field wearing a bite suit. He then began to run away, but Colli, a german shepard, quickly closed the distance. The military working dog sank its teeth into the Marine's arm and wasn't going to let go. The simulated criminal tried his best to break free from the dog, but Colli did not loosen his grip until the handler shouted the command to release.



Baby, military working dog, and Cpl. Jonathan Scudder, working dog handler, Provost Marshall's Office, exit the training field during a K-9 demonstration for the 'Paws for Reading' program hosted at the base kennels, July 11.

The working dog's instant obedience impressed the audience of families during a K-9 demonstration hosted at the base kennels, July 11. The event was part of a series of field trips hosted by the base library, for the summer-long "Paws for Reading" program.

"Field trips like this one are always geared toward the children, but the reading portions of the program are open for all ages because of how much participation has grown," said Ursula Morales, program coordinator, base library. "I love using our on-base resources to provide different events for kids. It gets them out of the house and doing something."

The field trips compliment the reading and show families some of what the K-9 unit with PMO is capable of.

"This program helps the younger children stay engaged in reading over the summer to avoid what's called 'summer slide'

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"This program helps the younger children stay engaged in reading over the summer to avoid what's called 'summer slide.'"

"They say not to get too attached to the dog you work with but how can you not get attached to something you work with for hours day in and day out," Westmoreland said. "Obedience comes from asserting your dominance from the beginning of the relationship. My dog, Colli, started on a rocky road with me. He wanted to do what he wanted, when he wanted, and that's when you have to step in as the handler and be the dominant role."

Although this was the program's last visit to the kennels for the summer, the 'Paws for Reading' program is scheduled to continue until August 8th and will be open for registrations and participation until then.

**[Top]** Colli, military working dog, leaps to bite Staff Sgt. Charlie Hardesty, kennel master, Provost Marshal's Office, while he wears a bite suit during a K-9 demonstration for the 'Paws for Reading' program hosted at the base kennels, July 11.

**[Center]** Chaz, military working dog, leaps up a set of stairs to take a bite at Cpl. Paul Kelley, working dog handler, Provost Marshall's Office, during a K-9 demonstration for the 'Paws for Reading' program hosted at the base kennels, July 11.

**[Bottom]** Staff Sgt. Charlie Hardesty, kennel master, Provost Marshall's Office, and Cpl. Paul Kelley, working dog handler, PMO, explain what the working dogs will be doing during a K-9 demonstration for the 'Paws for Reading' program hosted at the base kennels, July 11.

where students will regress in their reading if they don't keep their minds active," Morales said, "To avoid that we include incentives to keep participants interested."

The dog handlers went through the different stages of aggression with several of their working dogs. From demonstrating each dog's obedience to simulating attacks in different scenarios, the handlers entertained families by showing a different part of PMO.

"Letting people know what we do and that we're here to help them, helps us," said Cpl. Darren Westmoreland, working dog handler, Provost Marshal's Office. "Putting the dogs in the scenario with a crowd helps them train by still having them perform the tasks they have to accomplish regardless of the people's reactions."

The bond between handler and dog builds over time allowing the team to be effective when in use.



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See page B2

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## I MEF Change of Command

**Lance Cpl. Jonathan Boynes**  
Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — Marines and sailors of I Marine Expeditionary Force welcomed their new commanding general, Lt. Gen. David H. Berger, during a change of command ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., July 11.

Lt. Gen. John A. Toolan, who served as the I MEF

Lt. Gen. David H. Berger (left) assumes command of I Marine Expeditionary Force from Lt. Gen. John A. Toolan (right) during the most recent MEF change of command ceremony aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., July 11.

Berger also said that he sees his new responsibilities as a privilege and an honor when there were so many other choices for new commanders.

"The Toolans have done a fantastic job and have taught me a lot," said Berger. "Coming from 1st Marine Division, I had a lot to learn about how things were run on the MEF level and I have to thank the Toolans for their mentorship, patience and understanding that has put me on the level of leadership that I am at now."

During the ceremony, Toolan outlined the accomplishments, both past and present of the Marines of I MEF and gave thanks for their sacrifices and hard work, with which he credited much of his success.

"Marines are here for each other," said Toolan. "It's all about fighting for that brother and that sister next to you. The Marines here today accomplished the goals set before them and sanctified the ground that they fought on."

At the conclusion of his speech, Berger expressed the pride and enthusiasm that come with his new duties and promised the Marines of I MEF that he would do all that he could to be a strong leader and move them in the right direction.

"The Marines of I MEF will have my very best," said Berger. "I can't promise them anymore or any less."



General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, addresses Marines, sailors and family at Lt. Gen. David Berger's promotion ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., July 11.



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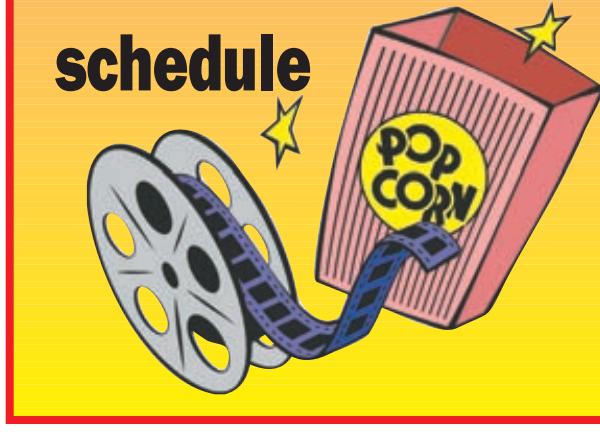
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## K9, from A1

water depends on each individual dog and the handler's training," Cpl. Jonathan Scudder, military working dog handler, PMO. "These dogs have been trained around this desert environment. Exposing them to water prepares them for where they may go when they change stations or handlers."

Military working dogs change duty stations just as Marines do. With this in mind, the military dog handlers prepare their dogs as much as possible with various training.

"If a working dog gets deployed with a handler to a combat zone and the Marine has to swim a distance with his rifle and combat load, he has to have confidence that his dog will be able to follow him effectively," Kelley said.

Over the course of the class, the handlers slowly accustomed the dogs to water by first leading them into the pool then progressing into biting and stages of aggression in and around the training tank. After going through different techniques by the water, the handlers went through the same stage transitioning into the pool.

"We take baby steps to ease them into the idea of swimming and practicing what they know while in water," Scudder said. "It's best described as success of approximation."

The working dogs with PMO are dual-purpose, specializing in both patrolling and drug and bomb detection. Although military working dogs move stations, handlers train to best prepare them for the future.

"We have to prepare them for where they may go," Kelley said. "As handlers we have to make sure we keep training to build that confidence with them while we have them."

The K-9 Division uses various training techniques to keep their working dogs sharp. The kennels conduct aquatics training, practice patrols, bomb detection, obedience training and building clearing regularly to maintain readiness.



PHOTOS BY CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

**[Above]** Military working dog, Baby, bites the bite sleeve of Cpl. Paul Kelley, working dog handler, Provost Marshall's Office, during an aquatics aggression class at the base training tank, July 14. The dogs are dual purpose and can be used for detection and patrol.

**[Left]** Military working dog, Baby, latches on with her teeth to the bite suit of Cpl. Paul Kelley, working dog handler, Provost Marshall's Office, while swimming during an aquatics aggression class at the base training tank, July 14.

## TANKS, from A1

ing, but when it's something you love doing, it's not hard at all."

More than 150 people in the community came to participate and approximately 104 plates of food were delivered to homes in the area.

"We here at the Food for Life Ministry are very appreciative of all the Marines who come down to give their time to volunteer for the community and are grateful for their willingness help," said Wallace Currie, president, Food for Life Ministry.

Every Saturday, volunteers help with organizing the event and serving. July 12 marked the second time '1st Tanks' volunteered for the event.

"Sgt. Maj. Priester is awesome and every week he brings in a new crew ready to work," Johnson said. "These Marines are not only serving our country, which we are thankful for, but they come in here so humbled. I've never seen a frown on any of their faces, and they make a difference in the Food for Life organization. We just love them and everything they do."

## NAVAJO, from A1

history," Neu-Fultz said. "By hearing it orally from the people who were there, and physically seeing somebody that lived that history is amazing."

Firsthand accounts included Walley's experiences with the Marine Raiders at the age of 18; and Bill Toledo's training aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif., and Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, which led up to his deployment to the Pacific, to include his actions during the legendary Battle of Iwo Jima.

"We landed there Feb. 19, 1945," Toledo said. "Before that, aircraft were bombing it for over 30 days. We were told that there were over 20,000 Japanese on that island."

He went on to remind the audience of

the tenacity of the enemy during that time, and the determination of the Marines to win the battle.

"We were supposed to take the island in one week," Toledo said. "That didn't happen. It took us 36 days before we finally secured the island of Iwo Jima."

At the conclusion of the presentation, all were invited onstage to shake hands and give thanks to the code talkers, recognizing the contributions that they and their code, one that was never broken, made to victories in the Pacific and the triumph of the United States in WWII.

"Not only did it make me proud but I feel like I can build on this pride and heritage," Alexander said. "I would encourage anybody to learn their Marine Corps history, as well as their nation's history. We can learn from and appreciate those that gave us our heritage."



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### TOUGH Minded OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



Babe Ruth made his major league debut on July 11, 1914, one hundred years ago, and we celebrate the man whose myth and legend is larger than life.

Here is a column I wrote about him some time ago. Read and reflect!

Connie Connaster was chair of our Church Board while I served our church as Senior Minister in Terre Haute, Indiana many years ago. Connie had been an outstanding member of the New York Yankees and he told me one night with tears in his eyes that his teammate Babe Ruth was the greatest player in the history of the game. He was not only a great pitcher and a fabulous hitter but he was a man who genuinely loved people—all people. His concern for others motivated his life. He cared for his family, his teammates, his fans, and, indeed, people of all ages everywhere.

Babe Ruth spent his final days at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City.

One morning a nurse found him standing on an outside balcony, watching a group of young boys playing baseball.

"Watch the swing on that kid," Ruth said with admiration.

"Go down there and tell that kid to step into the plate and lean forward on his swing," Ruth said to the nurse. "He could be a real good hitter."

The nurse did as requested, pointing out to the boy that he had a mentor. The boys gave Ruth, high on his hospital balcony, a wave.

The next day, Ruth summoned the nurse again. "I want you to give that kid this bat for me," Ruth said weakly, holding out one he had signed.

Ruth physically died later that evening.

My friend Connie had it right, didn't he?

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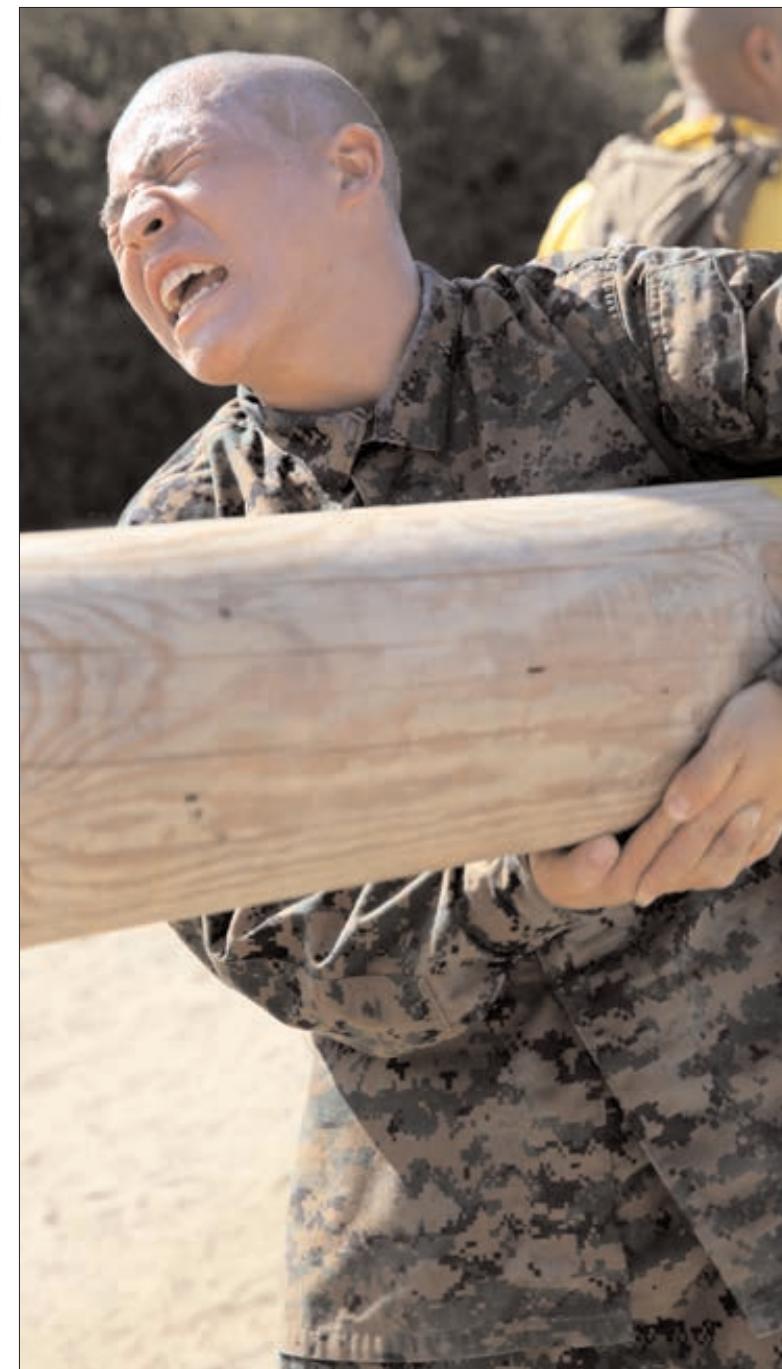
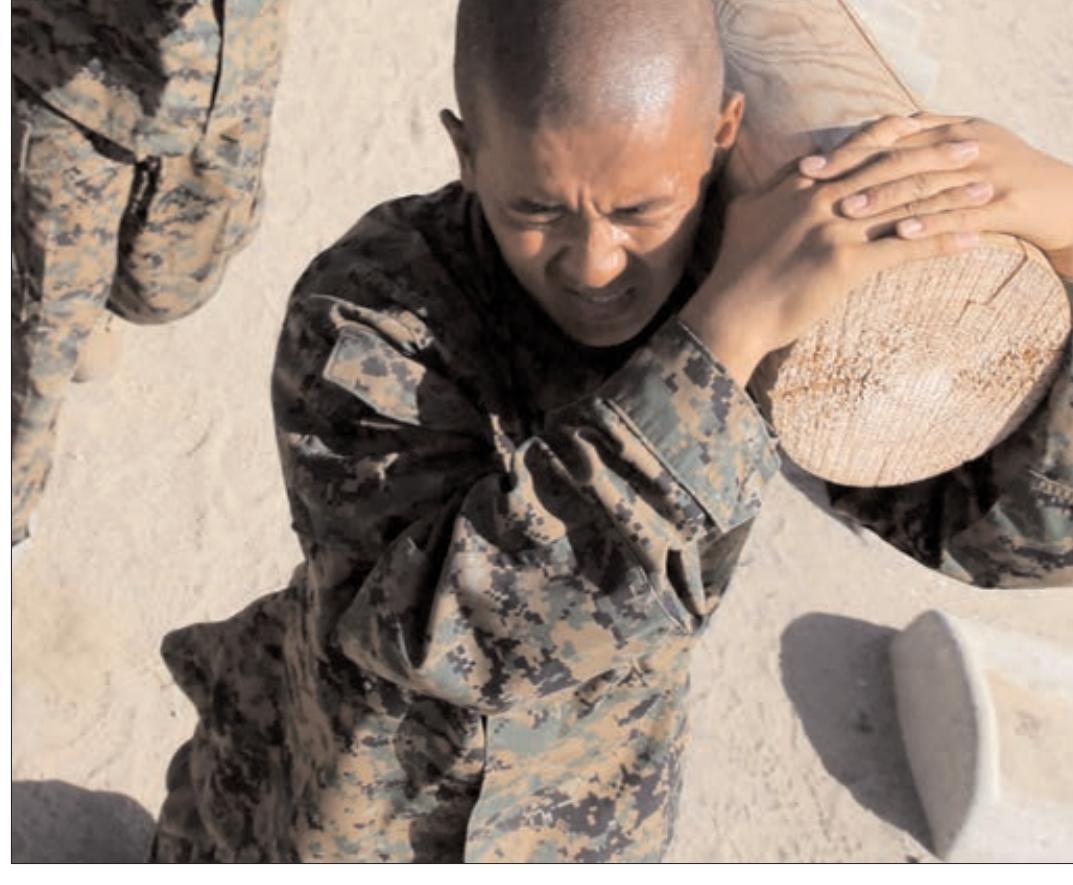
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# WeekINPhotos

Marine Corps Recruit Depot Sand Diego



**[Top, left]** Recruits with Company G, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, work together to finish a log drill exercise aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif., July 8. The log-drill is one of many training events required for graduation from Marine Corps recruit training.

**[Top, right]** Recruit Luchou Xiong, Platoon 2147, G Co., 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, conducts log side bends during a log-drill exercise at the MCRD San Diego, Calif., July 8.

**[Bottom, left]** Recruit Boonieua Lee, Platoon 2145, Co. G, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, leads a group of seven recruits through a log drill exercise at MCRD San Diego, Calif., July 8.



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# 'First team' leads the fight

## Infantrymen engage Taliban insurgents during 4th of July weekend

[ Story and photos by Cpl. Joseph Scanlan ]

**CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan** — While many Americans in the United States were celebrating during the Fourth of July weekend, Marines with Co. B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, were engaging Taliban insurgents in Helmand province, Afghanistan.

The infantrymen along with Afghan National Army soldiers operated within close proximity of Camp Leatherneck to continue disruption operations and prevent future attacks on the Camps Bastion and Leatherneck, July 4 - 6.

"Our job was to investigate some compounds of interest in order to deny the insurgents the ability to consolidate in certain areas where they could potentially plan attacks," said 1st Lt. Robert Kay, platoon commander, Co. B and a native of Palmdale, Calif.

The Co. B Marines inserted into Gereshk via CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters while the

into a different area of Gereshk. Insurgents were awaiting the Marines' arrival and fired rounds from several compounds at the helicopters. The crew chiefs aboard the helicopters responded to the enemy fire with mounted .50 caliber machine guns and silenced the enemy fighters.

The company landed in the area shortly after and began patrolling on foot. A combat engineer led the infantrymen through several freshly harvested fields with a mine sweeper. Often times disturbed earth or protruding wires can be visual indicators of an improvised explosive device. The patrol had to rely on mine sweepers to protect their lives as they maneuvered across fields with entirely disturbed earth in darkness.

The sun began to rise over the horizon at 4:30 a.m. and squads of infantrymen were already at their designated compounds. Locals emerged from their homes and began their morning prayers. The infantrymen respected their customs and waited for their prayers to conclude before enrolling the Afghans into a biometrics system. The Marines patrolled smoothly about the area without harassment, but the mounted element did not. Four vehicles struck IEDs; miraculously, no one was injured. After hours of patrolling and interacting

with locals, the Marines set up security at a landing zone and extracted from the area to prepare for their final day of the operation.

Once again the company gathered aboard the Camp Bastion flightline and departed friendly lines in the bellies of helicopters. As the infantrymen neared the area, small-arms fire spewed from compounds below.

"We came under pretty heavy fire from about five different points of origin," Kay said. "When I looked out of the helicopter I could see tracer rounds flying into the sky."

The crew chiefs returned fire and the helicopter pilots continued with their mission and landed to offload the Marines. Once on the ground, squads split up to move to different compounds. Daylight broke as Marines finished speaking with locals at a compound and then patrolled to their next objective. Only the deep breaths and crunch of boots crushing dried hay could be

heard as the infantrymen maneuvered across a tilled field with full combat loads. Suddenly machine gun and small-arms fire exploded from the corner of a compound nearly 150 meters away from the Marines.

Machine gunners with M240B medium machine guns instantly returned fire. Deafening gunfire and explosions filled the area within a matter of seconds. The only objects protecting the Marines were a flimsy mud wall and a small berm, the Marines needed to move from their positions. Staff Sgt. Matthew Ingwerson, platoon sergeant, Co. B, immediately took charge.

"Everybody looks in one direction, at either the platoon commander or platoon sergeant, and someone has to remain level headed because if the leadership starts losing their mind, the Marines start breaking down and they start losing their confidence in their abilities," said Ingwerson, a native of Nampa, Idaho. "I try to mitigate as much stress as I can in order to allow my squads to maneuver effectively and to ensure the junior Marines have confidence to do things they thought they could never do before."

Machine gunners provided suppressive fire as riflemen sprinted for their lives across an open field to reach the insurgents. Bullets kicked up dust as they impacted between the Marines' feet, and many of the Marines ran faster than they ever had before. ANA soldiers led them into compounds to search for insurgents and question locals. The fire slowly died out and the insurgents retreated.

After conducting a thorough search of the surrounding area and enrolling several Afghans into a biometrics system, the company linked up with the mounted element and departed the area via Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles. Every Marine returned to base unharmed after the three days of kinetic activity with their mission accomplished.

"A lot of coalition forces haven't been present in that area recently," Kay said. "The Taliban start getting comfortable in places and think they can do whatever they want. We told them that they are not safe there. I don't care if they go north, south, east, or west; the Marines are going to find them. We denied their ability to consolidate and their ability to plan and we also showed the local population that we are there to help them."



Lance Cpl. Michael Manues, machine gunner, Co. B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, provides security with an M240B medium machine gun during a mission in Helmand province, Afghanistan, July 6.

**When I looked out of the helicopter I could see tracer rounds flying into the sky."**

-1st Lt. Robert Kay

sky was black and the sun had not yet risen, July 4. They began to patrol across freshly tilled fields while monitoring the surrounding area with night vision goggles mounted on their Kevlar helmets.

By sunrise the Marines arrived at compounds and began to interact with local Afghans. Suspicious areas were being investigated and locals were being questioned when the infantrymen came under enemy fire.

Insurgents engaged the Marines from three different positions with machine guns, AK-47s and a precision-grade rifle. The Marines immediately took cover and began to maneuver on the enemy fighters while returning fire. Machine gunners with M240B medium machine guns provided suppressing fire as several Marines sprinted across an open field to reach a better firing position.

Audible cracks, pops and explosions of gunfire and high-explosive munitions quaked across the surrounding village as the Marines gained fire superiority. Riflemen with M16A4 service rifles, M4A1 Carbines and M27 Infantry Automatic Rifles gathered in the prone position behind berms and returned fire at the insurgents. Bullets zoomed within inches of several Marines, but after several minutes of exchanging fire, the firefight concluded and no Marines were injured.

It was mid-morning after the firefight when the Marines moved to set up a security posture for a landing zone in a nearby field to prepare to extract from the area. Two CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters arrived shortly after. The infantrymen darted through a cyclone of dirt and hay caused by the helicopters' rotors and arrived back on Camp Bastion within several minutes. The company's first day of operations had concluded; two more were to follow.

The following morning the company inserted



## Combat Center Events

### Sesame Street Tour

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When: Aug. 9 and 10

Location and time to be determined.

For more information, call 830-5086

### Back to School Week

Back to school week offers a whole week of activities including the Education Fair, Pool Party, Fashion show and Back to school Brigade.

When: Aug. 12 to Aug. 15

Where: Community Center

For more information, call 830-5086

## Sunset Cinema

### Friday, July 18

4 p.m. – **Free Admission** Adams Family Values, PG-13

6 p.m. – Edge of Tomorrow 3-D, PG-13

8:30 p.m. – A Million Ways to Die in the West, R

11:30 p.m. – 22 Jump Street, R

### Saturday, July 19

10 a.m. – **Free Admission** The Nut Job, PG

12 p.m. – The Fault in Our Stars, PG-13

3 p.m. – X-Men: Days of Future Past 3-D, PG-13

6 p.m. – Edge of Tomorrow 3-D, PG-13

8:30 p.m. – 22 Jump Street, R

11 p.m. – Jersey Boys, R

### Sunday, July 20

12 p.m. – How to train your Dragon 2 3-D, PG

4 p.m. – **Sneak Preview** Hercules 3-D, pg-13

7:30 p.m. – Think Like a Man Too, PG-13

### Monday, July 21

6:30 p.m. – Edge of Tomorrow 3-D, PG-13

### Tuesday, July 22

6:30 p.m. – 22 Jump Street, R

### Wednesday, July 23

6:30 p.m. – X-Men: Days of Future Past, PG-13

### Thursday, July 24

5 p.m. – How to train your Dragon 2 3-D, PG

7:30 p.m. – A Million Ways to Die in the West, R

## High Desert

### A Doll's House

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## Liberty Call



## Music helps heal two broken characters in summer flick

### NEIL POND

#### "Begin Again"

Starring Mark Ruffalo, Keira Knightley & Adam Levine

Directed by John Carney

R, 104 min.

Summer is typically when Hollywood brings out the big guns — space aliens, shootouts, explosions, careening cars, rambunctious comedies. But here's a captivating little romantic charmer that floats along as easily as a summer love song.

Maybe that's because it all revolves around music. When a bottomed-out record man (Mark Ruffalo) meets a down-in-the-dumps singer-songwriter (Keira Knightley) recovering from a devastating breakup, it turns both of their bruised lives around.

Sure, it's a bit of a cliché, but Ruffalo and Knightley are immensely likeable — and believable. Knightley, the British actress better known for her Pirates of the Caribbean roles than for anything that requires crooning, shows that she can indeed more than capably carry a tune.

Ruffalo plays Dan, a scuffed-up New York producer who's just been canned from the record label he co-founded back in his glory days. "We need vision, not gimmicks!" he fumes. Knightley is Greta, the guitar-playing girlfriend of a fast-rising pop star (real-life pop-rock star Adam Levine, lead singer of the band Maroon 5, making his movie debut), "marooned" herself in New York when she finds out — by deciphering the lyrics of his latest song — that he's been cheating on her.

The audaciously creative musical project they agree to do together — recording outside, here, there and everywhere, in various New York loca-

tions — brings them together, although not exactly to the destination you might think they're headed.

CeeLo Green plays a version of himself as a music mogul who owes Dan for his success, and rapper Mos Def (Yasiin Bey) dons a shirt and tie as a record exec. Catherine Keener has some very natural moments, never overplaying, as Dan's ex-wife. As their provocatively (under)-dressed teenage daughter, Hailee Steinfeld, 17, gets to play a much more contemporary character than the one that brought her into the spotlight in the Coen Brothers' 2010 remake of True Grit.

The elements of the story interlace in delightful, heartwarming, human ways, all led by the music. This is a music-lover's movie, no doubt about it, from the well-crafted original songs written for Knightley and Levine's characters, to the numerous scenes involving the music business, songwriting and recording, and discussions about artistry, integrity, the creative process, and the potent emotional pathway that leads from the ears to the heart.

(It's also a reformed Americanized makeover, by Irish director John Carney, of his 2006 movie Once, if you're taking notes.)

A particularly lovely sequence has Dan and Greta sharing each other's favorite songs on earphones as they traverse New York. As they listen to Sinatra, Stevie Wonder and "As Time Goes By" from Casablanca, watching a parade of Manhattan nightlife, Dan remarks how music makes moments memorable, like little "pearls on a string" of otherwise ordinary experiences.

Begin Again won't make the list of this year's big, boomy blockbusters. But it's well worth seeking out if you're looking for a cool little pearl to savor some sweet, enchanted evening in the middle of the summer heat.

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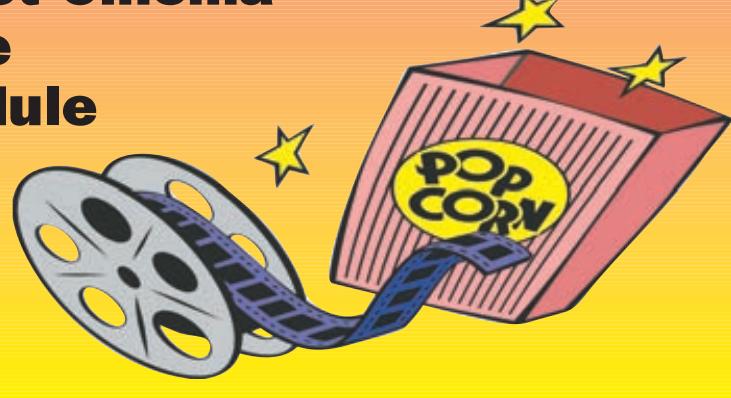
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