

# A HERO'S WELCOME

## Staff Sgt. Dodson returns to Combat Center

BY PFC. MEDINA AYALA-LO

From the main gate of the Combat Center to Shadow Mountain housing, Marines lined the streets. Some held welcome home posters and others waved miniature American flags, all waited for one person. The sound of approaching motorcycles grew louder. He was getting closer.

The Marines of 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, welcomed home Staff Sgt. Brandon Dodson, Monday.

"His wife wanted to do a big homecoming for him when he started feeling good," said Gunnery Sgt. Hector Jose Angulo, friend of Dodson. "It started out

as the company but then we ended up getting the whole battalion involved. Everybody was on board and everybody was willing to welcome him back."

Dodson, who served as a platoon sergeant, was deployed to Afghanistan for six months when the injury occurred. On Aug. 9, while conducting a routine patrol in Helmand Province, he stepped on a roadside bomb. He lost both legs.

"The one thing he wanted to do was see his Marines since he didn't get to come back with them," Angulo said. "You can say he's complete because he was able to see them."

For the last three months, Dodson has been recuperating with the



Staff Sgt. Brandon Dodson, platoon sergeant, Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines is welcomed by Marines of 1/7 at the Combat Center, Monday. Dodson plans on staying at the Combat Center long enough to attend his unit's birthday ball this weekend.

wounded warriors physical rehabilitation program at Walter Reed Military Medical Center in Bethes-

da, Md. Dodson plans on staying in Twentynine Palms long enough to attend his unit's Marine

Corps birthday ball this weekend. After the ball he will be returning to Maryland to continue his rehabilitation.

"I've known Staff Sgt. [Dodson] since 2008. I met him at D.I School and that's where our friendship began," Angulo said. "He's a man's man. He's really easy to get along with, won't hesitate to tell you how it is."

Upon landing in Palm Springs, Dodson and his family were greeted by the battalion Sergeant Major and the Commanding Officer. Dodson, a motorcycle enthusiast, was escorted to his house by a motorcycle brigade and when he arrived, he was warmly greeted by the Marines of Baker Company.

"It's absolutely amazing. It really shows me how much influence I have in the battalion and on the Marines, that they would do this for me," Dodson said.

Being able to see his family and friends again in such a grand way, touched Dodson and he was able to do the one thing he was looking forward to: reunite with his Marines.

"Even though he's been gone for almost four months now, I hope he feels welcome and still part of the First Team," said Sgt. Maj. Chasen E. Getty, battalion sergeant major, 1/7.

More photos Page A2

## Headquarters Battalion celebrates 239th Marine Corps Birthday

LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Headquarters Battalion Marines celebrated their 239th Marine Corps Birthday at the Rio Hotel and Resort in Las Vegas, Sunday.

HQBN Marines are responsible for maintaining and protecting the installation and training units that come aboard to conduct exercises. The Marines of HQBN vary from cooks, correspondents, logisticians, administrative personnel and combat training evaluators.

Retired Lt. Gen. Buck Bedard, a former exercise evaluator, otherwise known as Coyote, with Tactical Training Exercise Control Group, was the guest of honor at the ceremony.

"I think working at the Combat Center, both as the head Coyote and as the Commanding Officer of the 7th Marine Regiment, made me a better commander," Bedard said.

During the ball, Marines also witnessed ceremonial events, such as, the cutting of the cake and the passing of the first piece of cake from the oldest marine present to the youngest, representing the passing of tradition from one generation of Marines to the next. The Marine Corps birthday is a time of remembrance for Marines past and present.

"Today we are here to reflect on the ones who came before us," said Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General.

It is the Marines who are left who continue to carry on the legacy of their Marine ancestors.

Bedard believes that the Corps needs to keep going and stay strong for future conflicts the country may encounter.

Bedard also reminded us that the Marines of HQBN are the leading influence in the Marine Corps' pre-deployment training.

"You train every Marine for combat," Bedard said. "You should be proud of that."



Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, and retired Lt. Gen. Buck Bedard, guest of honor, proceed to the front of the ball room during Headquarters Battalion's 239th Marine Corps Ball ceremony at the Rio Hotel and Resort in Las Vegas, Sunday.

Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, addresses the audience during Headquarters Battalion's 239th Marine Corps Birthday Ball ceremony held at the Rio Hotel and Resort in Las Vegas, Sunday.



## CMC visits Combat Center during ITX 1-15



Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, greets a Staff Sgt. Darryl Huger, Staff Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge, Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 167, during Integrated Training Exercise 1-15, Nov. 14. The 36th commandant was greeted by the Combat Center's Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta.



Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, greets a Marine with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 167, during Integrated Training Exercise 1-15, Nov. 14.



Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, greets a rifleman with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, during a visit to a mock Forward Operating Base during Integrated Training Exercise 1-15, Nov. 14.

## Marine Corps' Top Shot

Every week, thousands of fans vote for the week on the best photograph, posted on the Corps' Facebook page. This week's top shot comes from Cpl. Jonathan R. Waldman.



LAV-25 Light Armored Vehicles from Charlie Company, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance detachment, Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), fire on fixed targets as part of a combined-arms engagement range during sustainment training in D'Arta Plage, Djibouti, Nov. 9. The 11th MEU is deployed as a theater reserve and crisis response force throughout U.S. Central Command and 5th Fleet area of responsibility.

# A HERO'S WELCOME

## Scenes from Staff Sgt. Dobson's return



Staff Sgt. Brandon Dodson, platoon sergeant, Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines talks to the Marines of 1/7 during his homecoming at the Combat Center, Monday. 1/7 Marines lined the streets from the Combat Center's main entrance to Dodson's house, to welcome him home. **PFC. MEDINA AYALA-LO**



Gunnery Sgt. Hector Jose Angulo, friend of Staff Sgt. Brandon Dodson, holds a plaque made in honor of Dodson during his homecoming to the Combat Center, Monday. **PFC. MEDINA AYALA-LO**



Staff Sgt. Brandon Dodson, platoon sergeant, Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines is welcomed by family, friends and Marines of 1/7 at the Combat Center, Monday. Dodson, a motorcycle enthusiast, was escorted to his house by a motorcycle brigade and when he arrived, he was warmly greeted by his company. **PFC. MEDINA AYALA-LO**



Staff Sgt. Brandon Dodson, platoon sergeant, Baker Co 1st Battalion, 7th Marines is welcomed by Marines of 1/7 at the Combat Center, Monday. Dodson was deployed to Afghanistan for six months when he stepped on a roadside bomb, costing him both legs. **PFC. MEDINA AYALA-LO**



Staff Sgt. Brandon Dodson, platoon sergeant, Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, is welcomed by Marines of 1/7 at the Combat Center, Monday. Marines from the entire battalion lined the streets from the Combat Center's main entrance to Dodson's house, unbeknownst to him. **PFC. MEDINA AYALA-LO**

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By Observation Post

# Chaplains mark 197th birthday

The Navy Chaplain Corps traces its history to the birth of the Navy itself. The Continental Congress adopted the second article of Navy Regulations on November 28, 1775, which provided for divine services aboard ships of 13 colonies.

The article reads: "The commanders of the ships of the Thirteen United Colonies are to take care that divine services be performed twice a day on board, and a sermon preached on Sunday, unless bad weather or other extraordinary accidents prevent."

John Paul Jones, recognizing the importance of chaplains aboard ship, wrote to Naval authorities in 1778 seeking to obtain chaplains for the ship Ranger and Bon Homme Richard. Since then the Chaplain Corps has been dedicated to creating a better way of life for all seafaring men. Because of influence of chaplains, flogging in the Navy was halted and various welfare

and recreation programs came into being.

In 1807 Chaplain Robert Thompson corresponded with the Secretary of the Navy urging establishment of a Naval Academy.

In 1938 a General Order was issued to permit chaplains to wear a Naval officer uniforms, and chaplains serving in the Civil War were officially given rank in 1863.

The first Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain John B. Frazier, was appointed in 1917.

The current Chief of Chaplains is Rear Admiral Francis L. Garrett, Chaplain Corps, United States Navy. He is an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church. He was appointed Chief of Chaplains on 1 July 1970.

Navy Chaplains played a major role in the Korean conflict while serving with Marine units and aboard ships.

During the Vietnam War Navy

Chaplains again distinguished themselves in their service to Marines and Sailors. Over 60 percent of all active duty Navy Chaplains have served in Vietnam.

Two Navy Chaplains, both Catholic, have been awarded the Medal of Honor: Commander Joseph T. O'Callahan, Chaplain Corps, USN while serving aboard the USS Franklin in World War II; and Lieutenant Vincent J. Capodanno, CHC, USNR while serving in Vietnam in 1967. Ships have been named in honor of both chaplains.

Navy Chaplains represent 54 denominations. Of the 913 active-duty Navy Chaplains, 7 are Jewish, 260 are Roman Catholic, 5 are Eastern Orthodox, and the remainder are Protestant. The five major Protestant denominations represented are Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Episcopalian. The Chaplain Corps seeks to parallel the American reli-

gious community in denominational representation.

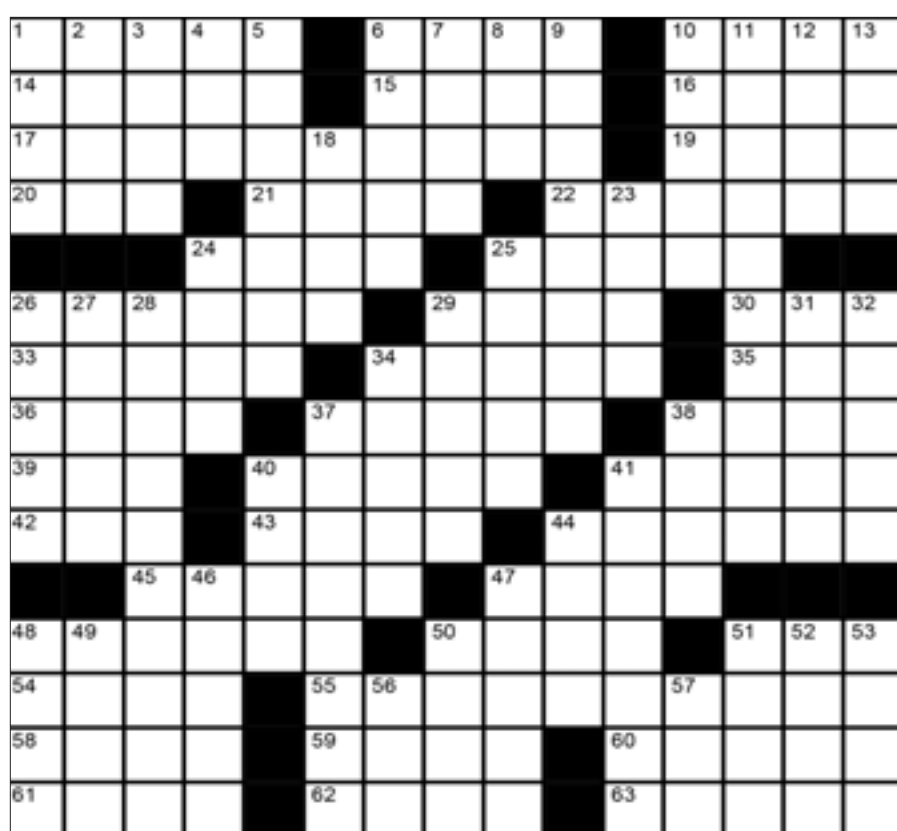
Three special qualifications must be met for appointment as a Naval Reserve Officer in the chaplain Corps. First, a candidate must have a bachelor's degree or 120 semester hours from an accredited college and 90 hours of seminary or an equivalent amount of appropriate graduate work. Secondly, he must be ordained, and thirdly, he must obtain an ecclesiastical endorsement from the endorsing agency of his faith which states, that he can function as a qualified representative of that religious body.

On active duty the chaplain conducts his ministry in accordance with the practices of his church and the dictates his conscience. The chaplain is free to preach, counsel, perform the sacraments, and to wear his vestments in accordance with the church or religion to which he belongs.

## CROSSWORD

### Across

- 1 Walk loudly
- 6 Ernie's buddy
- 10 "Leave it in," to a proofreader
- 14 Video's counterpart
- 15 Section of town
- 16 "That's terrible!"
- 17 Kind of joke
- 19 No, to Germans
- 20 Listening device?
- 21 Comes to a finish
- 22 Online greetings
- 24 Wedding day exchange
- 25 One of many in a mall
- 26 Lion or tiger
- 29 Recipe instruction
- 30 Airline until 2001
- 33 "Give \_\_\_! Don't pollute"
- 34 Troll's cousin
- 35 Drinker's sound
- 36 Gas used in lights
- 37 Words before a meal
- 38 South American nation
- 39 Ancient
- 40 Windshield problem
- 41 More difficult to find
- 42 Secret agent
- 43 Captain or general
- 44 Mother \_\_\_ (Nobel Peace Prize winner)
- 45 Casper, for one
- 47 Afflicts
- 48 Comes in low, like a bird of prey
- 50 German automaker
- 51 Just fine and dandy
- 54 Breakfast-all-day chain
- 55 Split evenly
- 58 Used a train or plane



- 59 At any point
- 60 Oregon \_\_\_
- 61 States out loud
- 62 Like a meadow in the morning
- 63 Get the idea
- 28 Teacher's pet
- 29 Between-meals food
- 31 Cables
- 32 Honda car
- 34 President Ulysses S. \_\_\_
- 37 Like some cattle
- 38 Golf course scores
- 40 Corn or wheat
- 41 Raises a second time
- 44 Neat
- 46 Desires for the future
- 47 Singing cowboy Gene \_\_\_
- 48 Gentlemen
- 49 "Stop right there!"
- 50 Not many
- 51 Not \_\_\_ of (not liking)
- 52 Singer Redding
- 53 "South Park" kid
- 56 "\_\_\_ got an idea!"
- 57 Wrath

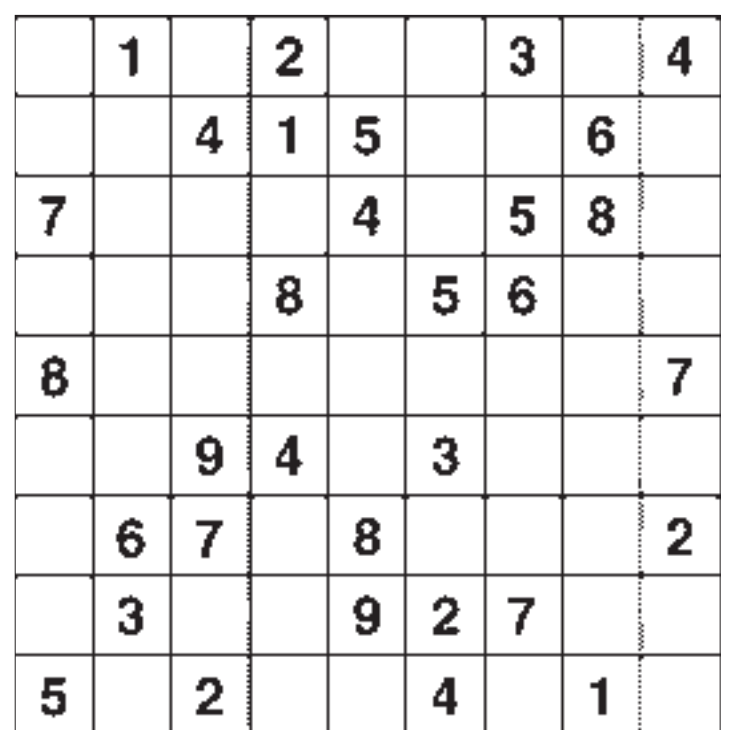
### Down

- 1 "For Pete's \_\_\_!"
- 2 Red sushi fish
- 3 Stench
- 4 Open \_\_\_ Night
- 5 Jabbed with a stick
- 6 Music groups
- 7 God of love
- 8 \_\_\_ center (place for kids to play)
- 9 Find room in your schedule
- 10 Detection system
- 11 "It'll all be fine!"
- 12 Oklahoma city
- 13 Lots and lots
- 18 Shoelace hassle
- 23 Apple's center
- 24 Desktop image
- 25 Inventory
- 26 Bathrooms, in Spanish
- 27 "May \_\_\_ you?"

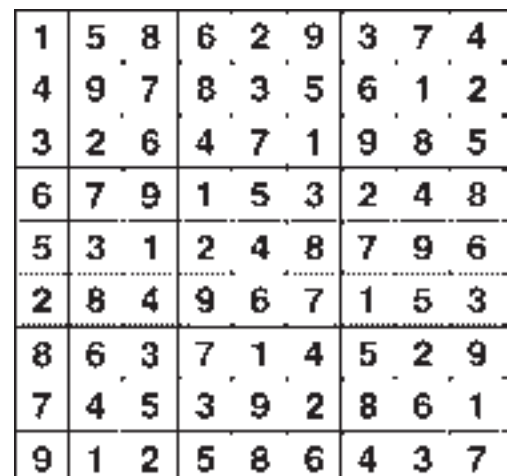
### Last week's answers



## SUDOKU



### Last week's solution



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  - Main Street Motel, 3494 Main St.
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- In Twentynine Palms:**
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  - 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.
  - Whisperring 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

# Marquis BEST

**Banning** administration specialist, lance corporal, 19

Marquis Best is passionate about photography and cars. His favorite vehicles are imports because he enjoys their uniquely customizable parts.

> **I went to a Lakers basketball game** when I was 8 years old and ever since then I've been a huge fan. My other sports team is the San Diego Chargers. I'm a fan of them because I'm from Southern California.

> **In high school, I ran track and** (participated in) the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps, JROTC, throughout high school. The program (initially sparked) my interest in the military. The other reason I joined was because I have family who also enlisted in the military.

> **I was originally stationed at (Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.)** but I'm on a (Temporary Assignment of Duty) aboard the Combat Center. I pretty much do the same thing there as I do here, just on a larger scale.

> **I'm very passionate about cars.** I'm a really big Acura fan and it looks really nice once it's finished. My favorite car is the 1993 Acura NSX.

> **I like to flip cars too.** I recently got a 1996 Acura Integra and I've started working on it. It looks a lot better now, but I've put so much sweat, blood and tears into that car. I've spent a few (thousand) on it.

> **I am strictly an import fan** because you can do more projects to them unlike muscle cars. Muscle cars are classics and you don't want to ruin a classic. They look stupid when you do too much to them.

> **I'm pretty much the 'go-to' guy** when it comes to cars. My friends are always asking me to help them with their car troubles.

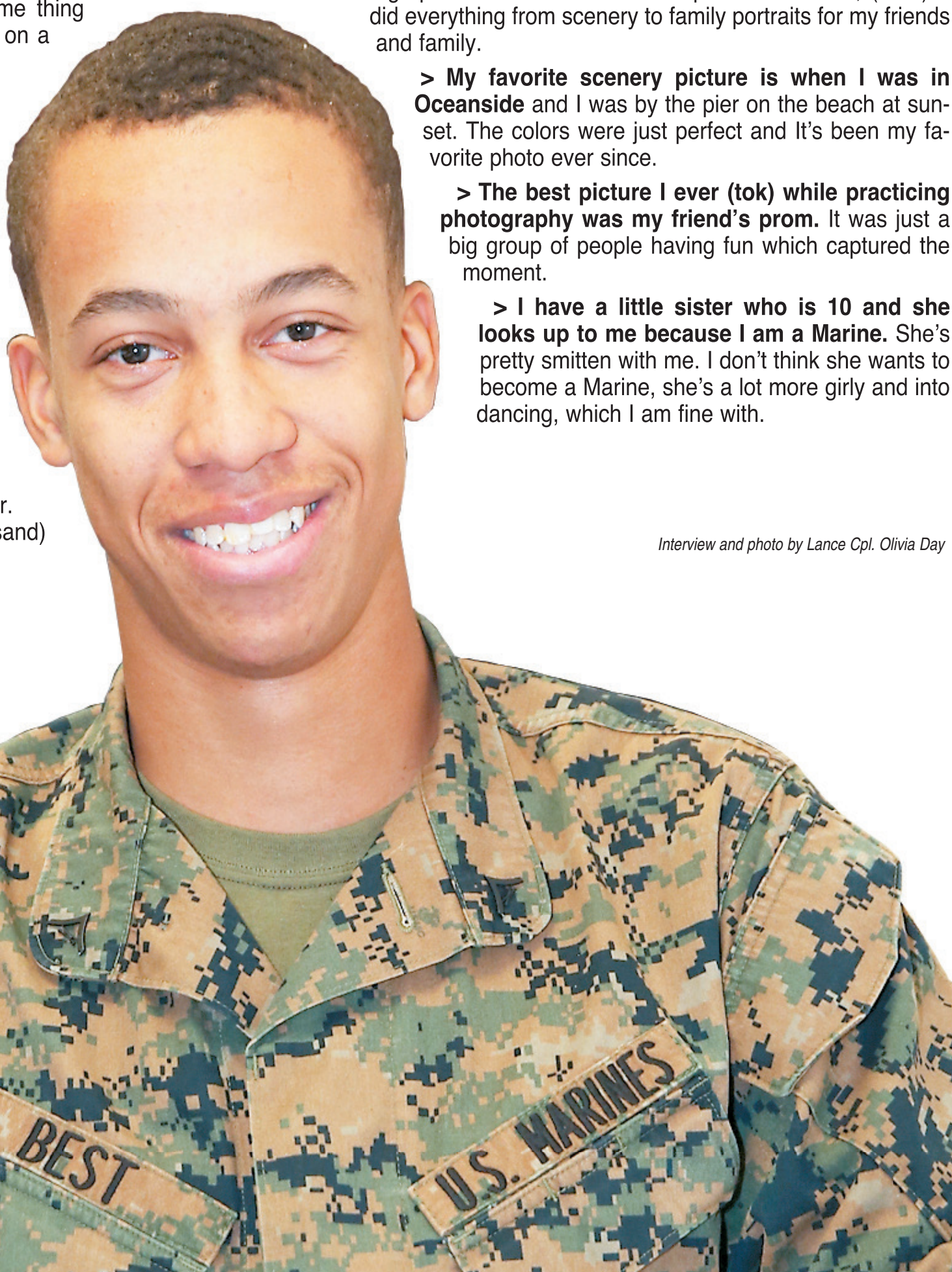
> **I don't really know what got me into cars,** but there's just something about working on them that's really peaceful and relaxing to me.

> **I'm also very interested in photography.** I was a photographer before the Marine Corps in Oceanside, (Calif). I did everything from scenery to family portraits for my friends and family.

> **My favorite scenery picture is when I was in Oceanside** and I was by the pier on the beach at sunset. The colors were just perfect and it's been my favorite photo ever since.

> **The best picture I ever (took) while practicing photography was my friend's prom.** It was just a big group of people having fun which captured the moment.

> **I have a little sister who is 10 and she looks up to me because I am a Marine.** She's pretty smitten with me. I don't think she wants to become a Marine, she's a lot more girly and into dancing, which I am fine with.



Interview and photo by Lance Cpl. Olivia Day

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# Tank Platoon rolls out

BY CPL PAULS. MARTINEZ

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. — Marines with Tank Platoon, Company B, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, conducted a three-day field training exercise at Landing Zone Hawk aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Nov. 12-14.

The platoon set out to develop their collective critical skills and execute the tasks they will be evaluated on during their stay at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, scheduled for the spring.

“The intent here was two main goals,” said 1st Lt. Kenton Comstock, platoon commander, Tank Platoon, Co. B, GCEITF. “To build crew cohesion and proficiency; and to familiarize our Marines with the tasks essential for our platoon to operate, as well as tasks that we will be evaluated on in Twentynine Palms.”

Over the three-day training period, the platoon practiced tank recovery via land tow, raced the clock in crew evacuation drills and kept maintenance skills sharp by breaking and repairing the tracks of the M1A1 Abrams tank.

“The Marines are retaining what they have learned,” said Sgt. Gilbert Ibarra, tanker, Tank Platoon, Co. B, GCEITF. “It shows when they get the opportunity to train out here. It’s good for me and good for them.”

The platoon will continue building their crew-level proficiency before executing a live-fire event early next year.

“(The training) was productive,” Comstock said. “We’ve got junior Marines learning and senior Ma-



Marines with Tank Platoon, Company B, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, command M1A1 Abrams tanks through the outside trails of aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Nov. 13. From October 2014 to July 2015, the GCEITF will conduct individual and collective level simulated ground combat arms occupational specialties in order to facilitate the standards based assessment of the physical performance of Marines in a

rine learning. The growth has been exponential.”

From October 2014 to July 2015, the GCEITF will conduct individual and collective level skills training in designated ground combat arms occupational specialties in order to facilitate the standards based assessment of the physical performance of Marines in a simulated operating environment performing specific ground combat arms tasks.

Marines with Tank Platoon, Company B, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, stage M1A1 Abrams tanks at Landing Zone Hawk aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Nov. 13. From October 2014 to July 2015, the GCEITF will conduct individual and collective level skills training in designated ground combat arms occupational specialties.



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# Integrated Task Force



CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ

CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ

Marines with Tank Platoon, Company B, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, command an M1A1 Abrams tank through the outside trails of Landing Zone Hawk aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Nov. 13. From October 2014 to July 2015, the GCEITF will conduct individual and collective level skills training in designated ground combat arms occupational specialties in order to facilitate the standards based assessment of the physical performance of Marines in a simulated operating environment performing specific ground combat arms tasks.



CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ



CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ

Sgt. Cody Ferrell, left, tank crewman, Tank Platoon, Company B, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, and Lance Cpl. Richard Yanez, tank crewman, Co. B, GCEITF, conduct tank maintenance at Landing Zone Hawk aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Nov. 13. From October 2014 to July 2015, the GCEITF will conduct individual and collective level skills training in designated ground combat arms occupational specialties in order to facilitate the standards based assessment of the physical performance of Marines in a simulated operating environment performing specific ground combat arms tasks.

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# Shooting team puts rounds down range

BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

The air was filled with anticipation as service members and civilians stood, waiting as Sgt. Maj. Karl Villalino, Combat Center sergeant major, aims an M14 service rifle from the 1,000-yard firing line. After a few seconds, the sergeant major pulled slowly on the trigger and fired the first round of the 55th Annual High Desert Regional Shooting Competition and with it, an explosion at the target line to start the competition off with a bang.

"I am absolutely honored to take this first shot," said Villalino. "This is what Marines do."

The High Desert Regional is a four-day competition where service members and civilians compete with rifles and pistols in both team and individual matches.

"This competition has been going on one year longer than the Inter-service competition," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Duane Ledford, Combat Center Shooting Team. "The Inter-service competition is where all the services come together and compete with the service rifle from 200 to 1,000 yards."

The event started with the individual 1,000-yard competition. On the second day, participants competed in the team 1,000-yard competition. On the third day, the 200, 300, and 600-yard competitions for both individuals and teams were held.

"The last day is where the shooters work towards their Excellence in Competition, where individuals can earn points toward becoming a distinguished marksman," Ledford said.

Being a distinguished marksman allows Marines to replace their traditional shooting badge with the distinguished shooter medal. Participants receive points through getting medals in events like the High Desert Regional.

Staff Sgt. Wayne Gallagher is the head coach of the base shooting team. This year



Sgt. Maj. Karl Villalino, Combat Center sergeant major, aims an M14 service rifle down range during the High Desert Regional Shooting Competition at the Combat Center, Nov. 13. Villalino fired the first shot, signifying the start of the competition.

he received four new members.

"Last year I trained all the older members of the club," Gallagher said. "This year I had the guys I trained help train the new members so they can have the techniques reinforced in them as they teach the skills they learned."

Gallagher has encouraged the team to focus on the team aspect of competitions

rather than the individual portion. The difference between the individual and the team matches is during the team matches, the team can coach the person firing and tell him what they believe will get the shooter a better score.

In the individual match, the competitor is left alone.

"The team uses the individual compe-

tion to prepare themselves for the team matches," Gallagher said. "They take the individual matches to find what they need to do to improve for the team matches."

After the four days of shooting, the competition was concluded. For those who are interested in becoming part of the base shooting team, contact the Marksmanship Training Unit at (760) 830-6700.



Lance Cpl. Brandon Debolt, Combat Center Shooting Team, fires a Match M16 service rifle down range during the 200-yard competition in the High Desert Regional Shooting Competition, Saturday. The third day, participants of the match competed in the team shooting portion at the 200, 300 and the 600-yard lines.



The participants of the High Desert Regional Shooting Competition aim at their targets from the 1,000-yard line aboard the Combat Center's qualification range, Nov. 13. The competition started with a 1,000 yard, individual match.

YouTube

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## TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



When I heard on a local radio station and read in our local paper that the Twentynine Palms High School Interact Club had 400 turkeys to share with families in our community at Thanksgiving, I knew immediately that my friend Eli Marshall of Marshall Networking had provided the turkeys. What a guy!

I first met Eli in 2009 when he donated 300 turkeys. In 2010 he donated 400 turkeys. The last two years he donated 500 and this year he's donating 400. The turkeys are being given November 22 at Twentynine Palms High School between 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM.

Eli is my kind of tough minded optimist. He understands the seriousness of the situation but he believes that if we all work together with a generous spirit and a positive attitude we can alleviate a bad situation.

Eli is a computer brain. He knows all about them. He also knows all about computer networking, phone systems, graphic design and other pragmatic matters.

On the other hand, Eli is a family man with deep love and concern for all people everywhere, especially right here in the high desert.

Eli is the kind of person who makes it a joy to live in the High Desert.

This column sponsored by:

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# 3/2 MARINES TRAIN FOR TRAP



LANCE CPL. JOHN BAKER

Marines with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, set security around a CH-53E Sea Stallion helicopter for a Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel training mission during the Integrated Training Exercise aboard the Combat Center Nov. 8. The purpose of the mission was to simulate recovering a downed pilot.

BY LANCE CPL. JOHN BAKER

Marines with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, participated in a Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel training mission aboard the Combat Center, Nov. 8. The training was part of Integrated Training Exercise I-15.

As the night rolled in, the Marines of Weapons Company received a call that there was a downed pilot and they immediately started planning. Leading the Marines was Cpt. James Vega, the executive officer for Weapons Company.

"Tonight we had close-air support supporting us on the deck," said Vega, from Kailua, Hawaii. "They clear any enemy out of the area before we insert the TRAP force."

In an isolated personnel scenario like the one they were given, it is important that they act fast to rescue the survivor.

"We plan and execute on a very short timeline," said Vega. "From the time we got the call to the time we got in the air, it was less than two hours. Once we had the grid of the isolated personnel we were out the door, so there's really not a whole lot of time to plan."

Before the mission was executed, every Marine was briefed about the isolated personnel. They received information about the stranded individual that can be used to identify them so they can be sure that they have the right person.

"It's not the ground force commander and it's not the staff sergeant supporting him that's going out and grabbing the isolated personnel," said Vega. "It's a lance corporal grabbing a pilot who's been on the ground for probably several hours, so it's important that they understand and know



LANCE CPL. JOHN BAKER

Marines with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, set up communications during a Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel training mission aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms Nov. 8. The purpose of the mission was to simulate recovering a downed pilot.

what's going on."

During missions like this it is crucial that Marines keep positive accountability of each other so that no one is left behind.

Lance Cpl. Khwamek Johnson, an M240 gunner with Weapons Company from Natchitoches Louisiana, explains simple methods they use to ensure accountability.

"We do what's called a MACO (Marshaling Area Control Officer) gate," said Johnson. "Our staff sergeant stands to one side

and counts everybody as they pass him to make sure we have accountability."

All Marine Expeditionary Units hold the capability to conduct TRAP missions. It is one of the many essential parts of the Marine Air Ground Task Force.

"Weapons platoons are known to do

TRAP missions," said Johnson. "It's important for us to know how to do this because if we don't, then we can't find that person."

Training missions like practicing for TRAP are part of what makes the MAGTF America's fully scalable, continually ready response force.



LANCE CPL. JOHN BAKER

Marines with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, await takeoff in a CH-53E Sea Stallion helicopter for a Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel training mission during the Integrated Training Exercise aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms Nov. 8.

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# MARINES PRACTICE REHEARSAL OF CONCEPT AT ITX 1-15

BY LANCE CPL. JOHN BAKER

**M**arine Corps leaders at Integrated Training Exercise 1-15, gathered for a rehearsal of concept drill for the Motorized Assault Course aboard the Combat Center, Nov. 7. The Marines went through the plan step-by-step to ensure it was understood by everyone.

Leaders from every unit participating in ITX attended the drill. Among them was Lt. Col. Timothy Powledge, the battalion commander of 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment.

"The rehearsal of concept drill is intended to bring the battalion together with the entire headquarters to make sure everyone understands the (Marine Air Ground Task Force) commander's intent," Powledge said.

Once the MAGTF commander's intent has been discussed, the commanders will use that information to begin more detailed planning for the mission before coming back together to brief their in-depth battle plans.

"We bring together all the elements of the MAGTF," Powledge said. "All these units come together from the East Coast and the West Coast and we've never worked together before. So it's very important that we get to meet each other, hear the commander's intent and discuss it in an open forum and talk through how we each see our own part in the mission."

The MAC is a large-scale training exercise that is bigger than these units are used to doing. Captain Jacob Godby, the assistant operations officer for 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment explained just how many different elements are going into this exercise.

"We're incorporating a lot of moving parts into this one large exercise," Godby said. "We have infantry, tanks, tracks, (light armored reconnaissance) as well as artillery and close air support."

Though some of the units are stationed at Twentynine Palms, others came from as far as Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, to participate in ITX.

"Twentynine Palms provides an awesome training facility," Godby said. "This is the only place where we can do live fire combined arms training with direct fire, indirect fire and close-air support on such a large scale."



LANCE CPL. JOHN BAKER

Marine Corps leaders watch as Maj. Jerry Godfrey, the supply officer for 7th Marine Regiment, speaks during the rehearsal of concept drill aboard the Combat Center, Nov. 7. The purpose of the drill was to discuss the Marine Air Ground Task Force commander's intent for the Integrated Training Exercise's Motorized Assault Course.



LANCE CPL. JOHN BAKER

First Lieutenant Brian Parker, a platoon commander for Company C, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, participates in a practice brief before a rehearsal of concept drill aboard the Combat Center, Nov. 7. The purpose of the drill was to discuss the Marine Air Ground Task Force commander's intent for the Integrated Training Exercise's Motorized Assault Course.



LANCE CPL. JOHN BAKER

Master Sgt. Anthony Greene, the operations chief for 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, surveys a map before a rehearsal of concept drill aboard the Combat Center, Nov. 7. The purpose of the drill was to discuss the Marine Air Ground Task Force commander's intent for the Integrated Training Exercise's Motorized Assault Course.



LANCE CPL. JOHN BAKER

Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Powledge, the battalion commander of 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, asks a question during a rehearsal of concept drill aboard the Combat Center, Nov. 7.



LANCE CPL. JOHN BAKER

Lieutenant Colonel Brian Middleton, operations officer for 7th Marine Regiment and DeSoto, Texas, native, starts the rehearsal of concept drill aboard the Combat Center, Nov. 7.



LANCE CPL. JOHN BAKER

First Lieutenant Jonathan Knight, an intelligence officer with 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, participates in a practice brief before a rehearsal of concept drill aboard the Combat Center, Nov. 7.

## Liberty Call



### Combat Center Events

**MCCS is scheduled** to host Turkey Bowling at 10 a.m. Nov. 22, at Sandy Hill Lanes. The event costs \$8 per person and includes three games or three hours of bowling, use of shoes and prizes. Registration for the event ends today. The event is open to all active-duty service members, retirees, Department of Defense employees and families.

**L.I.N.K.S. CAX for Kids** will be hosting 'A Day in the Life of Your Hero' on Tuesday, November 25, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Felix Field. The event is open to school children ages 6 to 12 years old. Kids CAX teaches children about the Marine Corps lifestyle. At the event, the kids will learn simple drill movements, relay races with uniform items, an inflatable obstacle course, MRE lunch and more. To register go to [tinyurl.com/linkscaxkids](http://tinyurl.com/linkscaxkids) or call 760-830-1696 for more information.

**MCX will be hosting** "Black Wednesday" at the Main Exchange, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Nov. 26. There will be door busters and all-day specials on the items in the store. Store hours on Friday will begin at 5 a.m. and close at 10 p.m. On Saturday the store hours will be from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

**One hundred families** from the Coachella Valley Country Clubs will host 350 Marines and sailors for Thanksgiving dinner, November 27. The participants will leave the base at 9 a.m. to go to the Coachella Valley Country Clubs and will arrive back at base by 8:45 p.m. For more information contact the Single Marine Program at (760) 830-4767.

**The Officers' Club** will be hosting Free Holiday Treats for Troops Workshop from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Dec. 3. At the event, participants will enjoy an evening of holiday cheer and fun for a cause that is close to everyone's heart. The troops will need to pick up their treats from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 5, at the Main Exchange.

### Sunset Cinema

#### Friday, Nov. 21

6 p.m. — The Best of Me, PG-13  
8:30 p.m. — Dracula Untold, PG-13  
11 p.m. — Fury, R

#### Saturday, Nov. 22

10:30 a.m. — Ice Age Continental Drift, PG  
1 p.m. — The Book of Life 3D, PG  
3 p.m. — Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day, PG

5 p.m. — Annabelle, R  
7:30 p.m. — The Judge, R  
11 p.m. — Fury, R

#### Sunday, Nov. 23

12 p.m. — The Book of Life, PG  
2 p.m. — The Judge, R  
5:30 p.m. — John Wick, R  
8 p.m. — Ouija, PG-13

#### Monday, Nov. 24

2 p.m. — The Nut Job, PG  
4 p.m. — Adventures of Tintin, PG  
6:30 p.m. — The Good Lie, PG-13

#### Tuesday, Nov. 25

2 p.m. — Frozen, PG  
4 p.m. — Home for the Holidays, PG-13  
6:30 p.m. — Annabelle, R

#### Wednesday, Nov. 26

1 p.m. — Free Birds, PG  
3 p.m. — Tyler Perry's: A Madea Christmas, PG-13  
5 p.m. — Christmas with the Kranks, PG  
7:30 p.m. — Fury, R

#### Thursday, Nov. 27

2 p.m. — Ouija, PG-13  
4 p.m. — John Wick, R

#### Friday, Nov. 28

2 p.m. — Rise of the Guardians, PG  
4 p.m. — Scrooged, PG-13  
6:30 p.m. — Dracula Untold, PG-13  
11:30 p.m. — Ouija, PG-13



MELINDA SUE GORDON

Anne Hathaway, left, and Matthew McConaughey star in "Interstellar," from Paramount Pictures and Warner Brothers Pictures, in association with Legendary Pictures.

## McConaughey stars in mind-bending space yarn

NEIL POND

### "Interstellar"

Starring Matthew McConaughey, Anne Hathaway & Michael Caine

Directed by Christopher Nolan  
PG-13

Outrageously ambitious, deliriously far-out and epically geeky, director Christopher Nolan's sprawling "Interstellar" is a space movie with one foot on the ground and one in the stars, a story of both humanity and the heavens, with a thumping heartbeat driving its spewing intergalactic fountain of dazzling, digitized special effects.

In this mind-bending yarn about gravity, time and the power of love, Matthew McConaughey plays a family-man space cowboy on a mission to save the Earth. As its story unfolds, sometime in the not-so-distant future, our planet's resources have been all but exhausted; the world's a big dust bowl. McConaughey's character, Cooper, a former moon-exploring astronaut, is selected for a top-secret, last-ditch NASA dash across deep space to chase down a probe signal that may possibly signal a new planetary home.

Big problem: The widowed Cooper will have to leave behind his sage old dad (John Lithgow) and his two young children, teenage son Tom (Timothee Chalamet) and spunky young daughter Murph (Mackenzie Foy). Even bigger problem: Once he takes off, Cooper doesn't know how long how he'll be gone — or if he'll be able to return.

Cooper tries to reassure Murph — he gives her an old-school wristwatch and tells her that whenever she looks at it, she can know he'll be looking at his, too, wherever he is, up there in space, for however long, until he comes home. Tick-tock, tick-tock.

Nolan, whose other films include the Batman "Dark

Knight" trilogy and the mind-scrambling "Inception," sets off an explosion of images and ideas as the tale unfolds both "on the ground" and "out there." We're taken through a space "wormhole," a shortcut expressway compressing and expanding space and time, to a planet where every hour counts for seven years of Earth time, and another that's so cold, even the clouds are solid ice. We watch as Cooper, whose own aging has been halted by the time-warp of space travel, sees video feeds of his children grown into adults (Jessica Chastain and Casey Affleck) — and bitter that their father has apparently abandoned them, "decades" ago.

Anne Hathaway plays one of Cooper's fellow explorers — a key role in more ways than one because of her connection to her NASA scientist father (Michael Caine) back on Earth, and also to someone the astronauts will meet on their journey to the outer reaches of the cosmos.

Along the way, we're introduced to some lofty concepts: Are we alone in the universe? Is it possible to go backward and forward in time, or to make it stand still? Is love a quantifiable force? Nolan lays out a narrative path between Odysseus, Albert Einstein and Buck Rogers, then paints it with bold cinematic brushstrokes inspired by the masters — Stanley Kubrick, Steven Spielberg, John Ford.

It doesn't always work, but man, is it ever something to see. It gets pretty trippy (and even a bit hokey) in the end, and at nearly three full hours, it's quite a journey. And this rip-roaring Rip Van Winkle rocket tale is unlike anything else you've seen at the movies this year, if ever. Hang on for the ride and you may come out on the other side feeling a bit wobbly and time-warped yourself.

And afterward, you might never look at the tick-tock of your wristwatch the same way again.

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