



LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

Max Hart, 3, son of Nicole Hart, military spouse, builds dinosaur formations with Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School students during Operation Homefront's holiday toy distribution at the Community Center, Dec. 3. OHF is a financial assistance program for veterans and active duty service members. **For another photo, see page A6.**

Combat Center families take part in OHF toy giveaway

BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

The faint sound of holiday music drifts through the air to greet all who walk through the doors. On the tables there are toys galore, dolls, footballs and action figures, all the things needed to make a child's Christmas dream come true.

Operation Homefront hosted a holiday distribution at the Combat Center Community Center, Dec. 3.

"I believe that military families sometimes suffer and these types of programs will help offset some of the holiday costs that appear," said Katrina Gonzalez, program manager, OHF.

OHF is a financial assistance program for veterans and active duty service members. They are based in San Diego and have representatives who travel all over California. The program receives corporate and in-

dividual donations that make their giveaways possible.

"We have our 'back to school brigade' in the summer and holiday parties in November and December," Gonzalez said. "The only way that we're successful is through our volunteers and partnerships with Marine Corps Community Services that make this event successful."

Programs like OHF are designed to provide parents and family members with relief during hectic times of the year, like the back to school season or around the holidays. This year they accommodated approximately 250 children.

"I do think when you have 2 or 3 kids, a premium toy that we give to one child might be worth 15-20 dollars," Gonzalez said. "That could be 60 plus dollars they're getting from

us, which could amount to a week's worth of groceries."

Through OHF's partnerships with dollar tree and the National Charity League, military service members are able to continue to gain assistance and provide holiday joy for their families annually.

"There's a lot of Marines out there who don't have the opportunity to come to these events," said Sgt. Jorge Altamiranosoto, motor vehicle operator, 1st Tank Battalion. "It's mainly to help the junior marines, and even ourselves. Getting something extra always helps and people shouldn't hesitate to come out here."

For more information on how to get involved, visit OperationHomefront.net or contact Michelle Hagge (858) 242-4995.

Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital hosts 3rd annual holiday party

BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

There is a festive feel at Smith's Ranch. Christmas lights hang from the rafters, illuminating the room. Whimsical notes of holiday music fill the air as volunteers prepare the final touches for the night's events.

Members of the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital attended a holiday party at Smith's Ranch, Dec. 11.

The party began with dinner and ended with a holiday raffle. Throughout the night there were a variety of activities including multiple giveaways including bikes and Christmas trees.

The night also included a visit from Santa Claus and a prize giveaway toward the end of the night.

The event was sponsored by Bob Hope United Service Organization, Palm Springs.

"This event in particular is important because it lets the caretaker, which is the staff of the hospital, know that they are appreciated

"We're so blessed to be able to have this and give back to the staff members and their families"

— HM1 Celeste Soza, directorate for clinical services leading petty officer

for what they do," said Teresa Cherry, center manager, Bob Hope USO, Palm Springs, native of Montecito, Washington. "We are here to lift the spirits of service members and their families because every moment counts."

Children lined up, with wonder in their eyes, to meet Santa and tell him their Christmas wishes. Parents took this as an opportunity to take priceless photos of their young ones

See **PARTY** page A6



LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

Elysia Morris, military spouse, native of Auburn, Washington, places her daughter Maya, 1, onto Santa's lap during the Bob Hope United Service Organization, Palm Springs sponsored Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital holiday party at Smith's Ranch, Dec. 11. The party included pony rides, live music, and prize giveaways.

Marine Corps' Top Shot

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



Marines with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 467, Marine Aircraft Group 29, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, II Marine Expeditionary Force returned to Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C., from a deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Dec. 6. HMLA-467 was part of the last Marines to be deployed to the Helmand province of Afghanistan in support of OEF with the purpose of providing close-air support to the Marines operating on the ground. The squadron began their first part of their combat deployment early May at Camp Bastion in the Helmand province and finished at Kandahar Airfield in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Combat Center hosts Family Fun Festival



LANCE CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

Santa Claus hands Alexa Velazquez, 2, daughter of Ksenia and Sgt. Rene Velazquez, roadmaster, Headquarters Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, natives of Chicago, Ill., a candy cane during the Holiday Family Fun Festival at the Main Exchange, Dec. 12. More than 450 people attended the four-hour-long event.



LANCE CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

Courtney Evans, face painter, paints a snowman on Josiah Guerrero's, 3, son of GERALYN De Los Santos and Joseph Guerrero, natives of Hawaii, face during the Holiday Family Fun Festival at the Main Exchange, Dec. 12. Three face painters painted different holiday themed items on the faces of more than 300 children.



Reprinted from the Observation Post
December 22, 1989

3rd LAI Marines are home in time for holidays

BY LANCE CPL LISA COOK

“Daddy,” a young girl squeals when she sees her father for the first time in a year. His wife leaps into his arms after their long separation; a family together again.

This was the sight when Marines from Company B, 3rd Light Armored Infantry Battalion (3rd LAI) returned to the Combat Center Thanksgiving Day from Camp Fuji, Japan after a year’s deployment. Also Marines from Company D, returned from Camp Schwab on Okinawa Dec. 6. The remaining unit, Company C of the battalion will stay in Japan at Camp Schwab indefinitely.

The Marines were temporarily assigned to the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force, on a one year unaccompanied tour, while Company A, reinforced, was the only company to remain at the Combat Center.

In Japan the battalion was able to train in a terrain much different than that of the Hi-Desert. They participated in a variety of maneuvers, and Company C participated in Team Spirit 89 this past spring.

“Every Marine should go overseas at least once.” said Sgt. Edward Lemos, Company B. “It gives you a chance to see people and cultures that otherwise would have been impossible. Most of all, it makes you appreciate everything so much more.”

Marines of Company B had been aboard the USS

Mount Vernon. They were completing paperwork and preparing their vehicles for debark. On board ship the Marines had opportunity to watch two English language television stations instead of the one that they had access to in Japan. Of course much of their time was spent thinking of the loved ones that they would soon be seeing.

A year ago, before the Marines left for Japan, their families attended a Family Readiness Program to help prepare them for their spouses’ absence. While the Marines were in Japan, Charlene Burham, wife of Sgt. David Burham, Company A, was a point of contact for the wives here who might have had any problems, personal or financial while their husbands were away.

Most of the Marines will take 30 days leave during the holidays after their long separation from their families. Some will use this time to bring back spouses who stayed with relatives during their absence.

When the Marines return to their normal duties, they will have to re-adjust to the climate. Training will continue as the 3rd LAI Marines prepare for a field exercise they will participate in February.

SSgt. Keith Harris, Company B, said of his homecoming, “Japan is a great learning experience for any Marine, but it’s great to be back in the States.”

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

BRAXTON KAI MATOUSEK
Born on: Nov. 28, 2014
Born to: Trevor and Tomeshia Matousek

SAMUEL ELIJAH PRUITT
Born on: Nov. 30, 2014
Born to: Michael and Anna-Marie Pruitt

SOPHIA JADE YOUNG
Born on: Dec. 1, 2014
Born to: Kevin and Jaynee Young

TALIA ISABELLE SFEIR
Born on: Dec. 3, 2014
Born to: George and Elizabeth Sfeir



Hey Combat Center fans – Spread the word!
The Combat Center has its own
YouTube channel. Find it at <http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>.

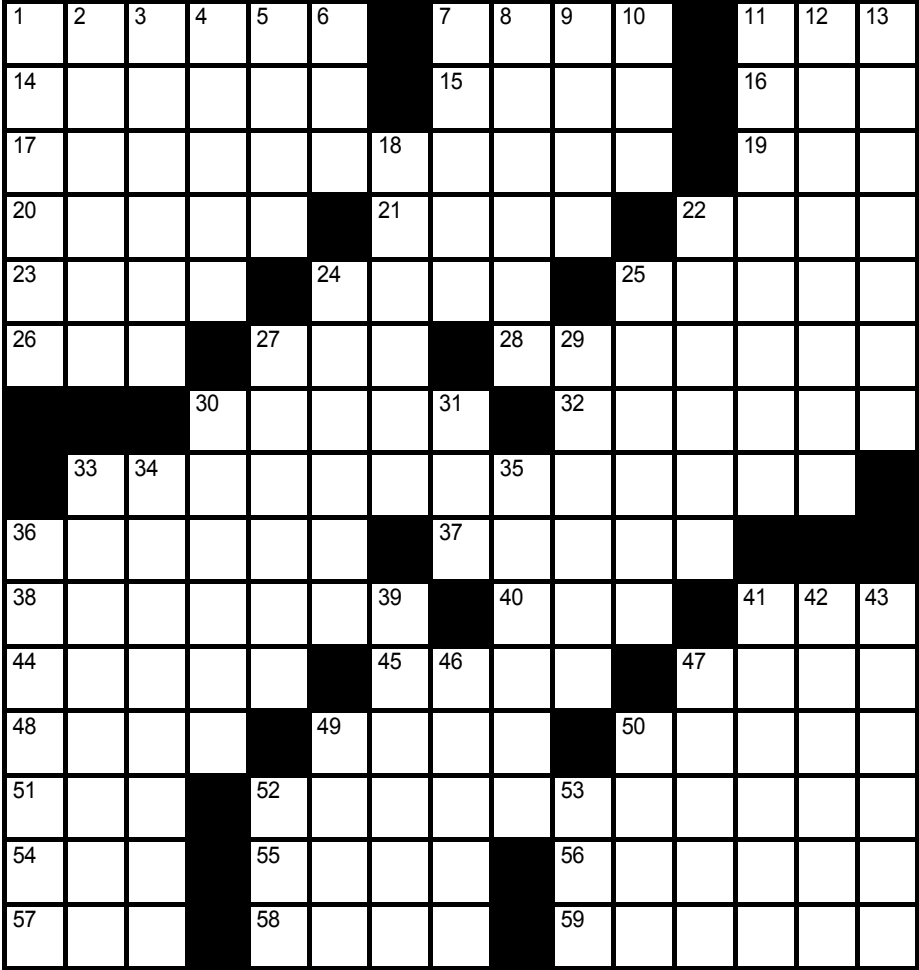


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CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Decayed, like metal
- 7 Catty comment
- 11 Bar obligation
- 14 Actor Peter
- 15 European volcano
- 16 "Open, sesame" speaker
- 17 Cheesy film starring Marlon Brando? (with "The")
- 19 Huge amount
- 20 Downs or salts
- 21 Lane of Metropolis
- 22 Something to plant
- 23 Formal wear
- 24 Group of nations
- 25 Don't go straight
- 26 Bummed, say
- 27 Animation or spirit
- 28 Athlete
- 30 Ascends to a height
- 32 Paces
- 33 Cheesy film starring Michael J. Fox?
- 36 Knock off the track
- 37 Certain locks
- 38 "Let's Stay Together" singer
- 40 Vicious fellow?
- 41 Typing test stat.
- 44 One using Elmer's
- 45 Silly Sandler
- 47 Storage structure on a farm
- 48 Tiffany merchandise
- 49 Feeling superior
- 50 Old fishing tool
- 51 "WALL-E" love interest
- 52 Cheesy film starring Humphrey Bogart?
- 54 Series, in cards
- 55 Cast forth
- 56 Some navels



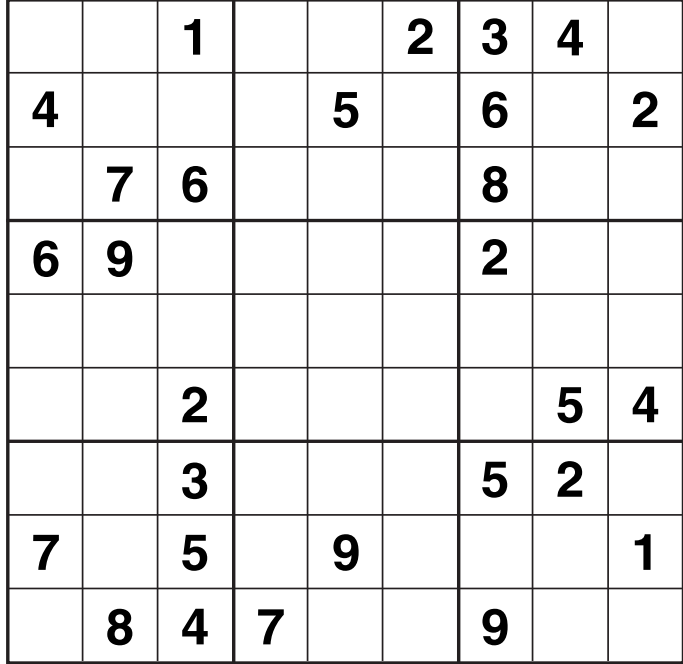
- 57 Spot for a scene
- 58 Round specks
- 59 Canine categories

Down

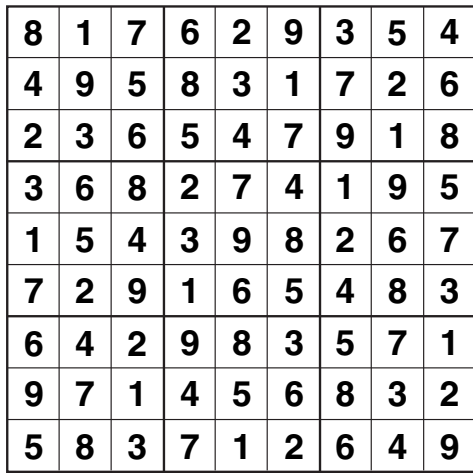
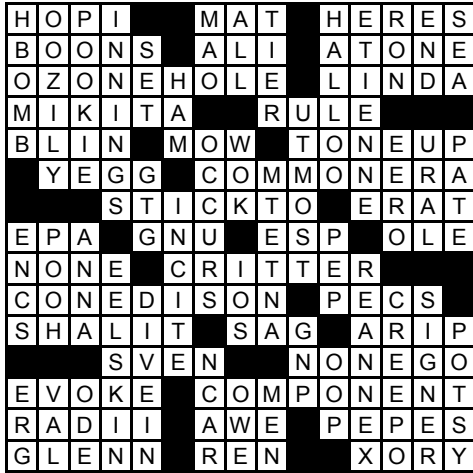
- 1 Popular thesaurus
- 2 More perfect world?
- 3 Drunk as a skunk
- 4 Minor errands
- 5 Jack of old westerns
- 6 OED offering
- 7 Tagalong's cry
- 8 Morals
- 9 Dollar bills
- 10 Kind of chest
- 11 Deep-fried mouthful
- 12 Medicinal juice
- 13 Some school supplies
- 18 Among the best in the league
- 22 Billows
- 24 "Revolver" musician
- 25 Styled in the salon
- 27 More dawdling
- 29 Undercard match, for short
- 30 Gives the willies to
- 31 Pig abode
- 33 City near Seattle
- 34 Debater's activity
- 35 Gives it a shot
- 36 Cloaks' partners

- 39 "Your wish is my command"
- 41 Frank
- 42 Arranged
- 43 Quagmire
- 46 Does a housecleaning task
- 47 Flurry
- 49 Wrestling with the big guys
- 50 Speak thickly
- 52 Abbr. in a math textbook
- 53 Try for an apple

SUDOKU



Last week's answers



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OFF-LIMITS ESTABLISHMENTS

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

- In Oceanside:**
- Angelo's Kars, 222 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054
- Angelo's Kars, 226 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054
In San Diego:
- Club Mustang, 2200 University Ave.
- Club San Diego, 3955 Fourth St.
- Get It On Shoppe, 3219 Mission Blvd.
- Main Street Motel, 3494 Main St.
- Vulcan Baths, 805 W. Cedar St.
In National City:
- Dream Crystal, 15366 Highland Ave.
- Sports Auto Sales, 1112 National City Blvd.

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

- In Twentynine Palms:**
- Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Rd.
- STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.
- K Smoke Shop, 5865A Adobe Rd.
In Yucca Valley:
- Yucca Tobacco Mart, 57602 29 Palms Hwy.
- Puff's Tobacco Mart, 57063 29 Palms Hwy.
In Palm Springs:
- Village Pub, 266 S. Palm Canyon Dr.
- Whispering Palms Apts., 449 E. Arenas Road
- NYPD Pizza, 260-262 N. Palm Canyon Drive

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

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Grace HASLET, N.J. Financial analyst, Comptroller Directorate

LEBDA

Lebda has 42 years of civil service. Her official retirement date is Jan. 1, which is also her birthday.



> **I've been in** Twentynine Palms, [Calif.] since 1975.

> **I was born in Brooklyn, N.Y.,** and raised in New Jersey. Before I came here, I worked for the Navy at Earle's Naval base in New Jersey and then I worked at an Army base in New Jersey before I came out here.

> **My mom had five children** and she was a single mom so we were raised on welfare. That's how I started in civil service. We were a low-income family and I had applied for the student aid program. That's when I started working for the different bases. When I finally passed that program, I was able to come into civil service without even taking the test.

> **Growing up, I remember** my mom was in charge of the Red Cross for the district. We used to help her go door-to-door and collect money.

> **When I got here, I was only 19 years old.** I just wanted to get away, so I applied for a job here over the phone. I drove from the east coast to the west coast. I got here on a Monday and I started work on Tuesday and I've been here ever since.

> **It was my first time away from home** and it was scary because I was only 19. When I got out here, there was nothing.

> **I stayed with a friend on base for a while** and then I had to get my own apartment. I moved into this apartment with a set of dishes, my clothes and a TV.

> **When I got here,** I was working at the commissary for about three months. Then this job opened and I applied for it and received on the job training.

> **I didn't have any prior experience** in financial planning.

> **I've worked in all different parts** of the finance office. I started as a clerk and then I became an auditor and then I was in charge of military pay. I was [officer-in-charge] for military pay for a long time, and then when they moved the finance office down to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, [Calif.] due to consolidation I was a [Defense Travel System] agent. I'm also a lead defense travel administrator for the base.

> **I received the highest award** a civilian can get working for civil service. I was taken aback, and I didn't

even know I was being looked at for that. My supervisor at the time recommended me.

> **I like dealing with Marines.** When I was OIC for military pay, I had 40 Marines that worked under me and I just loved working with them. In fact, I used to cook a lot of food and feed them all the time.

> **I support the Marines** because when they go [temporary assignment duty] we ensure they get the entitlements that they deserve and we ensure that they're paid correctly. When a Marine is paying off a debt of some sort they come to us and make that payment also.

> **I'm on the Twentynine Palms community food pantry,** and I hand food out twice a month there. I like to make sure that people are fed.

> **Food is donated to us** and we hand out food to people who need it, like people with low income or the homeless.

> **I've been involved with this for** over 15 years. I got involved through my church. They had a pantry at the church, and I just started volunteering.

> **I like to cook, and around Thanksgiving,** I have people give me their leftover turkey carcass and I take that and make soup and give it to everybody.

> **I love to ride motorcycles.** My husband and I do a lot of different runs for different fundraisers.

> **I started riding when** I was in high school.

> **I ride with a Christian group** and I know God has his hand on me so I'm not afraid.

> **We do runs with different groups** that are more hardcore bikers and they accept us because they know we're Christians. They even come over and we pray with them sometimes.

> **I love plants.** I used to have over 60 house plants. I don't pay attention to the names, I just help them grow. I love to watch little leaves when they first start budding. When they're all rounded up and they unravel.

> **I'm glad I came here because** I've met a lot of people. I can honestly say that if I were to take a trip around the world I would have a home to stay in.

> **If you were to open up my year book,** under my photo where they write the descriptions, mine says 'work for the government'.

> **I'm planning to stay home for a month.** I have some unfinished rooms in my house so I'm going to work on those. I also want to volunteer for Tender Loving Christmas in Yucca Valley, [Calif.] and look into Unity Home for battered women.

> **It makes me feel good,** I enjoy helping other people if it's a true need.

> **I've been around Marines for** so long. I know I'm going to miss working on base.

> **I like it all, I can't pin point it.** I like meeting people, I like meeting all kinds of people coming from all different places and just talking.

> **I'm not afraid to walk up to anybody** and start a conversation. I'm not afraid to ask questions because if I was shy, how would I do my job? Don't tell me I can't do anything, because I will. To me, that's like a challenge.

INTERVIEW AND PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO



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Palm Springs hosts 23rd ann

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

PALM SPRINGS, Calif., — As the sunlight faded over Palm Canyon drive, floats draped in holiday multi-colored lights began to move and the crowd of more than 60,000 spectators grew louder as each passed, spreading holiday cheer at the 23rd annual Festival of Lights Parade in Palm Springs, Calif., Saturday.

“The Festival of Lights Parade is a community event organized by the city of Palm Springs,” said Jasmine Sullivan-Waits, Palm Springs special events coordinator.

The parade hosted more than 90 holiday themed floats from businesses and agencies in the Palm Springs area like the Palm Springs Fire Department, the California Highway Patrol, and two vehicles from the combat center, which were an Oshkosh Defense Logistics Vehicle System Replacement and Oshkosh Defense Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement, all decorated with holiday themed multi-colored lights.

“I absolutely love this parade,” said Kayla Waymire, a spectator at



Fire Chief John Allen, Palm Springs Fire Department, waves at spectators from a carriage drawn by 3 Clydesdale horses at the Festival of Lights Parade in Palm Springs, Calif., Dec. 6. Over 90 floats decorated in holiday themed lights participated in the parade.

Matthew Quick, motor transportation operator, CLB-7, and a native of

“Interacting with the people and answering their questions about what I do and the equipment that we use is satisfying.”

— Lance Cpl. Matthew Quick, motor transportation operator, CLB-7

the parade. “It brings the community together, some families have been out here all afternoon barbequing creating memories and all the floats with the loud music and colorful lights are fantastic.”

Before the parade kicked off, Marines from Combat Logistics Battalion 7 displayed their military vehicles answering questions and taking photographs with people attending the parade.

“It’s fun being out here and supporting the community,” said Lance Cpl.

Newnan, Ga., “interacting with the people and answering their questions about what I do and the equipment that we use is satisfying.”

This was the 23rd year that the city has hosted the parade. Different themed floats rolled through street spreading holiday cheer, with everything from music out the motion picture “Frozen” to dancers in attire covered in lights, the parade captured the glow of the season and the community.



A Volkswagen Beetle cruises down the street decorated in holiday themed lights during the 23rd annual Festival of Lights Parade in Palm Springs, Calif., Dec. 6. Businesses and agencies in the Palm Springs area, to include the Combat Center, participated in the parade.

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Annual Festival of Lights Parade



A float decorated in holiday themed lights rolls down the street playing music from the motion picture "Frozen" at the 23rd annual Festival of Lights Parade in Palm Springs, Calif., Dec. 6. More than 60,000 people attended the annual parade.



Lance Cpl. Matthew Quick, motor transportation operator, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, radios last minute checks to the other vehicles at the 23rd annual Festival of Lights Parade in Palm Springs, Calif., Dec. 6. The Combat Center provided a rolling display of vehicle for the parade.



Lance Cpl. Matthew Quick, motor transportation operator, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, a native of Newnan, Ga., answers questions for parade spectators, Chris and Rebecca Lacour, at the 23rd annual Festival of Lights Parade in Palm Springs, Calif., Dec. 6. Marines from CLB-7 Answered questions about their equipment and posed for photographs with spectators of the parade.



Cpl. Brandon Bowen, motor transportation operator, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, native of Newport, Vermont, waves at the crowd during the 23rd annual Festival of Lights Parade in Palm Springs, Calif., Dec. 6. CLB-7 provided an Oshkosh Defense Logistics Vehicle System Replacement and Oshkosh Defense Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement as rolling display for the parade.

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Showtimes Effective
12/19/14 - 12/25/14

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2D 3:30 9:30 • 3D 12:30 6:30
Night at The Museum: Secret of The Tomb (PG)
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

Friday, Dec. 19 - Wed., Dec. 24
Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1 (PG13)
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00
Exodus: Gods & Kings (PG13)
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Nicole Hart, military spouse, browses for toys during Operation Homefront's holiday distribution at the Community Center, Dec. 3. OHF receives corporate and individual donations that make their giveaways possible.

PARTY, from A1

with Santa.

"These kinds of events help to show our gratitude to the military members for all the sacrifices they have to endure," said Brian J. Coyle, director, Charter Center Relations, USO, native of Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Service members and their loved ones hit the dance floor as live music played. Others enjoyed the night's meal with their families.

"We're so blessed to be able to have this and give back to the staff members and their families," said HM1 Celeste Soza, directorate for clinical services leading petty officer, native of Chandler, Arizona. "They work really hard and the families sacrifice a lot. To be able to give back to them is exciting."



Children create arts and crafts during the Bob Hope United Service Organization, Palm Springs sponsored Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital holiday party at Smith's Ranch, Dec. 11. This is the third consecutive year that the Bob Hope USO, Palm Springs has sponsored the holiday party.

Christmas Services

Yucca Valley Center for Spiritual Living

December 21, 10am
Christmas Sunday Celebration Service
December 24, 6pm
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
December 31, 4am
World Peace Meditation Service
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Peace for the Broken

Sunday, Dec. 21,
9:30 & 11:00 a.m.
Candlelight Christmas Eve
An hour to reflect and worship
Dec. 24, 5-6 p.m.

First Christian Church

56284 Buena Vista Dr.
yuccavalleychurch.com
760-365-4014

Christmas Eve Service 5pm

Yucca Valley Church of the Nazarene
Helping People Take Their Next Step Towards Christ
56248 Buena Vista Drive
Yucca Valley 760-365-7819
www.yvnazarene.org

CHRISTMAS EVE

Candle Lighting Service at 7pm

Little Church of the Desert
6079 Adobe Rd., 29 Palms, CA

St. Mary of the Valley Catholic Church

7495 Church St. ~ Yucca Valley
61261 Sunburst Dr. ~ Joshua Tree
760-365-2287

Come Celebrate Christmas!

Wednesday, December 24 ~ Christmas Eve Masses
4:00pm ~ Joshua Tree 6:00pm ~ Yucca Valley **Family Mass**
12:00am Midnight Mass (preceded by caroling at 11:30pm)
Thursday, December 25 ~ Christmas Day Masses
9:00am ~ Yucca Valley

Desert Hills Presbyterian Church

Candlelight Service
December 24 at 5:00 p.m.
Sunday Service at 10:00 a.m.
56750 Mountain View Trail
Yucca Valley
(760) 365-6331

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Christmas Day: 11:00am communion service
32150 Candlewood Drive, Cathedral City, California 92234
MCCCCV.NET 760 512 1700

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Sun., December 21 – 6:00 PM
Choral Presentation & Bible Message (CBC Sanctuary)

Wed., December 24 – 7:00 PM
Christmas Eve Service (CBC Sanctuary)

Sun., January 4 – 11:00 AM
First Sunday of 2015 (CBC Sanctuary)

Calvary Baptist Church
57175 Crestview Dr.
(across from the YV Airport on Hwy. 247)
For more info. call 760-365-9731
Pastor Rob D. Watkins

December 24:
7 p.m.
Family Candlelight Service
11:15 p.m.
Midnight Communion Service

December 25:
10 a.m.
Christmas Service with Holy Communion

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Rev. Matthew H. Jennings, Pastor
59077 Yucca Trail, Yucca Valley
CHURCH: 365-2548

Church on the Hill

• **Sunday, December 21:**
Sunday School at 9:30 am
Worship Service at 11:00 am
Potluck to immediately follow service.

• **Wednesday, December 24:**
Special Christmas Eve Communion Service at 6:00 pm

Pastor Jeff Alkire
6088 Sunset Rd.
Joshua Tree
(North side of the hwy)
760-974-9075

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CALVARY CHAPEL
57373 Joshua Lane

December 21st 6pm
December 24th 5pm and 7pm

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St. Joseph of Arimathea Episcopal Church, Yucca Valley

Dec. 24th 6:00 pm
Sundays 10:00 am

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(760) 774-8918

New Years Eve Service 12/31 10pm
Spirit & Truth Worship Center Church
4751 Adobe Rd 29 Palms CA

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Combat Center mothers attend Christmas Baby Shower

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

INDIAN WELLS, Calif. – As 19 expectant mothers walked into the ballroom, their faces lit up with appreciation when they saw a stage lined with gifts meant for them, and their soon-to-be born babies.

Twelve spouses, six Marines and one sailor attended the 4th Annual Assistance League Christmas Marine and Navy Baby Shower in Indian Wells, Calif., Dec. 10, which was hosted by the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort and Spa.

More than 130 people attended the event including the Combat Center Chief of Staff, Col. James Hanlon and his wife Heather Hanlon who were the guests of honor.

“All these women are young and some of them are going to be first-time mothers. What better way to help them out than to give them a starter kit

for babies,” Roberts said.

The event treated the 19 expectant mothers with a lunch and gift baskets filled with baby products like bibs, blankets, hats and socks along with an assortment of other products. A raffle was also held giving away Disney tickets and spa packages.

“It is amazing, and definitely more than I expected,” said Erin Murphy, a mother participating in the baby shower. “I thought we were just going to receive some diapers and a bib but instead it was a giant gift basket and a lunch. It really feels like an early Christmas.”

At the end of the event, Raymond Moore, the master of ceremonies wished the expecting mothers all the best. The mothers’ faces radiated smiles and joy as they embark on the journey of motherhood that awaits them.



Erin Murphy, expectant mother, reaches for a gift at the center of the table during the 4th Annual Christmas Marine and Navy Baby Shower held at the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort and Spa in Indian Wells, Calif., Dec. 10. Twelve spouses, five Marines and one sailor from the Combat Center attended the baby shower.



Combat Center expectant mothers wait to receive their gift baskets filled with an assortment of baby products at the 4th Annual Christmas Marine and Navy Baby Shower held at the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort and Spa in Indian Wells, Calif., Dec. 10.



Krystal Williams, expectant mother, stands for the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance at the 4th Annual Christmas Marine and Navy Baby Shower held at the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort and Spa in Indian Wells, Calif., Dec. 10. Nineteen Combat Center expecting mothers were treated to a baby shower coordinated by the Assistance League of Palm Springs Desert Area.



Cpl. Jessica Jordan, native of Tulsa, Okla., expectant mother, stands to be recognized at the 4th Annual Christmas Marine and Navy Baby Shower held at the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort and Spa in Indian Wells, Calif., Dec. 10. The event was coordinated by the Assistance League of Palm Springs Desert area.

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Wed. 6:00 PM Bible Study


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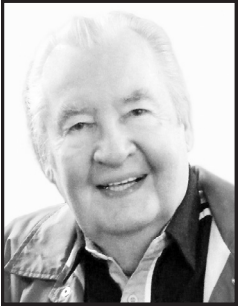
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TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



My sister-in-law Phyllis physically died last Thursday, December 11. She and my brother Gene had been happily married for better than 62 years. They raised a wonderful family of beautiful girls and were extremely active in their church and community of Traverse City, Michigan. Please keep us all in your thoughts and prayers.

In this column last week I used a Christmas affirmation by a former professor of mine at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley.

This week I share another from Dr. Thurman's brief Christmas essays.

I place these gifts on my altar this Christmas;
Gifts that are mine, as the years are mine:

The quiet hopes that flood the earnest cargo of my dreams:
The best of all good things for those I love,
A fresh new trust for all whose faith is dim.

The love of life, God's precious gift in reach of all:
Seeing in each day the seeds of the morrow,
Finding in each struggle the strength of renewal,
Seeking in each person the face of my Brother.

I place these gifts on my altar this Christmas,
Gifts that are mine, as the years are mine.

This column sponsored by:

Dr. Barry Mayron
Yucca Valley

Irene Padgett
Yucca Valley

Dr. Lou can be reached at 760-367-4627
800-995-1620
res19mxc@verizon.net

Combat Center hosts Treats for Troops



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

Elayna Newton, daughter of Elda Newton, volunteer, and Melody Cardoza, daughter of Delilah Cardoza, volunteer, sprinkle an assortment of candies atop frosting covered cookies at the Treats for Troops cookie decorating event at the Mameluke Officers' Club, Dec. 3.



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Julie Chang, volunteer, packages decorated cookies at the Treats for Troops cookie decorating event at the Mameluke Officers' Club, Dec. 3. The cookies were distributed to Marines and sailors at the Main Exchange Friday and Saturday.



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

Roary Hunter, daughter of Brandy Hunter, volunteer, drapes cookies with icing during the Treats for Troops cookie decorating event at the Mameluke Officers' Club, Dec. 3.



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Danica Pochop, volunteer, helps her children decorate cookies during the Treats for Troops cookie decorating event at the Mameluke Officers' Club, Dec. 3. At the event, more than 1,000 cookies were decorated.



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Michelle Richmond, volunteer, helps her daughter Addie Richmond while decorating cookies during the cookie decorating event at the Mameluke Officers' Club, Dec. 3. The children and adults decorated cookies for service members who live aboard the Combat Center.

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President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama speak to the Marines and children of Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling during a Toys for Tots event, Dec. 10. The mission of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program is to collect new, unwrapped toys during October, November and December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in the community in which the campaign is conducted.

President, First Lady Volunteer at USMC Toys for Tots Event

STORY BY CPL. JOSEPH KARWICK

WASHINGTON D.C. - Marines and civilians gathered at the U.S. Department of State building Dec. 9, and Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling Dec. 10, to show their support and donate toys to the Toys for Tots drive sponsored by Marine Forces Reserve to provide Christmas gifts for needy or under-privileged children.

The U.S. Department of State was the first stop for Marine Forces Reserve personnel to pick up donations with the assistance of Secretary of State John Kerry.

"It is a great opportunity to be able to provide to a child," said Byron D. Harley, a physical security specialist for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security with the U.S. State Department. "I don't have any of my own, so having the opportunity is a great feeling that I get when I see these kids' smiling faces."

According to Harley, the State Department has been donating toys to Toys for Tots since 2001 and donations come from the employees of each bureau.

Donators from the State Department gave willingly to Toys for Tots, knowing that just one toy from them brings smiles to kids' faces.

Marines who volunteer their time to Toys for Tots, by giving out gifts and collecting toys, were present at both events. The Inspector Instructor staff and their Reserve Marines were on site at various locations.

"Their role is to collect the toys and consolidate them at a facility so they can distribute them once we get closer to the end of holiday season," said Maj. Angel Torres, Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization Liaison Officer to the Department of State.

Though hundreds of toys were gathered and presented already, many believe there are still more to come in the time remaining until Christmas.

"The turnout was amazing; we have collected hundreds of toys and we are

expecting more and more donations," Torres said. "This is what the holiday season is all about - giving. You are helping your fellow Americans, and giving a toy to a needy child could change so much in their life and that is a priceless feeling."

The second event at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling was attended by President Barack Obama, and first lady Michelle Obama, who joined Marine Forces Reserve personnel in sorting Toys into age-group appropriate bins.

"Today we have the honor of having the president of the United States and the first lady join us in helping sort toys for distribution to the needy," said Lt. Gen. Richard P. Mills, commander of Marine Forces Reserve, as he began to sort toys himself alongside the president, first lady, other Marines and children.

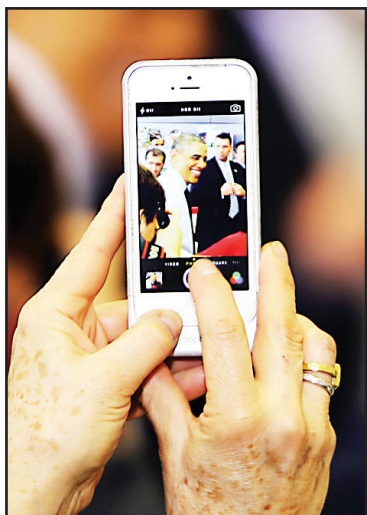
Toys for Tots is a program that the Marine Corps Reserve has used to go above and beyond, making sure no child is left behind, from using trucks to deliver toys to lesser known Native American tribes, to helicoptering into remote villages in Alaska.

The commitment and service of the Marine Corps Reserve to the community and Toys for Tots is beyond all contestation.

"Service to the community is just one more aspect to the Marine Corps," Mills said. "We are warriors through and through but we are also good citizens, and this is a chance for us to demonstrate that to a lot of young children that otherwise would have a very poor Christmas."

Standing at a collection point and collecting toys is a great way to contribute to spreading holiday cheer, but the real delight comes at the moment of presenting a gift to a child who was wishing for, but not expecting, one of their own.

"Toys for Tots will bring a tear to your eye," Mills said. "The really joyous part of the drive is when we get to distribute the toys to children, and the thankfulness on their faces and the joy in their hearts is absolutely wonderful."



A bystander takes a cellphone picture of President Barack Obama as he shakes hands with the Marines and children of Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling during a Toys for Tots event, Dec. 10.



President Barack Obama whistles the tune "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" as he sorts presents with the Marines and children of Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling during a Toys for Tots event, Dec. 10.



President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama speak to the Marines and children of Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling during a Toys for Tots event, Dec. 10.



President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama sort presents with the Marines and children of Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling during a Toys for Tots event, Dec. 10.

Photos by Cpl. Clayton Filipowicz



Combat Center Events

The Single Marine Program is hosting a holiday party at The Zone on 5th street, today, at 7 p.m. The event is open to all single Marines and sailors. There will be games, prizes and refreshments provided. For more information call 830-4767.

MCCS is scheduled to host a New Year's Bash at Sandy Hill Lanes on Dec. 31. The event is for youth and teens and will be held from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Adults 18-years-old and up will be able to stay from 8:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. For more information call 830-6422.

MCCS is scheduled to host UFC 182, Jan. 3 at 7 p.m. The event is free and open to all single Marines and sailors. There will be light refreshments and prizes with a chance to win an MCX gift card. For more information, call 830-4767.

The Winter Basketball League will begin Jan. 12 and continue through April 2. Registration ends on Jan. 7. You can register at the Sports building 1341 at 12 p.m. The league will be held at the East Gym from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. For more information call 830-4092.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, Dec. 19
3:30 p.m. – The Santa Clause, PG
5:30 p.m. – St. Vincent, PG-13
8 p.m. – Dumb and Dumber To, PG-13
10:30 p.m. – Nightcrawler, R

Saturday, Dec. 20
12:30 a.m. – Bad Santa, R
10:30 p.m. – Elf, PG
1 p.m. – Big Hero 6 3-D, PG
3:30 p.m. – St. Vincent, PG-13
6 p.m. – Beyond the Lights, PG-13
8:30 p.m. – Dumb and Dumber To, PG-13
11 pm – Interstellar, PG-13

Sunday, Dec. 21
12:30 p.m. – The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1, PG-13
5 p.m. – Free Screening- The Gambler, R
8 p.m. – Birdman, R

Monday, Dec. 22
2 p.m. – Arthur Christmas, PG-13
3 p.m. – Polar Express, G
6 p.m. – Nightcrawler, R

Tuesday, Dec. 23
2 p.m. – The Grinch, PG
3:50 p.m. – Ernest Saves Christmas, PG
6 p.m. – St. Vincent, PG-13

Wednesday, Dec. 24
2 p.m. – The Nightmare Before Christmas, PG
3 p.m. – Four Christmases, PG-13
5 p.m. – Interstellar, PG-13

Thursday, Dec. 25
1 p.m. – The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1, PG-13
3:30 p.m. – Birdman, R

Friday, Dec. 26
1:30 p.m. – Penguins of Madagascar, PG
3:30 p.m. – Horrible Bosses 2, R
6 p.m. – Big Hero 6, PG
8:30 p.m. – Beyond the Lights, PG-13
11:30 p.m. – Dumb and Dumber To, PG-13



From Bad To Worse

Things go wrong in ‘Horrible Bosses’ sequel, in more ways than one

NEIL POND

“Horrible Bosses 2”
Starring Jason Bateman, Jason Sudeikis and Charlie Day
Directed by Sean Anders
Rated R

If you got a chuckle out of the first one, you'll probably get a chuckle out of this one. But just because you might doesn't mean you should. And why don't you save your titters for something that's not such a waste of talent, a lazy roll over retreaded gags, and a smutty stroll down a street full of racist, sexist and homophobic jokes?

The first Horrible Bosses, in 2011, set up an initially amusing, over-the-top, screwball comedy: Three hapless schmucks (Jason Bateman, Jason Sudeikis and Charlie Day), each so exasperated with their individual employment situations, were driven to an absurdly extreme measure: a plan to murder their bosses.

Their bosses were pretty bad—especially the crooked, conniving business owner (Kevin Spacey) and the rapacious sexual-predator dentist (Jennifer Aniston). Awful, yes—but sometimes awfully funny.

Both Spacey and Aniston, as well as the knucklehead trio of Bateman, Sudeikis and Day, are back in Bosses 2. This time, the disgruntled employees have become entrepreneurs—they're the bosses now—striking out on their own with a prototype for an all-in-one bathing accessory. But when an unscrupulous distributor (Chrisoph Waltz) hatches a ploy to bankrupt them and take over their operation, they devise their own plan for

payback—by kidnapping his insufferably spoiled adult son (Chris Pine) for ransom.

Things go “horribly” wrong, of course—in more ways than one. The plot follows the same basic course as the first movie, down to some of the same exact gags. (Hey, they got a laugh the first time, right?) The humor is beyond bawdy—it's super raunchy, and so blatantly offensive on so many levels, it almost seems admirable the filmmakers tried so hard to maintain such a consistent tone of tastelessness.

To call it “bathroom” humor demeans a lot of bathrooms, especially in one particular scene with a toothbrush, and in another when the discussion in a sexaholics support group turns to a topic that would be shocking even if it didn't involve underage children.

Any guffaws these jokes get depends on just how far you think it's OK to go for a laugh, and how closely you care to look at what you're really laughing at. I'm not sure in what context a reference to the sexual assault of a hospital patient in a coma, for instance, would come off as funny—but here it's played just that way.

Jamie Foxx returns as a shady career criminal whose obscenity of a nickname can't be printed in a newspaper but is repeated dozens of times in the movie, and whose flawed advice the would-be kidnappers once again seek.

The first time around, the bosses were terrible, but the movie wasn't so bad. This time, the “new” bosses turn out to be awful, too, the movie is a disappointment, and the jokes may make you laugh... but you should feel guilty about it when you do.

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