



OBSERVATION POST

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS

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'Wolfpack' Mechanics



Marines keep LAVs fit to fight

Photos and story by
Cpl. Ali Azimi

The Light Armored Vehicle is an eight-wheeled armored transport used by light armored reconnaissance units. They are versatile assets in combat and keeping them in the fight requires experience and ingenuity from their mechanics. LAV mechanics' time in the field and experience teaches them how to keep them operating. They can spot problems in LAVs from dozens of yards away, just by the color of the smoke coming from the exhaust or the sound and repetition of the weapon systems firing.

The mechanics of 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance are responsible for maintenance and upkeep of all their LAVs, from the engineering aspects to the optics and weapons systems. These complex machines are used to their fullest capabilities and keeping them running requires constant up-keep.

"Routine maintenance in the LAV world is a hard thing to say," said Sgt. Brandon McKinley, assistant maintenance chief, 3rd LAR. "It's always something different. Just this week we've had a turbo go down, we've had two guns go down for multiple problems, a feeder go down, a receiver go down and a flat tire or two. It all kind of rotates. Everyone will all of a sudden focus on one thing and another problem comes up, so it's a rolling cycle."

Gunnery Sgt. Charles Dozier, maintenance chief, Company A, 3rd LAR, has also served as the senior instructor for the LAV mechanics school in Maryland. He has seen the progress Marines make from the time of their arrival to the school house to making repairs in the field.

"Some of the students would come in with little or no mechanical knowledge," Dozier said. "They wouldn't know the difference between a Philips screwdriver and a flat-head screwdriver. It is basically the crawl, walk then run method."

The more time they spend in the field with the LAVs the better they get to know them. Each noise and movement has its purpose and when something is out of place it's apparent.

"After a while, you listen to the gun and you can hear if something is going mechanically wrong," Dozier said. "Just by doing it for a long time you get a feel of what the LAV is saying to you without actually looking at it. We've got keen senses. We know what sounds right and we know what sounds wrong."

During the units' Table 6 qualifications at Range 500 April 12, Dozier and McKinley knew there was something wrong with an LAV they saw firing on the line before it was even brought to them.

The crank to the ballistic cover that protects LAV's optic glass had broken and the cover had fallen closed on the sights. The problem, although small in comparison to other potential mechanical malfunctions, prevented the crewmen from being able to see.

McKinley hopped into the LAV to examine the problem. After a few minutes and with the use of 550-Cord, the LAV was cleared to return to training.

Although this was only a temporary solution, it allowed the LAV to finish its qualification while the mechanics



CPL. ALI AZIMI

Light Armored Vehicle mechanics with Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion fix a malfunctioning pin, preventing the LAV's weapons system from firing during Table 6 qualifications at Range 500 April 12.

See **MECHANICS** page A5

Letters to Afghanistan



Photos on A4

CPL. ALI AZIMI

3rd Combat Engineer Battalion Marines, sailors and children release balloons that carry letters written by the children to their parents, who deployed to Afghanistan last month during the unit's Deployment Workshop Saturday.

Combat Center promotes safety measures at gate

Cpl. William J. Jackson
Combat Correspondent

Security measures at the Combat Center's gates have been adjusted in compliance with Department of Defense Force Protection regulations. The Combat Center has initiated the use of the Mobilisa scanner during rush hour traffic to manage safety hazards, identity fraud, tampering, counterfeiting and terrorist exploitation aboard the base.

Although the Mobilisa scanners have been used at the Combat Center since 2010, the push to employ them during rush hour traffic was April 8. The scanners check the authenticity of an identification card and can find

"We're trying to ease the congestion with the traffic coming in. We've opened up a third lane, which is a search lane, to help traffic get through."

— Maj. Scott Pryor

any warrants on a person based on a crosscheck of more than 150 federal and state databases.

"First we do a (quick) investigation to make sure it is that individual being scanned on the Mobilisa," said Maj. Kim Keefer, provost marshal, Provost Marshals Office. "We'll have them pull over and look into what they were flagged for. If it's a warrant, we'll contact local law enforcement. If it's just something we don't allow on the installation, such as sex

See **SCANNER** page A5

Corps reinstates tuition assistance

Cpl. Ali Azimi
Combat Correspondent

Tuition assistance is back. The program was reinstated April 8, per Marine Administrative Message 203/13. All approved classes must have an enrollment date following TA's reactivation and will not pay for any classes retroactively.

However, the newly reinstated TA policy is limited.

first-serve basis," said Noudam Khamphouy, education and career technician, Lifelong Learning Education Center. "We receive a limited amount of funding for our installation each quarter, so once the funding is gone, it's gone."

Many Marines decide to use this financial assistance and take courses online or in class after work to obtain a degree, but these are not their only options.

"We receive a limited amount of funding for our installation each quarter, so once the funding is gone, it's gone."

— Noudam Khamphouy

Tuition assistance is one of the many educational benefits granted to military members for their service. It can be used during active service and does not take anything away from either the Montgomery or Post 9/11 GI Bill. Marines are encouraged to use their TA during active service and their GI Bills after separating from the Marine Corps to optimize the greatest benefits as students.

"It's almost like a first-come

TA can be used for a number of vocational courses, taking Marines out of the classroom and teaching them a useful trade for a career after the Marine Corps. The education center provides no-cost programs and services such as:

-College Level Examination Program: these tests, if passed, transfers to college credits. The 90 minute-long exams are administered

See **TA** page A5



Combat Center holds sexual assault prevention 5K

Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
Combat Correspondent

The annual 5K educational fun run for Sexual Assault Awareness Month took place at the Combat Center's Desert Winds Golf Course April 12.

The run was open to all Combat Center units and government employees.

"This event highlights a very important issue," said Lt. Col. Michael Bowers, commanding officer, Headquarters Battalion. "It also got us out of our offices and makes us compete as a team."

"Sexual assault is zero tolerance in the Marine Corps. It goes against honor, courage and commitment. Awareness needs to be raised towards this issue," said Jennifer

Husung, installation sexual assault response coordinator.

"We always take care of our own," Bowers said. "No matter what we are doing, we started together, we are going to finish together. Never leave anyone behind."

The participants competed in teams of three or four. If a team only had three people, one of the members was forced to carry a sand bag to take the place of the fourth team member. Each team member was asked three sexual assault related questions at the end of the race. Thirty seconds was added to a team's overall time for every question that was answered wrong.

"We had to work together and finish together,"

See **FUN RUN** page A5

Student OUTREACH

Guest speaker educates military youth

Photos and story by
Cpl. D. J. Wu

The United Services Organizations and the Trevor Romain Company toured local schools to talk to students about how to deal with the hardships of just being a kid April 8 through 12.

His presentations, geared toward military-connected children, taught students how to cope with a parent's deployment and to come up with strategies to face the unique challenges of military life. The tour was hosted by five local schools, including Twentynine Palms Junior High School and the Combat Center's Condor Elementary School.

"It's incredibly good for us to have him here," said Justin Monical, principal, Twentynine Palms Junior High School. "This is a great opportunity for our kids to have somebody with some specific insight and a great deal of experience speaking to students about positive ways of treating one another."

One of Romain's goals in his presentations is to make kids feel safe and secure with their own feelings.

"What we're doing is helping military kids with the added stress that they have," Romain said. "Because just being a kid is tough in general, but military kids have a little bit of added stress based on the fact that they have to move every three years or that their parents have to be deployed."

Romain told the students about his experience being in the South African Defence Force and he has spoken to children from all over the world. The stories he told brought up topics like bully prevention, healthy friendships, facing your fears, taking care of your body and tackling homework. It also gave students perspective on the struggles children in other countries endure.

"What we do is give them the tools to be able to navigate the hur-



Trevor Romain talks to students at Twentynine Palms Junior High School about the stress of being a kid and how to cope with bullying, facing fears and dealing with deployments as military children.

dles that they face," Romain said. "We teach them to have a peer-to-peer culture so that they can take care of themselves, asking for help when they need it and that there is no shame in asking for help."

One of Romain's messages was "There is no shame in having feelings." For example, being sad that a parent is deployed. He wanted to make the students feel safe and secure with their emotions and to learn to cope with them.

"We have to remember that our students, even though 12, 13, 14 years old, that they're still kids," Monical said. "They still need some training, they still need some guidance and I'm glad that (Romain) is here to speak to our students."

Romain tours the world teaching children these important messages. For more resources, visit <http://www.trevorromain.com> and <http://www.comfortcrew.org>.

CG's civilian breakfast



Thomas Burke, supply officer, Exercise Support Division, Ann Julius, network operations officer, G-6, Eddie Reid, barracks coordinator, G-4, Sandra Merlan, facilities management, G-4, Dennis Anderson, divisional sales manager, Marine Corps Community Services, were honored by Maj. Gen. David H. Berger, Commanding General, and his wife Donna, for their outstanding contributions as civil employees aboard the Combat Center for the month of April.

TRISKAIDEKAMANIA

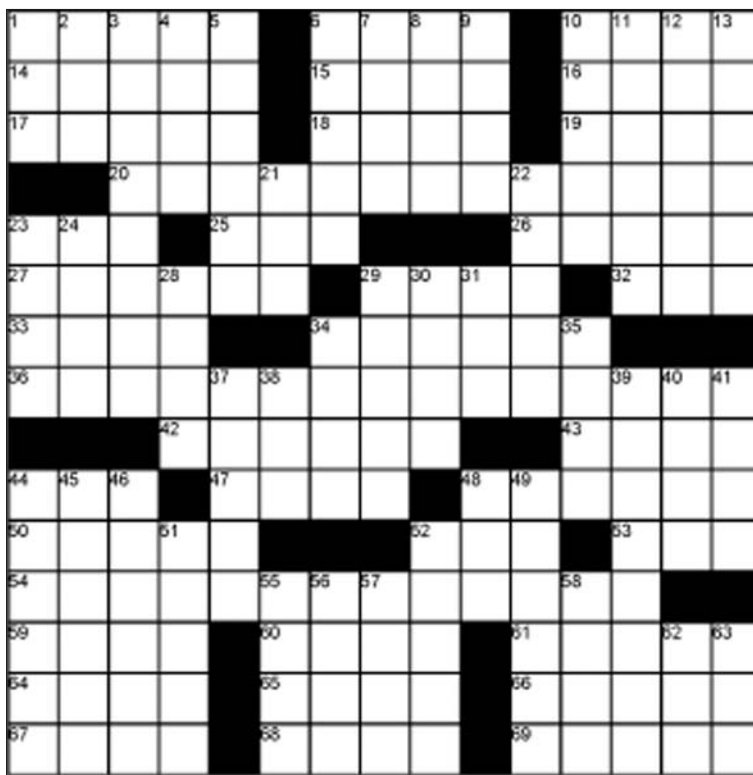
ACROSS

- 1. Red Bordeaux
- 6. IOU, of sorts
- 10. Comic Roseanne
- 14. St. Theresa's town
- 15. Prospector's strike
- 16. Siouan speaker
- 17. Stun gun
- 18. Field of expertise
- 19. Connecticut politico Chris
- 20. There werethirteen
- 23. The Windy City, briefly
- 25. Words from sponsors
- 26. Hosiery material
- 27. Composer Arlen
- 29. Munro's pen name
- 32. Vane dir.
- 33. Oscar role for Julia
- 34. Toughen, as glass
- 36. There are thirteen
- 42. The Old World
- 43. Wash up
- 44. GI's mail drop
- 47. NBA arbiters
- 48. Radiation-emitting star
- 50. Sculpted form
- 52. "Now, where ___ I?"
- 53. Wrap up
- 54. There are thirteen
- 59. Sicilian peak
- 60. Make changes to
- 61. Stirs up
- 64. "No Ball Playing," e.g.

- 65. Model Macpherson
- 66. Word before ear or tube
- 67. ITAR-__ (news agency)
- 68. Timid creature
- 69. Monopoly stack

DOWN

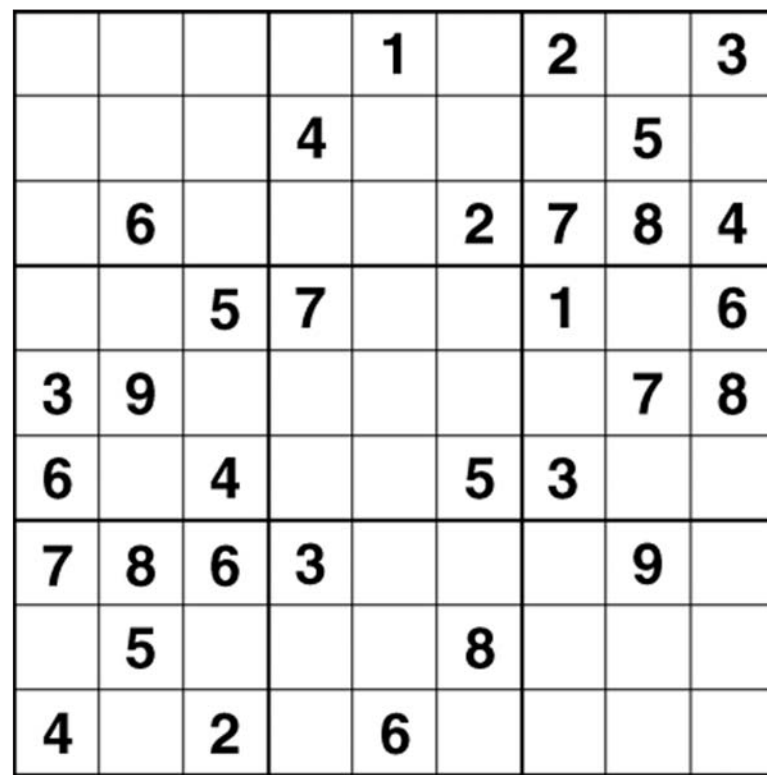
- 1. Shower safety item
- 2. A sister of Zsa Zsa
- 3. Make crestfallen
- 4. Toast topping
- 5. ___ tunnel syndrome
- 6. Freshman or sophomore
- 7. Phone, slangily
- 8. Creative spark
- 9. Plow puller
- 10. Mr. ___ (victim in the game Clue)
- 11. Coral rings
- 12. Cowpokes' contests
- 13. Made over
- 21. Former Leno announcer Hall
- 22. Early computer
- 23. Enjoy bubble gum
- 24. Mata ___
- 28. Fairy tale start
- 29. Salon sounds
- 30. Poet Sexton
- 31. Mauna ___
- 34. Starting on
- 35. Veg out
- 37. Impresario Sol
- 38. Bard's "before"
- 39. Petroleum-based



- lubricant
- 40. ___ Picone (fashion name)
- 41. Uncool one
- 44. Affirm to be true
- 45. "The Merchant of Venice" heroine
- 46. Circular seals
- 48. Place to crash, perhaps
- 49. WWW moniker
- 51. Flips through
- 52. 10K race handout
- 55. Place, as in a tourney schedule
- 56. Hanging around
- 57. Khartoum's river
- 58. Top-of-the-line
- 62. Blazed a trail
- 63. Most coll. applicants

See answers on page A3

SUDOKU 2878-M




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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.

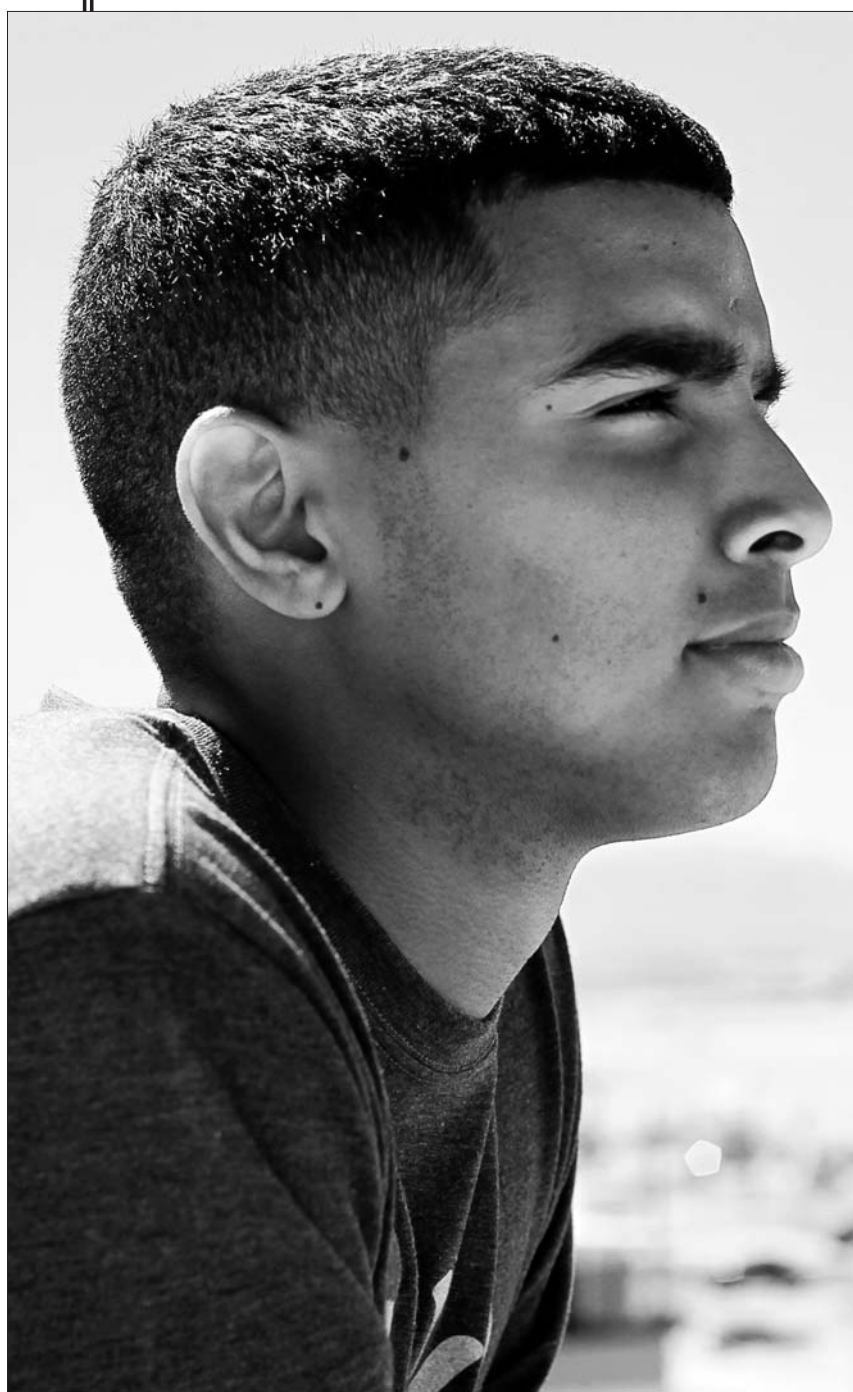
- In Oceanside:**
 - Angelo's Kars, 222 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054
 - Angelo's Kars, 226 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054
- In San Diego:**
 - Club Mustang, 2200 University Ave.
 - Club San Diego, 3955 Fourth St.
 - Get It On Shoppe, 3219 Mission Blvd.
 - Main Street Motel, 3494 Main 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.

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



Ilan St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, aviation radar repairman, 19

RIVERA

RIVERA IS AN AVIATION RADAR REPAIRMAN, RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING LIGHTWEIGHT SEARCH RADAR SETS AND RADAR TRANSPONDERS.

- > **To venture off** to the States was a scary thought when I was home. It's not like I can just walk home whenever I want to.
- > **I pictured the States as a big castle** when I was back home. We see stuff on the television and it seems like every place here is a big city.
- > **There is a humongous difference between** the Islands and the United States. Some people find that hard to believe but it's very true.
- > **I would go** to the beach every day just for fun.
- > **I moved to the United States** in September of 2011. I went straight to Parris Island for boot camp.
- > **I arrived in** California in February 2012. My MOS school was in Twentynine Palms.
- > **To this day**, this is all still a cultural shock to me. I am trying to figure out how people think and act because everyone is so different here.
- > **The American embassy** in Jamaica is where I saw a Marine for the first time. They were always in their Dress Blues.
- > **Marines would also** help around the community. They made me realize that even the small things make an impact.
- > **My parents knew** I wanted to be a Marine for a long time so it was no surprise to them when I enlisted and they are very supportive.
- > **College is not my thing** and I did not want a desk job. I wanted to see new things.
- > **Electronic maintenance was the job** I picked from the very beginning because I wanted a technical job.
- > **When I first got to** boot camp, I didn't know what to think. I had no idea why everybody was screaming and threatening each other.
- > **One of the biggest things** I have learned from the Marine Corps is to stand up for myself. Back home, I was very quiet and kept to myself, I wouldn't try to correct someone because I did not want to disrespect them. Now, If something is not right, I'm going to say something about it.

- > **One of the biggest culture shocks** was the atmosphere at boot camp because the last thing I would want to do is disrespect someone back home and that happened a lot at boot camp.
- > **My parents were very proud** to see me in uniform when I went home for the first time.
- > **Communication with my** family is constant. I communicate with them through video chat, phone calls and even letters.
- > **I miss home** cooked meals. The times where I would go out with my family and cook something we caught right away. I haven't had a meal that good since I have been here.
- > **The tallest buildings back home** are only three stories tall. There are no big cities, just small towns. These towns are so small, you could walk from one end to the other in 15 minutes.
- > **The islands are** so small that everyone knows each other. One thing I noticed about the States is that everyone is friendly and social.
- > **My island is only** eight miles wide and 10 miles long. If I wanted to go to another island I would take a privately owned plane, pay for a ferry or even take my own boat if the other island was close enough.
- > **The cities** back home were very relaxed. When I was bored, I would just walk around looking for something to do.
- > **My friends and family are** what I miss the most from home. I also miss the beach.
- > **When I went to** the beach here, it was very different. I could even feel the difference in the sand.
- > **I could pick fresh fruit** straight off the tree back home when I went on hikes. If I wasn't hiking then I was riding a horse.
- > **The hiking here** is very brown compared to the hiking back home.



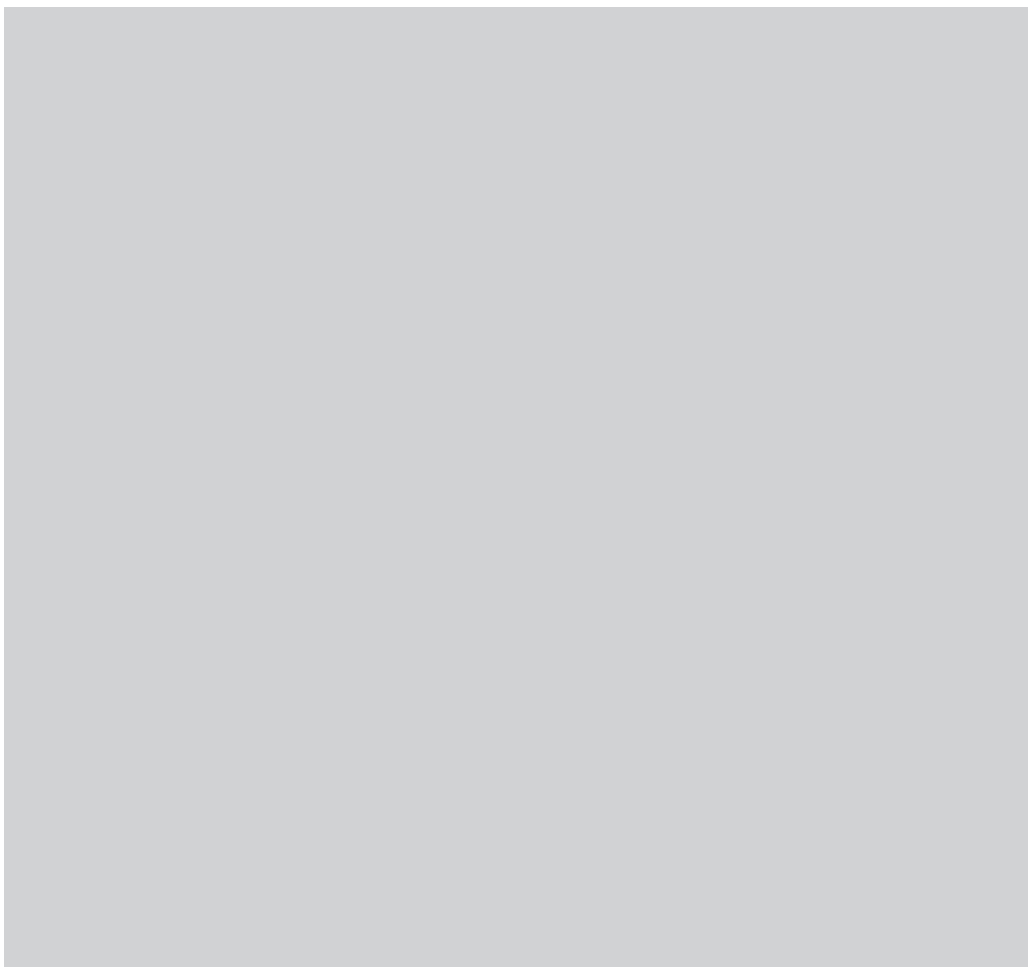
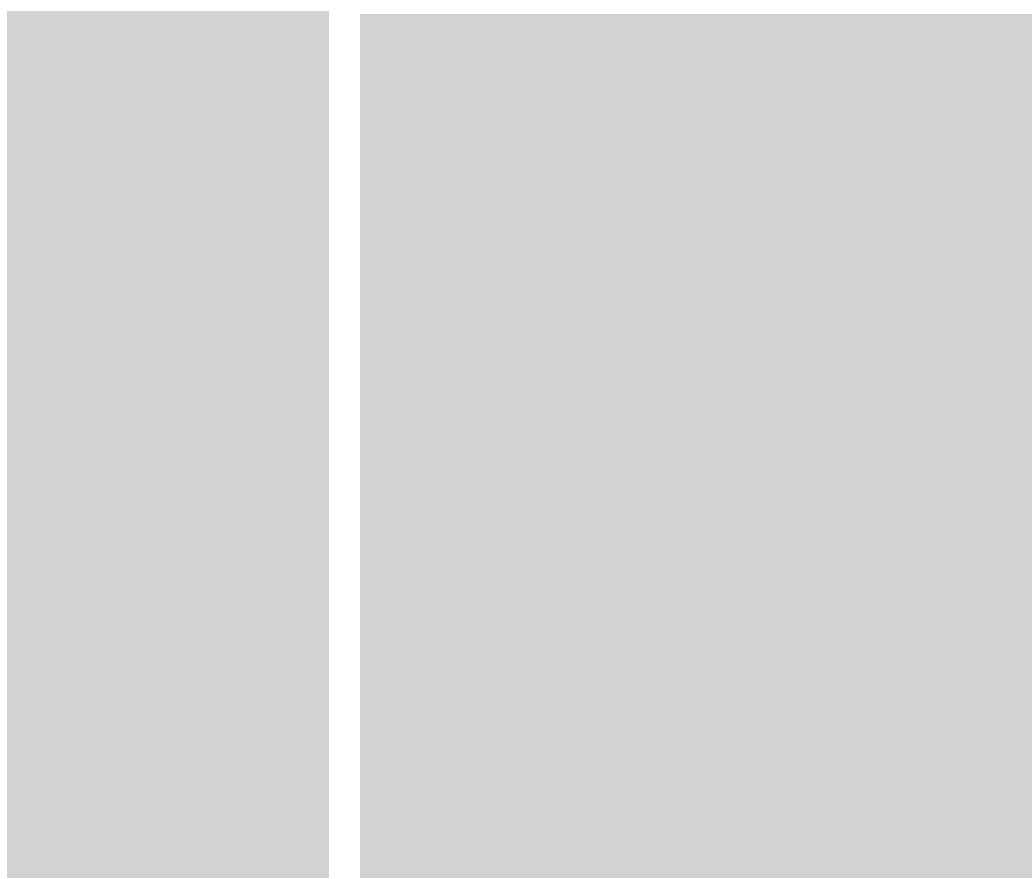
Interviewed by Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
April 14, 2013

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



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Faces in the Crowd



[1] Lance Cpl. Ricky Madera, intelligence clerk, 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, plays "Lance Corporal Says" with kids of currently deployed unit members Saturday as part of 3rd CEB's deployment workshop.
 [2] Mackenzie Culp, 9, has her face colored with camouflage paint during 3rd CEB's deployment workshop. The face paint was one of many fun activities the kids enjoyed that afternoon.
 [3] Kids with the 3rd CEB family huddle around to watch a puppet show, focused on deployment. The workshop helped kids with coping methods during their fathers' deployment and teach them that they are not alone.
 [4] Kids at the workshop make hand-written notes to their fathers overseas. The notes were later attached to balloons and released into the air in hopes that they would reach their parent.
 [5] Bailey Salisbury, 5, dances to the sound of music playing at 3rd CEB's compound during their deployment workshop.



Cpl. Ali Azimi
 Combat Correspondent

Service members with 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion hosted a deployment workshop for the battalion's children Saturday in response to the unit's recent deployment to Afghanistan. The workshop introduced 3rd CEB kids to each other and provided games and activities to help understand and deal with the hardships of having a parent deployed.

"For us it's important that we establish that this is not just daddy's job; we are a family," said Erika Capistran, family readiness officer, 3rd CEB. "We had the puppet show, focusing on deployment, mail call, where they received their care packages, and sending the notes off to Afghanistan."

Each kid made a hand-written card for their father and attached it to a red balloon. The kids gathered together and released the balloons in hopes of reaching their Marines overseas.

The children also got the chance to explore a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle and received their own package of Meals, Ready to Eat, just like dad.

The kids at the workshop were each given a jar of M&M's. Each night the kids will eat one, counting down the days until the jar is empty and the fathers are home safe.

"My favorite part was getting to see the (MRAP)," said Eric Salisbury, 9, son of Maj. Michael Salisbury, executive officer, 3rd CEB.

Although Salisbury loved the MRAP, he said he made new friends that day and enjoyed meeting other kids with dads who are deployed.

"The focus with our battalion is we're a family, not just a battalion" Capistran said. "Everything is generated around family. That's what we are: A 3rd CEB family."

The battalion is scheduled to return to their family and loved ones at the end of the year.



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



The Combat Center also has its own Flickr photo and video streams. Find them at <http://www.flickr.com/thecombatcenter>.

FUN RUN, from A1

said Pfc. Christopher Smith, a runner with Consolidated Material Service Center, Team 11. "It is always good to come out to these events and bring awareness to an issue. This is more than just a piece of paper on the wall about sexual assault. This brings together a large crowd."

Smith and his teammates, Cpl. Robert Garcia, Cpl. David Gonzalez and Lance Cpl. John Miller, took first place in the fun run.

Everyone who attended the run had a chance to

enter a drawing for a night stay in Big Bear. The teams with the top three times also won prizes. Each member of the third-place team won a \$25 gift card to the Marine Corps exchange and a certificate of participation. The members of the second-place team won \$50 gift cards to the MCX, a certificate of participation and a plaque. The winning team of the race won a trophy and a coin from the commanding general.

"It feels good competing in something like this," Smith said. "I am happy to contribute and spread the word of this problem."



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

Lacy Richey, a participant in a 5 kilometer run supporting Sexual Assault Awareness Month, races through the Combat Center's Desert Winds Golf Course April 12.

SCANNER, from A1

offenders, they will be denied access to the installation."

The Mobilisa scanner is an electronic verification system that takes seconds to use. It scans the barcode on many different forms of identification military ID cards and driver's licenses.

"Once you start communicating with the personnel that are operating the vehicles, it's definitely going to open up the viewfinder for a lot more issues out there," said Maj. Scott Pryor, deputy police chief, PMO. "It can lead to a lot more issues and possibly holding up that one person that may be going out there to do some harm to a unit because he or she is upset."

Pryor also added that the scanners help with the contractors who work aboard the Combat Center. They're able to track the validity of the ID card and their job and confiscate cards if the contractor no longer has privileges to access the installation.

Those coming aboard the Combat Center can help the heavy traffic by ensuring that everyone inside the vehicle has identification ready for PMO to scan at the gate.

"We're trying to ease the congestion with the traffic coming in," Pryor said. "We've opened up a third lane, which is a search lane, and we're drawing trucks and vendors in to help traffic get through. We've been doing a pretty good job overall as far as security of the installation. Doing these things now is an improvement process."

Gate guards are trained to be vigilant and always be on the lookout for activities that would endanger residents and workers on the base. The scanners allow a more in-depth approach for PMO to show its presence and enforce safety aboard the Combat Center.

"It's all just safety procedures for everyone, not just us but for the general public as well," said Sgt. Luis Cuestas, patrol sergeant, PMO.

TA, from A1

at National University to help earn credits with on-base convenience.

-Defense activity of non-traditional education support testing: These tests are similar to the CLEP test. They offer students the opportunity to earn college credits by passing a test. Most DSST credits also satisfy the general education requirements of a college degree.

-United Service Military Apprenticeship Program: a partnership between the Department of Labor and the Marine Corps allows Marines to use on-duty experience to earn "journeyman" status in a trade. Journeyman status is an indication that one has served apprenticeship in a trade or craft and is qualified to work in another's employment in the distinguished field.

Courses can certify Marines in a number of fields. They can become anything from certified pilots or scuba diving instructors to mechanics, nurses or personal trainers. Many of the schools offering vocational classes can be found online or within a close distance to the Combat Center.

The education center provides counseling to ensure Marines are well prepared to use TA as well as the free educational services provided.

For more information, call the education center at 830-6881.

MECHANICS, from A1

ordered the correct parts to permanently resolve the issue when they return to mainside.

"We don't have our big work benches or the parts readily available but we manage pretty well," McKinley said.

Light Armored Vehicle mechanics are limited in their resources in the field and on deployments. They make do with what they have in their Light Armored Vehicle Recovery and Light Armored Vehicle Logistics platforms. These vehicles carry the only parts and tools available to the mechanics, such as drills and power packs, and are able to tow any LAV deemed beyond repair outside the wire.

The Marines with 3rd LAR make do with what they have and do so constantly to keep up with mission requirements.

"The other night we were up until one

and reveille was at seven," McKinley said. "It makes it a long 18-hour-day when you're up working constantly."

The constant wear-and-tear of the vehicles is increased as they push through the unforgiving

"We work 24 hours a day seven days a week if need be. It doesn't matter what time of the day or night it is. We always have to be ready to support the mission."

—Gunnery Sgt. Charles Dozier

desert environment. The sands, winds, and terrain create more problems, keeping the mechanics busy and versatile in the field. This is an important trait to have when dealing

with such a similar environment during combat operations in Afghanistan.

"Out in the field, we have more conditions to deal with. We have to be prepared to support all 26 vehicles with minimal amounts of support," Dozier said. "We do a lot of improvisational fixes to make sure the vehicles can safely conduct their mission. There are a lot less resources out here. We don't have the parts supply that we do when we're in garrison. Out in the field environment my mechanics have to think on their feet."

3rd LAR's mechanics stay flexible in the way they think and work as problems arise and keep a strong work ethic in order to meet the mission demands of the battalion.

"We work 24 hours a day, seven days a week if need be," Dozier said. "It doesn't matter what time of the day or night it is, we always have to be ready to support the mission."



PHOTOS BY CPL. ALI AZIMI

[Left] The Light Armored Vehicle-Recovery's crane can lift up to 9,100 pounds and tow LAVs in training and combat environments.

[Right] Cpl. Jesus Ortiz, platoon mechanic, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, checks the engine of a Light Armored Vehicle after getting off the firing line during qualifications at Range 500 April 12.

Surf to Snow

'Island Warriors' take on cold weather training

By Lance Cpl. Suzanna Lapi
Marine Corps Base Hawaii

MARINE CORPS MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING CENTER, BRIDGEPORT, Calif. — Marines with Company E, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, made the transition from sand to snow and took to the slopes during ski-tour training at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, Calif., April 3.

The Hawaii-based unit, also known as Island Warriors, conducted training in preparation for operations in colder temperature and higher altitude environments. Each company in the unit participated in various training exercises for approximately one month.

Staff Sgt. Mathew Black, mountain warfare combat instructor and native of Wellsville, N.Y., said the Marines need to be relaxed in the snow while conducting the exercises.

"They have been learning half-flat ground technique, which is basically cross-country skiing," Black said. "We teach them diagonal strike, double pole, up and downhill kick turns, breaking, how to properly fall, and basic athletic stances. They also learn where to use these techniques on the appropriate terrain."

Seaman Elias Sandoval, hospital corpsman, Co. E, 2/3 and native of Oceanside, Calif., said the training is important for the Marines so they know the consequences of their environment.

"They need to be aware of the symptoms of high-altitude sickness,"

Sandoval said. "In this setting, they have to understand the changes their bodies experience. Most of the time, it's simple injuries that are easily preventable. If their feet get wet, they need to change their socks. Preventing easy injuries means there will be more people on the battlefield, which helps the corpsmen to focus on more serious injuries."

Black also said the training helps the Marines get in shape and get their ski legs.

"They are training for 10 days, day and night, and each day we focus on more techniques," Black said. "After learning basic mobility, we want them to be comfortable with snow movement during attacks, patrolling and defense. All of this training is for future deployments in cold-weather areas that incorporate snowy terrain and high elevation. The Marines will use this training effectively, and therefore be successful in such settings."

Lance Cpl. Justin Hoppis, squad leader, Co. E, 2/3 and native of Tulsa, Okla., said the training was rough, but worth it.

"I noticed that if I refrained or held

back, I would make a mistake," Hoppis said. "But if I went for it and committed to it, I was successful. This training has been a bonding experience for us, because we are all doing this for the first time and making mistakes together."

Lance Cpl. Jonah Siedl, team leader, Co. E, 2/3 and native of Goshen, Ind.,

said the skiing exercises and maneuvers help Marine be versatile.

"Learning how to ski is something new and different for us," Siedl said. "Everything else we do, like hiking and digging, is second nature. This training makes us adaptable, able to fight in every climate and place."



Lance Cpl. Justin Hoppis, squad leader, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, skis with his fellow Marines during ski-tour training conducted at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, Calif., April 3.

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



BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS



RYAN PHILLIP BAKER
Born on: March 31, 2013
Born to: Charles and Correia Baker

HUNTER LEE BRENDEN
Born on: April 6, 2013
Born to: David and Crista Brenden

CHARLOTTE MAE MIDDLETON
Born on: April 11, 2013
Born to: KC and Michell Middleton

BRIAN M. CLOSE JR.
Born on: March 31, 2013
Born to: Brian and Jennifer Close

JAYDAN JOSE JOHNSON
Born on: April 7, 2013
Born to: Michael and Jazmin Johnson

COLTON JAMES AMUDSON
Born on: April 11, 2013
Born to: Shaw and Samantha Amudson

NOLAN REECE JONES
Born on: April 2, 2013
Born to: Justin and Kristen Jones

AARON JOSEPH LARA
Born on: April 10, 2013
Born to: Ricardo and Cari Lara

MOLLIE ELIZABETH MORSE
Born on: April 13, 2013
Born to: Patrick and Trina Morse



Mentally Prepared

■ RCT-7 psychiatrist helps Marines maintain combat mindset

Sgt. Ned Johnson
1st Marine Division

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan — Military psychiatrists cover special aspects of psychiatry and mental disorders within a military context. The aim of military psychiatry is to keep as many Marines and sailors as possible fit for duty and to treat those disabled by psychiatric conditions, with sensitivity and respect.

Military psychiatry often deals with counseling individuals in a deployed environment. It includes life strategy counseling, as well as counseling for mental health issues, substance abuse prevention and post-traumatic stress disorder.

For Marines with Regimental Combat Team 7, some mental health resources are provided by the Observational Stress Control and Readiness Team, or OSCAR Team.

The team here is made up of sailors who travel the areas of operation providing mental health assessments and give Marines an opportunity to talk about their stress.

“You could say the paradigm is changing,” said Navy Lt. Dennis White, psychiatrist with the RCT 7 OSCAR Team. “Now, instead of (a Marine) coming to us for help, we go to them.”

There are several levels of OSCAR training designed to help identify combat stress and traumatic brain injury as early as possible. Having the different

levels helps the system work, White said.

Getting to know the Marines personally helps the OSCAR Team identify issues before they develop into a larger problem, said White, a 33-year-old native of Dagsboro, Del.

While White and his corpsman assistant, Petty Officer 3rd Class Allan Lee, are based here, they often travel the areas of operation to provide support to Marines. Some of their trips specifically target units who have survived significant combat situations.

“Usually we will go to a base after a Marine has been

University, said traveling to smaller bases allows the Marines to get help without having to leave his current unit or base.

The OSCAR Team understands that not everyone wants to talk to a psychiatrist, but Lee said being an enlisted service member helps.

“There’s certainly a stigma that comes with mental health on the enlisted side,” said Lee, a 26-year-old native of Sacramento, Calif. “I think it helps that they can come talk to me.”

White and Lee want to help the Marines resolve their issues while minimizing the stigma of mental health. If a Marine seeks help, it does not mean he is unstable and will be processed for separation.

One way the OSCAR Team helps Marines become more comfortable with treatment is by allowing them to maintain their professionalism and warrior ethos.

“We do our best to keep the Marines as Marines,” White said. “We are honest with them and want them to know their career is not over.”

White and Lee spend a good deal of time traveling around the RCT’s area of operation which can be tiring and stressful, but White is doing what he wants to do, where he wants to do it.

“I wanted to practice military psychiatry,” said White, an alumnus of Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass. “I love being here and with the Marines.”

“There’s certainly a stigma that comes with mental health on the enlisted side. I think it helps that they can come talk to me.”

— Petty Officer 3rd Class Allan Lee

killed in action,” White said. “We will give the unit a 30 minute class on (the signs and symptoms of combat stress) and usually the next day we will see Marines come in and ask to talk to someone because they believe they have some of the symptoms.”

White, who has a doctorate from Uniformed Services



IN *the* CORPS

My time

By Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya

I have always wanted to be a Marine, even after I received a scholarship to the college of my dreams. Virginia Military Institute was giving me a chance to play Division 1 soccer, become a Marine officer and get an education all at the same time. At the end of the day, what I really wanted was to wear the uniform of a Marine.

Soon, my want to join became a need. After I found out my wife was 11 weeks pregnant, I knew what I had to do. I was a college athlete with no income, so I chose to back out of my scholarship to enlist in the Marine Corps. Before I knew it, I had to leave my wife and infant son behind so I could put food on the table.

My time in training was most difficult not because of what was demanded of me but because the two people I love most were nowhere near me. I endured and was then sent to learn my military occupational specialty at the Defense Information School on Fort Meade, Md. During my fifth month being at DINFOS and tenth month away from my family, the anticipation became unbearable. I knew I was about to get orders to my first duty station. I was finally going to be able to create a home for

my family and start my career. I checked the administration office every day for about a week, trying to figure out where I was going. The longer I waited, the more frustrated I became. Then one day, I found out the administration office had received my orders. I rushed to their office, nervous and excited to discover my fate.

As I approached the office, I had no idea what to expect. My heart

"I knew I was about to get orders to my first duty station. I was finally going to be able to create a home for my family and start my career."

— Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya

was racing and I had that nervous feeling like I was on a roller coaster. The Marine behind the desk handed me a piece of paper, face down, and told me to have a nice day. I dared not look at it until I walked into the privacy of my room. That one piece of paper would determine so much. It would be the beginning of my Marine Corps career, the first place my wife would live other than our home town and where my son would spend the first four years of his life.

I heard other Marines through my door reacting to their orders. Some yelled out of excitement and others shouted obscenities. I turned over my sheet of paper to determine which of these reactions I would have. The first word I read was California and my heart dropped. My orders were to report to this base, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Staring at the print on the paper, I felt a wave of every emotion possible. I didn't know whether to break down into tears or to jump up and down in excitement. On one hand, Twentynine Palms is a small town, like mine, but situated near some of California's greatest cities. On the other hand, it's on the opposite side of the country and holds a reputation not many Marines speak highly of. I set the piece of paper down and started thinking of how I was going to tell my wife she would have to pack up her life and move across the country. I didn't just have to tell her, I had to tell my family, who had always had me close by. I never would have thought that the moment I had long anticipated would drive me so far from home.



Your time

By Lance Cpl. Lauren A. Kurkimilis

No matter how mentally prepared your attempt may be, this place will take you by surprise; pleasantly and sometimes miserably. Many Marines will offer up their complaints about Twentynine Palms, Calif., and warn all to stay away. So, to a newcomer, it may be hard to dive head first into the desert, but there are many things to love, and a few to loathe, about this sunny piece of rock and sand.

If you don't know it yet, you'll soon learn the meaning of "extreme climate change." No matter how long you've lived in the desert, there is really very little you can do to mentally prepare for the heat. Short from being in Iraq or Afghanistan, there are few places that can compete with the often triple-digit-temperatures that consume the summer months. The power of the desert sun is not to be taken lightly either so, the hot summer fragrance every year should be that of sunblock.

The common misconception is that it is constantly hot and

dry here, which is true, but some days in the summer it will rain so hard it's unsafe to go outside. And even though those molten-lava hot summers can make you forget how to even say the word "winter," the cold is no joke. You would never assume that you could drive through Yucca Valley, a

"To a newcomer, it may be hard to dive head first into the desert, but there are many things to love, and a few to loathe, about this sunny piece of rock and sand."

— Lance Cpl. Lauren A. Kurkimilis

town near base and see snow. But it happened just a few months ago.

Sometimes, when it's just the right time of spring or fall, the weather here is perfect. During this time, once the cool of the morning burns off, the weather can be sunny, with a mild breeze and a high of 78. Days like those are when you need to get out to Joshua Tree National Park and

hike, camp or rock climb. The challenge can be getting there.

If there is anything that can make or break you out here, it's having a car. With Las Vegas, San Diego and Los Angeles close by, you'll need safe transportation if you decide to get away for the weekend. If that's not your thing, you'll still need a car to access basic amenities. It will take you about 40 minutes to get to the nearest Walmart and a little more than an hour to find a Target or large selection of restaurants. Don't plan on finding fresh seafood close by either. You won't find it.

Even though entertainment options out here are limited, the slow pace of the desert can provide a welcome distraction from the sometimes stressful and hectic lifestyle of being a Marine. This unique and humble community, nestled in the heart of the Mojave Desert, provides a surprisingly serene place to find peace of mind, see new things and raise a family.





Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Monday: Margarita Mondays
 Thursday: Rockin' Karaoke 7 to 10 p.m.
 Friday: Social hour with food, 5 - 7 p.m. followed by DJ Gjettblaque, 8 - 11 p.m., Ladies Night
 Saturday: Variety Night, DJ Gjettblaque 8 to 11 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Monday: Margarita Mondays
 Thursday: Warrior Night 4:30 - 9 p.m.
 Friday: Karaoke Night 6 to 9 p.m.

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Friday: Steak Night, 4:30 - 8 p.m.
 Monday-Friday: All-hands lunch from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
 Monday: All-hands steak night, 4:30 - 8 p.m.

Combat Center Officers' Club

Monday: Steak night, 5 - 7:30 p.m.
 Monday-Friday: All-hands lunch, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
 Thursday: Taco Night, 5- 7 p.m.

For complete calendars visit <http://www.mccs29palms.com>.

Local Events

Free Line Dance Lessons

Learn to dance the night away
 When: 5 to 9 p.m., every Sunday
 Where: Willie Boy's Saloon and Dance Hall
 50048 29 Palms Hwy, Morongo Valley, Calif.
 For more information, call 363-3343.

Ragtime

When: May 3 - June 1
 Where: Theatre 29
 73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
 For more information call 316-4151
 or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

Lower Desert

Gabriel Iglesias

Comedian performs
 When: 8 p.m., May 4 and 5
 Where: Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa
 32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
 For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>

Huey Lewis and the News

American pop rock band performs
 When: 9:00 p.m., Friday, May 17
 Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
 49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
 For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinosort.com>.

Il Divo

Crossover quartet performs
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, May 18
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
 84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
 For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Scotty McCreery

Country musician performs
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, June 1
 Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
 46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
 For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit <http://www.spotlight29.com>

Sunset Cinema

Friday, April 19

6 p.m. - Dark Skies, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. - Snitch, Rated PG-13
 Midnight - 21 and Over, Rated R

Saturday, April 20

10:30 a.m. - Free Matinee Rise of the Guardians, Rated PG
 12:30 p.m. - Oz The Great and Powerful, Rated PG
 3 p.m. - Jack the Giant Slayer 3-D, Rated PG-13
 6 p.m. - The Incredible Burt Wonderstone, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. - 21 and Over, Rated R
 Midnight - The Call, Rated R

Remake of '80s horror classic resurrects original bloody recipe



COURTESY PHOTO

NEIL POND

"Evil Dead"

Starring: Jane Levy, Shiloh Hernandez & Lou Taylor Pucci
 Directed by Fede Alvarez
 Rated R, 91 min.

Given the price of movies today, the saturation of advertising and the wide selection of modern multiplexes, it's highly unlikely that anyone just saunters into a local "movie house" anymore, buys a ticket to whatever's showing and settles in without any idea of what they're about to see.

And that's a good thing, because I'd hate to think of that happening with "Evil Dead." Anyone who stumbles across this devilishly disturbing movie unaware would certainly be in for shock, revulsion and maybe some nightmares.

To say it's not for the faint of heart is a whopping understatement.

On the other hand, this is a film that, for some viewers, couldn't get here soon enough.

"Evil Dead" is a long-awaited remake of a one of the most iconic and successful horror movies of the modern era. Its schlocky predecessor of the same name, made on a shoestring budget and released in 1981, created a template that other fright flicks followed so closely it became a cliché: Put a group of young people into a remote, isolated location (like a cabin in the woods), then create a situation in which all hell (quite literally) breaks loose.

The original "The Evil Dead" spawned two sequels and multiple pop-culture spin-offs, made a cult figure of its star, Bruce Campbell (who'd go on to play Sam Axe on TV's "Burn Notice"), and launched the career of its director, Sam Raimi, who'd later steer the "Spider-Man" trilogy and the recent "Oz The Great and Powerful." Both Campbell and Raimi were producers of this resurrection of the Dead.

The perpetual life of "The Evil Dead" franchise also created a cross-generational fan base, and that's who'll likely be lining up to see just how the new movie stacks up against the first. The distributors are also hoping, of course, that horror fans, curiosity seekers and gore hounds with little or no link to the

previous film will be lured by the promise of seeing, as the poster's tag line promises, "The Most Terrifying Film You Will Ever Experience."

Is it terrifying? Well, it's got some passably scary moments as it recreates the original recipe with two guys, three girls, a woodland cabin, and their discovery in the basement of an ancient book of rituals bound in barbed wire and scrawled with the words "LEAVE THIS BOOK ALONE" — a suggestion that they, of course, ignore.

What most people who see "Evil Dead" will be buzzing about will be its over-the-top, gross-out globs of blood 'n' guts, and its nasty new spin on the devil-inside shocks of "The Exorcist" 40 years ago. Characters are attacked in various ways and some of the most gruesome moments are when demonically possessed bodies do awful things to themselves with electric carving knives, shards of broken glass, box cutters and nail guns. One of the most disturbing scenes involves a rape by a tree — yes, you read that correctly.

And there's battle featuring a chainsaw that has to set a new high — or a new low, depending on how you score such things — for cinematic use of that particular piece of unconventional weaponry.

It's an extreme cocktail of carnage and dark, horror-slasher humor that's clearly not for everyone. But it takes the very clichés its own franchise helped create and it runs hard with them, pushing them boldly into inventively grosser, wickedly wild places for audiences who've become complacent with the violence on TV shows like "The Walking Dead" and films like "Hostel" and "Saw."

And in an age when most films rely on computers for special effects, it's almost an homage to more "authentic," old-school moviemaking, relying entirely on makeup, prosthetics and good ol' goop, instead of cheaper, faster, digitized FX.

And so, director Fede Alvarez, making his long-form debut after several short films, has created a big, spewing slab of gory, red meat entertainment, carved out with all the delicacy of a sputtering chainsaw, for fans a horror movie classic that just refuses to die.

But for anyone else, be aware of what you're about to see before you settle in with your popcorn — or you'll be in for one very unsettling surprise.

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 own YouTube channel
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<http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>



prehistoricart
The Combat Center's protected petroglyphs

**Photos and cutline by
Cpl. William J. Jackson**

The Combat Center is home to the Foxtrot Petroglyph Site in the Lava Training Area. Although the Combat Center is full of prehistoric art, up to 10-thousand years old, Foxtrot is the best known. Images etched and painted onto stone by prehistoric Native American tribes

depict a unique, abstract and naturalistic portrayal of life, resulting in the images being referred to as "rock art."

The rock art includes bighorn sheep, people and other designs made by the prehistoric natives. Only red pictographs, or paintings, are found throughout the Combat Center. The red pigment used was made from a mineral called hematite and images were painted by using fingers or brushes.

Petroglyphs were created by rubbing or scratching at the surface of a rock with another rock, exposing a lighter interior surface.

For more information contact the Archaeology and Paleontology Curation Center at 830-1196.

For full story on the Foxtrot Petroglyph Site, see next week's edition of the Observation Post.



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



The Combat Center also has its own Flickr photo and video streams. Find them at <http://www.flickr.com/the-combatcenter>.