



June 7, 2013



Vol. 57 Issue 22



See tips for safe driving in the Summer, page A7

## Amos addresses Senate on sexual assault prevention, response



From the office of the  
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Sexual assault is criminal behavior that has no place in our Corps and my institution is aggressively taking steps to prevent it. Over the past twelve months, we have attacked sexual assault and have seen encouraging, and in some areas, measurable improvements in three specific areas – prevention, reporting, and offender accountability. There is more work to do, much more work, but we are seeing indicators that tell us we are on the right track.

Leadership is an essential element of our profession. We must be cautious, however, with changes that will undercut a Commanding Officer's ability to ensure obedience to orders. When Commanding Officers lose the ability to take action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, we risk losing the enforcement mechanism needed to maintain the world's most effective fighting force.

My written testimony is composed of three main sections. First, I will discuss the importance of the military Commanding Officer generally. Any discussion of the role of the Commanding Officer in the military justice process must start with overall responsibilities and duties of a Commanding

**Sexual assault is criminal behavior that has no place in our Corps and my institution is aggressively taking steps to prevent it."**

– Gen. James F. Amos

Officer to fight and win on the battlefield. Second, I will speak to the progress we have experienced in the last year under our Campaign Plan in the areas of prevention and response. Central to this discussion is the importance of top-down, Commanding Officer leadership that will bring about the culture change necessary to end sexual assaults, and the preconditions that lead to it in our Marine Corps. Finally, I will discuss our new Complex Trial Teams that came online and began prosecuting complex cases in October 2012.

### The Role of the Commanding Officer

Sexual Assault Prevention within our ranks is ever front and center in my mind and at the top of my priorities. Our senior officers and Staff Non-Commissioned Officers have steadfastly focused on making the necessary changes to prevailing conditions and attitudes to create the environment that the American people not only expect but demand from their Marines. Sexual assault is a crime against individual Marines that reverberates within a unit like a cancer undermining the most basic principle we hold dear -- taking care of Marines. Our unit Commanding Officers are our first line of action in implementing aggressive policies and changing the mindset of the individual Marine.

The Commanding Officer of every unit is the centerpiece of an effective and professional warfighting organization. Marine Commanding Officers are chosen through a rigorous selection process, based on merit and a career of outstanding performance. They are entrusted with our greatest asset, the

See **ADDRESS** page A3



CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

See photos of the Twentynine Palms Car Show, page B1

## ITX Integrated Training Exercise aviation command



## New element in combat training

**Cpl. Ali Azimi**  
Combat Correspondent

Marines with Marine Aircraft Group 11 spent the last month working from the Air Combat Element Compound at the Combat Center's Camp Wilson to provide support for multiple air wings units undergoing Integrated Training Exercise 3-13.

Since their arrival at the Combat Center in early May, MAG-11 has provided support for Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462, Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369 and Marine Fighter

Attack Squadron 314. The exercise provided a vigorous training opportunity and updated approach to aviation ITX training.

In past exercises, Tactical Training Exercise Control Group acted as a notional higher headquarters for the squadrons. MAG-11 played this role directly.

This arrangement provided better training for both the MAG 11 Marines as well as the squadrons, said Maj. Mark Bortnem, operations officer, MAG 11. All of the ACE units received some extra training at the same level of skill as they would deployed.

The MAG-11 Marines operated out of the ACE Compound as they would while in-country. Working from tents at the combat operations center, they briefed pilots before and after flights to provide and gather the latest intelligence. They also monitored the aircraft and communications with TTECG, which allowed them to support the pilots with real-time adjustments to tactics, as it would be done in the constantly changing battlefield.

They scheduled the battle

See **SUPPORT** page A3

## Pilots, caretakers of F/A-18s

■ Officers, enlisted work together

**Cpl. Ali Azimi**  
Combat Correspondent

The F/A-18 is able to be configured for a variety of operations to meet mission requirements. The aircraft can conduct fighter escort, enemy air defense suppression, reconnaissance, air control and close air support - the calling card of Marine aviation. Its versatile nature makes it an indispensable instrument to the Marine Corps, but it comes with a heavy price tag.

These multipurpose assets are incredibly advanced and each cost millions of dollars to manufacture. The responsibility in maintaining these aircraft and keeping them in the air is entrusted to the Marines geared up in the cockpit and the ones on the flight line, tools in hand.

### IN THE COCKPIT

The F/A-18 pilots are the Marines who control these complex aircraft and their training and education is very extensive.



CPL. ALI AZIMI

F/A-18s are inspected prior to and after every launch. Marines on the flightline constantly work to prevent wear and tear and keep them in the air.

The bar is set high for those with dreams of becoming F/A-18 pilots. The four-year degree required by commissioned Marines gets their foot in the door, but in order to become pilots they must also show their potential in the job field. Future pilots must do well on the Aviation Selection Test Battery, an aviation aptitude test, as well as meet certain physical

See **WING** page A5

## CAMP Wilson Like no place on Earth

**Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya**  
Combat Correspondent

*Hot. Dusty. Desert. Desolate. Uncomfortable. Disobliging. Camp Wilson is in the middle of the desert, which is in the middle of Twentynine Palms, which is in the middle of nowhere. There are reasons people come out to the desert. To get away. To get a different experience. And because they got military orders. But Camp Wilson has its amenities. You can place to wash your clothes, work out at its gym. You can even catch a burger and a brew at its local watering hole, after experiencing the most unique training in the Corps.*

Camp Wilson sits on the edge of the most realistic training area available in the Marine Corps. If you peer outside your metal, rounded, tent-like building known as a K-Span, you can see the mountains and desert terrain that hold some of the most unique training areas the Marine Corps has to offer like an urban military complex the size of downtown San Diego. Some of the training areas include names that can conjure fantastical imagery – Lead Mountain, Rainbow Canyon, Quackenbush. So as you sweat through your shoes, can't breathe because of the hot dry sand, the occasional sandstorm that comes in and

See **WILSON** page A5

### Supporting the Mission

"We support the units coming through here for training," said Maj. Van White, officer in charge of the exercise logistics coordination center. "Camp Wilson has always supported and we will continue doing that."

Camp Wilson has the ability to hold up to 6,200 personnel at one time. Service members are housed in K-Spans that can hold up to 30 people and are equipped with electricity to charge phones or run a laptop. Camp Wilson is used as a place for units to stage their equipment and prepare for their training.

Units are able to tactically move into training directly off of the camp. Units must have all materials needed for the field before coming aboard Camp Wilson. Once a unit is staged, Camp Wilson provides extra materials for the units preparing to train.

There are a variety of training exercises that begin from Camp Wilson. There are also simulators aboard Camp Wilson that units can use for a different type of training exercise. One of the simulators included is a combat convoy simulator, where Marines are assigned to a vehicle and a role. Once they have their roles they are put in a variety of simulated combat situations. Another simulator is an operator driver simulator where Marines have the chance to practice their driving skills in different simulated scenarios and while driving different vehicles.

Camp Wilson provides a wide variety of facilities and even though these amenities are meant to provide a high quality of life while training aboard the Combat Center, the most important thing that Camp Wilson facilitates is the training. Camp Wilson is the central nervous system for the training that takes place here aboard the Combat Center.





# Advanced Riders Course

Story and Photo by  
Cpl. Ali Azimi

## Sport, cruiser riders attend class to hone skills

Riding motorcycles comes with risk. Riders accept this risk as the cost for the unparalleled feeling of riding. In order to continue this passion, Marines must meet requirements set by the Marine Corps.

In addition to the Basic Riders Course, active duty service members at the Combat Center are required to go through the Advanced Riders Course or the Sport Riders Course as well. These two courses may differ in name, but are nearly the same and are commonly combined on the course's track.

"We find that students get more out of it if we have two different kinds of bikes out there," said Brent Athy, rider coach, Combat Center safety office. "It gives a broader experience base."

The two-day course is meant to increase the confidence and control of riders. It's geared toward street riding.

All active duty service members are required to take ARC at least 120 days after the completion of BRC. The course is open to DOD employees, retirees, and dependents.

"If they want to take the course and I've got space for them, I'm not going to turn them away," Brent said.

The advanced course is a follow up to the BRC and is not meant for riders with less experience. The BRC provides a broad-based skill set to get out in traffic, negotiate successfully with some confidence and not get injured. The skills in the advanced courses expand on those building blocks.

"From the basic to the advanced course, there are definitely some changes," Brent said. "We improve their turning techniques, their braking skills and their controls. If we tried to teach this to a basic person, it would be way too much."

The 120 days between the basic and advanced courses allow the Marines time to adjust to their motorcycle and get use to the feel of their cruiser or sport bike. Although patrons of the course may differ in their type of bike, they are taught nearly the same lessons in combined courses.

"We do them both at the same time, mainly because the curriculum is the same in the classroom and the exercises are the same on the range," Brent said. "Basically, the only thing that differs is we have to coach each individual specifically to their bike."

The bike-specific training is an important aspect of the course. The design, weight and position of riding that separate capabilities of cruisers versus sport bikes makes a large difference in the way Marines ride.

The cruisers give riders a more comfortable sitting position, but can't lean side to side as far as sport bikes, due to the bike design. Alternatively, the sport bikes allow more versatility in cornering thanks to a sleeker design, but their lean forward position makes longer rides more fatiguing.

Marines need to learn and be comfortable with their personally-owned motorcycles.

"For the advanced course, we want them to be more comfortable on the bikes, have some more finesse," Brent said. "We do customized coaching for the rider on the bike."

The lessons taught in the advanced courses range from the bike itself to the physical and mental factors of the riders.

The two-day course begins in the classroom, where the riders get to know themselves as riders.

"We go over the mental aspects in the classroom, just some things to think about," Brent said. "There's a quick

little survey just to let them get to know themselves a little better and what type of person they are."

The survey reveals the individual's level of risk management through a series of questions and answers which are given numerical values.

When they get on the bike they're a little more self conscious of what their potential is, Brent said. If they've got things that set them off and they realize what that is, it is a lot easier to avoid it.

The following day, the riders move onto the track where theory comes into practice. The students improve on the cornering and braking skills they had learned in the BRC. During the course, the riders circle around the course's open-pavement training area, swerving around cones and leaning on the corners.

"There's a lot more refinement involved," Brent said. "You have to be a lot smoother, you have to be a lot more confident on the motorcycle to achieve it, which a basic rider doesn't have."

Brent and the other coaches keep a watchful eye on the riders. Unlike the BRC, there is no graded test for the advanced course.

As the student progresses through the exercises, the coaches judge their performance and their ability. If they are clearly not comfortable and not ready for the curriculum, the students are asked to retake the course at a later date.

"We're not just cycling people through the system," Brent said. "We want to make sure that they're understanding the material and that they're able to do it."

The course is taught an average of twice a month, with 12 spots open for sport and cruiser riders. To join the course call 830-6154.

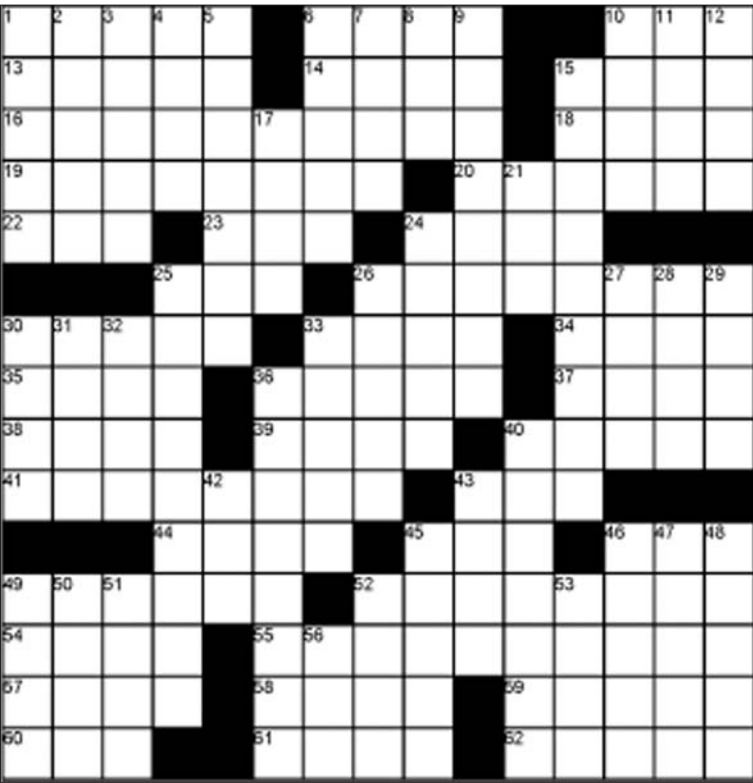
### GROUP THEORY

#### ACROSS

- Paddled at an initiation, say
- Make-believe
- \_\_\_ of the land
- In reserve
- Andean land
- Wound at the corrida
- Wedding party member
- Genesis brother
- Miss World et al.
- Strengthen by tempering
- Switch positions
- Dead heat
- Smelter refuse
- Murphy \_\_\_
- Painted with dots
- Western plateaus
- \_\_\_ d'oeuvres
- Zero, in tennis
- Wharton School subj.
- Mubarak's predecessor
- Diva's performance
- Like most workhorses
- Jazz vocalist Anita
- Mournful ring
- Starts by short- circuiting
- Suffix with neat or beat
- Currier's partner
- Swerve at sea
- Word of advice
- Ray-Bans, e.g.
- Short Beethoven work
- Libel, e.g.
- Mule or burro
- "To \_\_\_ his own"
- Wind ensemble member
- Peace goddess
- Paid player
- Body decorations, slangily
- Male and female

#### DOWN

- Arthur Marx, familiarly
- Like most Turks
- Criticizes harshly
- Sharp quality
- Presidential campaign events
- Sudden influx
- Towel pronoun
- "We \_\_\_ the World"
- Cave-wall painter
- Earring site
- Surface figure
- Give a whoop
- Ship-to-shore connection
- Camelot lady
- Carpet fuzz
- Alley cat, e.g.
- Range of radio frequencies
- Fountain drinks
- Handed-down stories
- Wicked doings
- Negotiation's end, hopefully



- Fishnet stocking pattern
- Off-the-wall response?
- Santa suit soiler
- Where the Styx flows
- Touchy subject
- Service club since 1915
- "\_\_\_ got a mule ..."
- "Peter Pan" dog
- Oxen connectors
- Casio competitor
- Totally absurd
- Turns white
- Aerobics move
- Frosty coating
- With the bow, in music
- Dundee denizen
- Get bushed
- Lawyers' org.

See answers on page A6

### SUDOKU 2920 M

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

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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>

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ADDRESS, from A1

individual Marine. Commanding Officers are charged with building and leading their team to withstand the rigors of combat by establishing the highest level of trust throughout their unit. Unit Commanding Officers set the command climate, one in which the spirit and intent of the orders and regulations that govern the conduct of our duties will be upheld. There are a number of leadership styles, but the result of any of them must be a group of Marines and Sailors that have absolute trust in their leaders, a level of professionalism derived from competence and confidence. Trust in the Commanding Officer and fellow Marines is the essential element in everything we do. Developing this trust, dedication, and esprit de corps is the responsibility of the Commanding Officer. Commanding Officers do this by setting standards, training to standards, and enforcing standards. This defines the good order and discipline required by every Marine unit. Marines expect this.

Whether it is rewarding success or correcting failure, the Commanding Officer remains the common denominator. Commanding Officers may delegate certain tasks, but they can never delegate their accountability for their unit. This is the essence of good order and discipline. A unit with good order and discipline meets and exceeds standards, works together to continually improve, follows orders, trains new members,

expects constant success, seeks challenges, and does not tolerate behavior that undermines unit cohesion.

As the nation’s Crisis Response Force, the Marine Corps must be ready to answer the nation’s call at a moment’s notice. Accordingly, good order and discipline is required at all times...wherever a unit is and regardless of what that unit has been tasked to do. Commanding Officers cannot delegate this responsibility.

I have repeatedly referred to these duties as maintaining the “spiritual health” of the Marine Corps from a holistic sense. This theme was the genesis of the 27 briefings the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps and I delivered to Marines all around the world last year. My intent was to re-emphasize the heritage of our Marine Corps...who we are, and who we are not. Our heritage is one that is guided by our principles of Honor, Courage and Commitment and described by our motto...Semper Fidelis – Always Faithful.

I expect Marines to have a unified sense of moral and righteous purpose, to be guided by what I refer to as “true north” on their moral compass. I will aggressively pursue and fight anything that destroys the spiritual health of the Marine Corps and detracts from our ability to fight our Nation’s wars. That includes sexual assault. A single sexual assault in a unit can undermine everything that a Commanding Officer and every Marine in that unit has worked so hard to achieve.

After more than 43 years of service to our nation, it is inconceivable to me that a

Commanding Officer could not immediately and personally – within applicable regulations – hold Marines accountable for their criminal behavior. That is the sacred responsibility of Commanding Officership. I expect to be held accountable for everything the Marine Corps does and fails to do. That is my task under U.S. law. I, in turn, will hold my Commanding Officers accountable for everything their units do and fail to do.

Commanding Officers never delegate responsibility and accountability, and they should never be forced to delegate their authority. We cannot ask our Marines to follow their Commanding Officer into combat if we create a system that tells Marines to not trust their Commanding Officer on an issue as important as sexual assault. In May of 2012, I wrote a personal letter addressed to “All Marines” regarding sexual assault; I told them “[o]ur greatest weapon in the battle against sexual assault has been and will continue to be decisive and engaged leadership.” My opinion has not changed.

While our efforts in confronting sexual assault have been expansive, they have not eliminated this behavior from our ranks. I have been encouraged by our progress, but I acknowledge today, as I have told Members of Congress in previous testimony, that we have a long way to go. Changing the mindset of an institution as large as the Marine Corps always takes time, but we remain firmly committed to removing sexual assault from our Corps. We continue to work to ensure that our leaders gain and maintain the trust of their Marines, as

well as ensuring that Marines can likewise trust their chain of command when they come forward. We are not there yet. Where the system is not working as it should, we are committed to fixing it, and to holding commanders accountable for what is happening in their units. I pledge that we will work with Congress, as well as experts in the field, as we eliminate sexual assault with our ranks.

I have reviewed the current legislative proposals related to sexual assault and military justice, and I believe there is much merit in many of the proposals. We should continue to engage in a serious debate about the best way to administer military justice. I want to specifically identify some encouraging trends in prevention, response and offender accountability. I believe these are based on substantial changes made in our SAPR Campaign Plan, and in the complete legal re-organization of our trial teams, both instituted mid-year 2012. These changes are showing measurable improvements and demonstrate that a Commanding Officer-led model of military justice can be successful. My service will continue to work tirelessly in our fight to bring about the culture change that will combat sexual assault.

*Editor’s Note: “The Statement of Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response” was given June 4. The statement will continue in the next issue of the Observation Post.*



CPL. ALI AZIMI

Maj. Daron Youngberg, F/A-18 pilot, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314, inspects the aircraft prior to his launch from the Combat Center's expeditionary airfield, June 3.

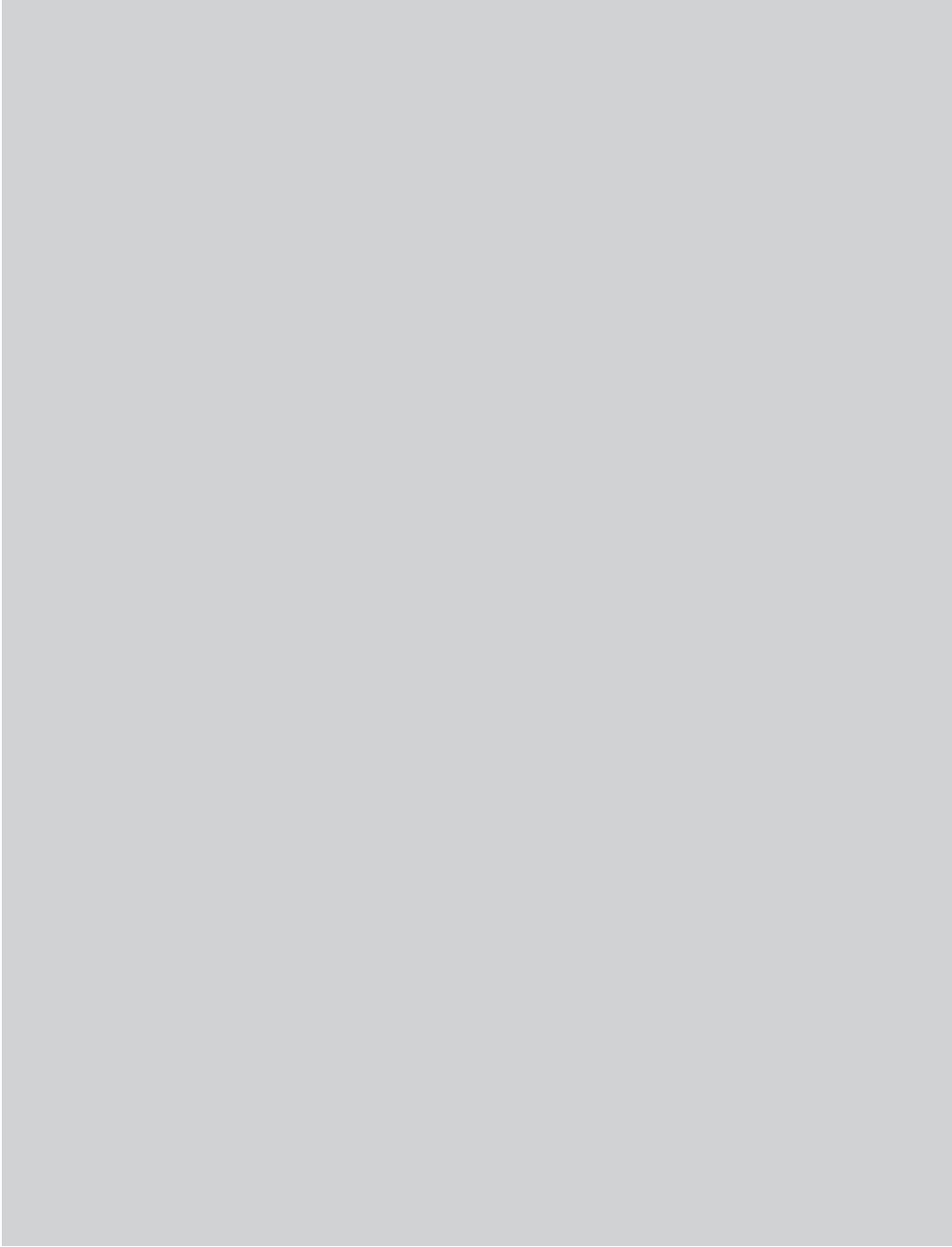
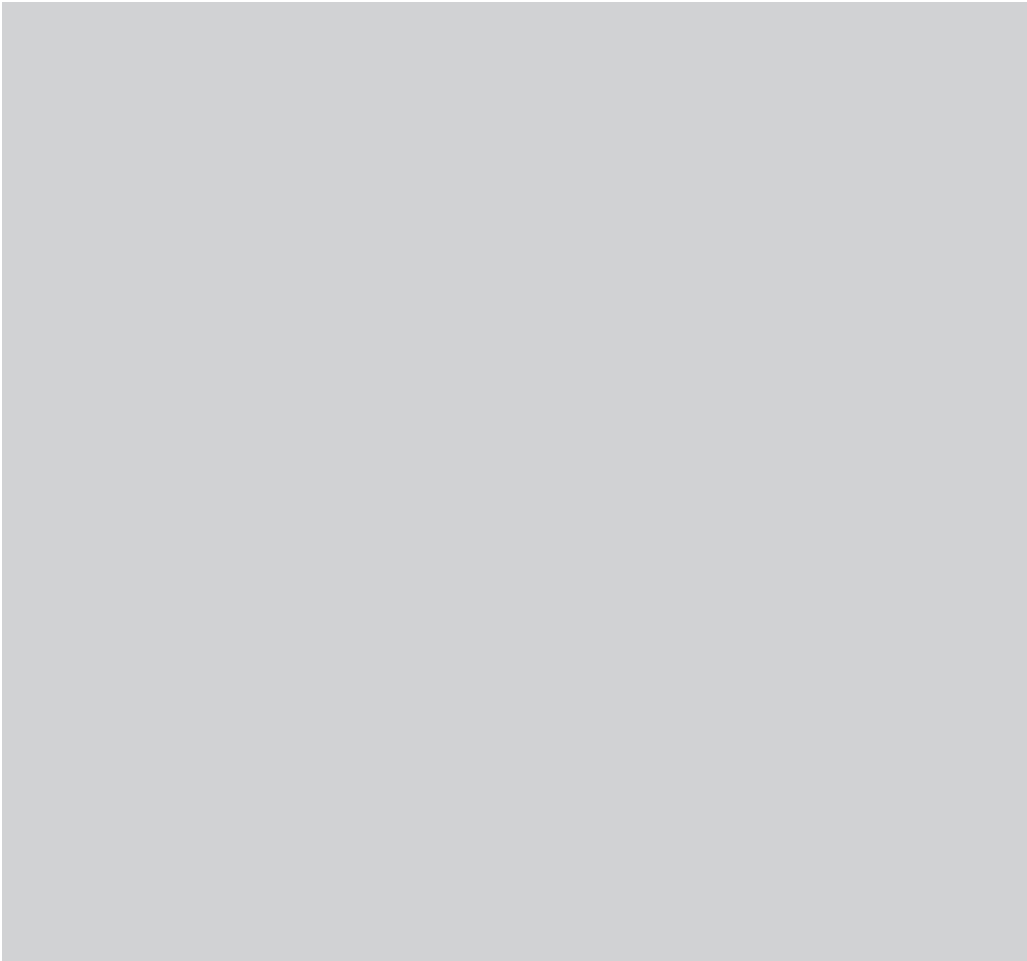
SUPPORT, from A1

rhythm - the daily assigned missions, the support functions, the intelligence picture and managed the pace of operations.

Their ability to monitor and calculate the weather conditions of the harsh Twentynine Palms desert environment also became an invaluable factor to pilots.

“We canceled some flight due to visibility,” said Capt. Mike Harper, UH-1Y Huey pilot, HMLA-369. “It was disappointing to the ground guys because if you look straight up you can see blue sky but you couldn’t see in the Hueys.”

It is unclear if this will become a permanent part of the predeployment training exercises. However the addition of the command control element at ACE compound for ITX 3-13 sets precedence for future aviation-based training operations at the Combat Center.





# WILD & CRAZY KIDS

PHOTOS BY CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON



**[Above, Left]** Adrianna Torres, a 2nd grade student at Condor Elementary, tosses a ball into a bucket during the school's Field Day event June 4. The ball toss was one of several events held during the Field Day event. Torres and her classmates spent the morning enjoying the summer heat with games and water activities.  
**[Center]** Adelina Hernandez, a 2nd grade student at Condor Elementary, hula hoops during Condor Elementary's Field Day.  
**[Right]** Aaliyah Sanchez, a 2nd grade student at Condor Elementary, catches a water balloon during the water balloon toss station June 4. The school set up the afternoon activities as a way to kick off the students' summer break.  
**[Left]** Daniela Vargas, a 2nd grade student at Condor Elementary, shakes off water after being splashed during Condor Elementary's Field Day event June 4.



WING, from A1

requirements specific to their job.

“You have to have decent vision although that is correctable these days, and standard physical fitness required of a Marine officer,” said Capt. Michael Huck, assistant operations officer, VMFA-314. “Specific to the fighter units is the G tolerance, the ability to handle the high (gravitational forces) of a fighter aircraft.”

If they meet all the standards required of Marine pilots, the officers move on to the Naval flight school for two years and earn their wings. After their school, they are assigned to fleet replacement replace meant squadrons, where they get 100 hours of flight time in the F/A-18 before they in they join the fleet squadron.

The pilot’s training in the fleet is continuous. They are required to meet annual minimums, which are usually broken down into monthly and weekly, to keep up their training.

“We tend to fly maybe three days a week,” Huck said. “The other days are studying our ground jobs and simulators.”

These ground jobs help keep up operations within the squadrons and can range from working in maintenance to operations and logistics, where they plan and coordinate all the squadron movements.

If they are not providing support for the squadron, these pilots continue their training by hitting the books or the getting into

the simulators to maintain their skills sharp.

“Outside of the cockpit, we’re either studying our tactics or the basic capabilities of the jet,” Huck said. “We also spend a lot of time in the simulators.”

Pilots take on a heavy responsibility every time they step into the jet. They take this responsibility seriously inside and out of the aircraft to ensure they are at the top of their game and able to do what is required.

“It’s definitely a job that comes with a lot of responsibility, but if you have the dedication it takes to do this job, it probably means you love doing it a lot,” Huck said. “So all that responsibility just kind of comes with going out there every day and doing what you love.”

IN THE HANGAR

Every time the F/A-18 flies over the hangar, the roar of the twin-engines echoes against the walls. Inside, Marines toil away on maintaining and repairing the same jets that fly overhead.

Some of the Marines in the hangar aren’t old enough to drink, yet they are responsible for multi-million dollar aircraft and the lives of the pilots who fly them. It’s a responsibility they take seriously.

“You are in charge of that jet,” said Lance Cpl. Ian Bennett, power line mechanic, VMFA 314. “You write your name on it and say it’s safe to put someone in and fly off.”

After every flight, these Marines inspect, wash and fuel the jets. They do what

they need to prevent and daily wear and tear, to expand the lifespan of the million-dollar planes.

The prerequisites to work on the jets do not require more than high school degree and less than less than a year of aircraft mechanical training, but most of their training comes on the job, according to Bennett.

“When I came to the fleet I thought I knew a good bit about the aircraft, but not at all,” Bennett said. “A lot of it is on-the-job training. I’m constantly learning. Literally, everyday it’s something knew.”

During deployments the Marines work twelve hours on and twelve off, but in the rear a night crew can work fourteen to fifteen hours.

“Pretty much every day you set the jets up , get them ready for flight,” Bennett said. “Send them out and when they come back you do your inspection. Say during the inspection, something has happened you just address it from that point.”

They work as long as needed to make sure these aircraft last long and are properly maintained.

There may be a gap between the amount of training for the marines in the cockpit and those in the hangar, but they are two sides of the same coin. The combination of knowledge and skill between these Marines creates a working cycle that maintains these aircraft. They are trained and entrusted to them by the Marine Corps to keep the jets flying and in the fight.

WILSON, from A1

wrecks all your gear, the sudden strong gust of winds, feeling of emptiness when you peer at the vast emptiness of the desert, Camp Wilson really isn’t so bad. The local club has cable television.

WARRIOR’S CLUB

It is called the Warriors Club, but you can’t exactly bring in a loaded rifle through the doors. They prefer you clear your weapon by pointing the business end at a big red aluminum barrel and make sure there isn’t any ammunition in the weapon. Once through the doors though, it’s like any other sports bar in America. There are arcade games, pool tables, and a grill and bar. Most importantly, it has air conditioning, a valuable commodity when you’re drenched in your own sweat and there is not a dry spot on any article of clothing you’re wearing.

MINI-MART FOR MARINES

They got movies. They got snacks. They got cold drinks and a whole aisle of beef jerky. They got everything you need, up to and including a tactical, SWAT team style pistol holster. Not exactly something you can find at your local convenience store. The Post Exchange aboard Camp Wilson is a fully-functional store where people will find the majority of items they would find at a regular military store. It is a central hub of a one-stop-shop where at any time it is open, you can find a dusty and sandy Marine walking through the aisles with a rifle slung over his shoulder perusing Pop-Tarts.

LAUNDROMAT

You can’t wash away the heat, but you can wash away the sweat, dirt, sand, rocks,



grime, funk, blood, and other extra effects that you might get on your clothing at the local Laundromat. Marines are known for their spit and polish uniforms. Looking sharp and professional in their Dress Blues – high glossed and high speed. The camouflaged battle dress uniform? Not so much. But at least you can wash it here for free. And it has air conditioning.

YES, THERE IS A GYM

In every clime and place, Marines want a gym. They need a gym. If Marines went to Mars, the very first thing they would ask for is, “Is there a gym.” If not, they will make one using pieces of steel and wood for pull-up bars, concrete on the end of poles for curls, and rocks in their packs to pick up and put down.

If running in 100 degree weather with 70 pounds of gear up and down hills isn’t enough, there are free and Nautilus weights at the Camp Wilson gym. There is even a small gym outside next to the indoor gym. A gym outside to work out in the heat if you just can’t get enough of the beautiful weather in the desert oasis that is Camp Wilson.

SEE YOU SOON

Weather it be a first or last visit, it can often seem like an extended stay at Camp Wilson. However, most would agree, it could be much much worse and those Marines who know what it’s like to be out in the field for weeks, in the desert heat, with out showers, clean socks and hot meals, will say Camp Wilson can be a welcome sight.

*Editor's note: This is the first installment of a three-part series about Camp Wilson. See next week's edition of the Observation Post for part two.*

Marines participating in the Integrated Training Exercise 3-13 use their cell phones in an area of Camp Wilson nicknamed Verizon Hill June 1. The hill is known for being one of the few areas where Marines can find consistent cell phone reception near Camp Wilson.

WHAT I'VE LEARNED



Mark

Howell, Mich., operations officer, MAG 11, 43

# BORTNEM

> **If you walk into** a bar, how can you tell who the fighter pilots are? You don't have to, they'll tell you.

> **Every Marine is a type-A** person. Now take that and multiply that by a hundred and that's where you get your pilots.

> **When I first enlisted** in the Marine Corps, I was a high school drop-out, so I still have not finished high school. I think it allowed me the opportunity to mature a little bit.

When I went to flight school, I was already 29 years old and a lot of my contemporaries who just went right from high school through college were 23 or 24 years old.

> **For me, it wasn't as difficult** because I think I had

BORTNEM ORIGINALLY ENLISTED IN THE MARINE CORPS AS A SUPPLY MARINE AND WAS ACCEPTED IN TO THE MECEP PROGRAM AND IS NOW A FA-18 PILOT

an opportunity of time to kind of grow up a little bit. I can tell you that if I went when I was 22 or 23 years old, I never would have made it. I'm glad I had the chance to grow up a little bit.

> **I got sick probably** the first 20 times I was in the airplane. You know those little airsickness bags? Every time I flew, I used to take gallon-sized ziplock bags. It's pretty common to have air sickness. It's all related to your ears, but you eventually get over it.

> **It's actually very common** for someone to be able to not look over the ledge of the Empire State Building, but not have a problem in the airplane. I'm not particularly afraid of heights, but there are other pilots I know that are definitely afraid of heights. The airplane has a floor. It might be a very small floor and a floor with nothing below it, but it still feels like you're in a space.

> **I don't like being** in the dark by myself. Big, bad fighter pilot. I've been flying in some pretty black times too. I guess you just don't feel by yourself when you're in an airplane.

> **Top Gun.** Everybody has watched Top Gun. I think you have two different perspectives on it. You have the perspective before you become an aviator and after you become an aviator. Before you become an aviator, it's the same as everybody. It's cool, you wonder, "Wow, that sure seems fun." After, you get to look and critique it, all of the things that maybe aren't accurate.

> **Overall I think** it's neat, not very accurate, but fun to watch.

> **Once you become someone** who drives a car, you go get in someone else's car. Many of us find ourselves thinking, "Maybe I would do things a little bit differently." The same thing happens in a commercial jet. For me though, when an airplane is taking off or landing, I'm thinking, "I wonder if that guy knows what he's doing."

> **You see that a lot** in pilots. Pilots that say that all they've ever wanted to be is a pilot, no matter what kind of pilot they end up being. That was not true for me. When I grew up, I use to race motorcycles. From the time I was 10 years old to the time I was 20. I really thought I would grow up and be in professional motocross, but a couple of injuries and that goes away pretty quick.

> **Remember I said** I was a high school drop-out, well I quit high school in the 11th grade, because I wasn't very smart. I don't mean I wasn't very smart and didn't have intelligence; it was just a dumb move. When I joined the Marine Corps and had an opportunity to be in the MECEP program, I went to school.

> **I really wanted to** go to a school that was close to home. I wanted to go to a university in Michigan and they didn't want me. Instead I went to Ohio State because it was close to home.

> **My first year at** Ohio State I was a Michigan kid, and eventually I opened myself up and decided I really enjoyed the place, the school, the city, and now I am a die-hard Ohio State fan.

> **I root for two** teams, Ohio State and anyone who plays against Michigan.

> **In my opinion** it's the biggest rivalry in college football. I get teased about that every year. Most of my family is Michigan fans. Every year, in November, Ohio State and Michigan play against each other. There's a little bit of friendly family rivalry.

> **I got it from** both sides. People in Ohio don't trust me, people in Michigan don't trust me.



Interviewed by Cpl. Ali Azimi  
May 31, 2013





Cpl. William J. Jackson  
Combat Correspondent

## Tips drivers should know before hitting the road

Summertime heat is here and with temperatures rising to the 100s, getting to your vacation destination and back safely is a top priority.

During long-distance rides, vehicles and drivers are pushed harder in the scorching heat. It’s important to keep your vehicle and yourself in top shape before taking any trip, short or long.

Getting lost can be embarrassing and can induce unnecessary stress. If necessary, plan your trips accordingly and try to avoid unusual road closures and traffic jams.

### CHECK YOUR VEHICLE BEFORE THE TRIP:

There are a few things travelers should check on their car before the trip, what to take on the trip and how to stay safe during the trip.

■ **Tires** – Air pressure, tread wear, spare-tire maintenance

Make sure the air pressure in all your tires are at a consistent level, especially the spare tire. Correct tire pressure for the tires is listed inside the driver’s doorframe or in the owner’s manual, not on the tire itself. Continue to check the tread on each tire. If the tread is worn down to less than 1/16 inches, it is time to replace the tires. Also, inspect the tires for excessive or irregular wear, a tire rotation or alignment might be needed. The friction from the tires and the hot road temperatures can wear down tires quicker in the summertime.

■ **Belts, hoses and wiper blades** – Condition and fitting

High temperatures can speed up the deterioration of rubber belts and hoses. Cracks, cuts and blisters can appear when a replacement is needed. Double check connections to make sure all of the fittings are secure. Small adjustments can save a lot of money instead of full replacements.

Wiper blades go through rigorous climate changes and extreme wear during the spring and winter months. If

noticeable cracking and splitting is apparent, invest in a new pair before hitting the road.

■ **Cooling system and fluid levels** – servicing and levels: oil, brake, transmission, power steering, coolant and windshield.

Vehicles overheat, especially in hotter climates. To combat over heating engine temperatures, check coolant levels to make sure it’s at a sufficient level. In addition, look into flushing the coolant system completely and refilling it to the proper level. This goes with oil, brake, transmission, power steering and windshield fluid levels. Make sure each reservoir is full and if there are any leaking fluids, take the vehicle in to be serviced.

■ **Lights** – Headlights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers and interior lights

Check everything for serviceability. Common problems are brake lights and turn signals. Failure to see vehicles is a common problem and a serious safety hazard. Not having a functional light can also lead to a ticket.

■ **Air Conditioning** – performance

Lack of air conditioning on summer days can adversely affect people who are in poor health. Check to ensure that your air conditioning system is functioning properly. Consider repairing before taking a trip.

### WHAT TO TAKE:

Some passengers focus on making sure they have the necessary entertainment like movies and music before their trip kicks off. Most importantly, understand the appropriate safety precautions for travel.

■ **Child Safety Seats:**

Some children may be required to use safety or booster seats. Ensure the vehicle has enough room to properly fit the necessary safety equipment. To learn more, visit

[www.booster-seat.gov](http://www.booster-seat.gov) and click on “Which seat is right for my child?”

■ **Emergency Roadside Kit:**

There are cases where even the most maintained car breaks down. In this case, having an emergency roadside kit can help ease troubles in extreme situations. Items to have in a kit include a cell phone and charger, first-aid kit, flashlight, flares, jumper cables, maps, batteries, food and water.

### ON THE ROAD:

Traveling can be half of the fun on road trips, but be aware of distractions that can take attention away from the road. As a driver, there will always be distractions. Counter them with safe driving techniques and stay focused on the road. Advise someone of the trip and route you are taking. Avoid texting and talking on cell phones, even talking on a headset can provide a level of distraction.

■ **Staying Focused:**

Avoid fatigue. Schedule frequent stops and breaks to allow everyone to reset and stretch their legs. If traveling for a few days, alternate drivers if possible or set up an overnight stay at a motel. Stay alert.

■ **Traveling With Children:**

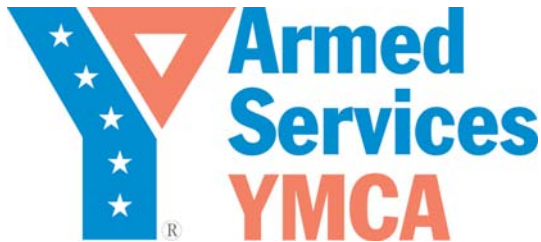
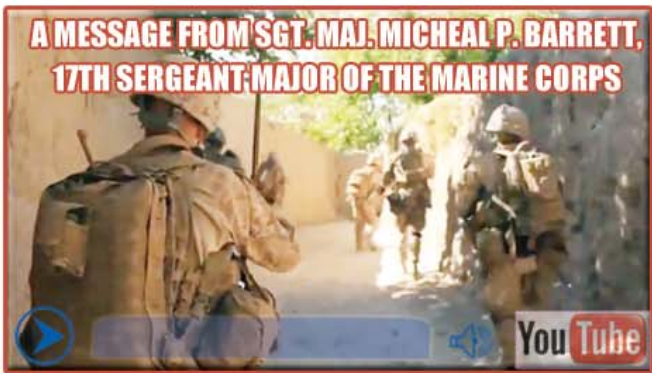
Combat the frequently ask question, “Are we there yet?” Keep children entertained with books, music, toys and games. The trip will be much more memorable if stress levels are low.

■ **Buckle Up:**

Buckling up is the most effective safety measure to take while driving.

Safety on the road is paramount and the Department of Defense is encouraging leaders to continue to hold their junior counterparts accountable. Plan accordingly for vacation destinations and enjoy the summer.





## TWENTYNINE PALMS 7TH ANNUAL SOAP BOX DERBY

■ **Community gathers  
for car show, races**

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Heat vapors rose off of Donnell Hill as children sat at the starting line in their soapbox cars. The blow of an airhorn, started the first heat of racers, kicking off the 7th annual Armed Services YMCA Soapbox Derby June 1.

Forty-six racers ages 5 to 14 drove their unique soapbox racers along side the Twentynine Palms 13th annual Street Fair & Car Show Sunday. Children from the local area were able to showcase their racing skills and their creativity with their hand built soapbox race cars.

"I was first in both of my heats and I had the fastest times," said 9-year-old Dillan Hargrove. "At first it was pretty scary, but it was fun after a while."

Each time racers passed the finish line, one of the Marines and sailors who volunteered to work the event pushed more cars back up the hill, helping the racers get ready for their second and final heat.

After the races, the crowd gathered around the awards tent, talking shop and comparing notes while Sadie Fisher, the ASYMCA special event and volunteer coordinator, tallied the racers downhill times.



[Left] Jason Tagita, 8, races his way down Donnell Hill during the Armed Services YMCA's 7th annual Soapbox Derby June 1. Tagita raced twice and was awarded a participation ribbon.

[Right] Caden Dickson, 5, streaks by the finish line during the ASYMCA 7th annual Soapbox Derby June 1. Dickson won his first heat during the race.

"Thank you so much for attending the 2013 Soapbox Derby Race," Fisher said as the crowd cheered loudly.

Fisher announced each racer by name so they could come forward to accept their participation ribbon and placement trophies.

"The building of the cars is really supposed to be a family function," Fisher said. "So the parents can do something with their children. They have input with design and color. We have them come out here and race down the hill, for fun. We award trophies but the point is just for the kids to have fun."

The results were broken up into a few categories, first time racers for both 5 to 8 and 9 to 14 years old age groups, veteran racers for both age groups and the choice awards.

Alex Murray, 7, won third place in his division. It was his first time racing in the event.

"I was shocked," Murray said, as he and his father, Kevin, carried his soapbox racer to his car. "I'm serious, I was shocked."

The children raved about their awards and huddled around each other so the volunteers and families could get pictures of them.

"Again, one more round of applause for our racers and wonderful volunteers," Fisher said. "The kids always have a wonderful time."

The ASYMCA is also hosting a summer camp in Big Bear, Calif., this August. For more information of events or volunteer opportunities call Sadie Fisher at 830-7481.

### *The winners are...*

**ASYMCA Choice Award:** Lauren Danser  
**General's Choice Award:** Kaleb Bushman  
**Chamber of Commerce's Choice:** Cloey Duffield

#### **Age 5-8 Stock Division**

1st: Alexander Young  
2nd: Jessalla Landers  
3rd: Alex Murray

#### **Age 5-8 Super Stock Division**

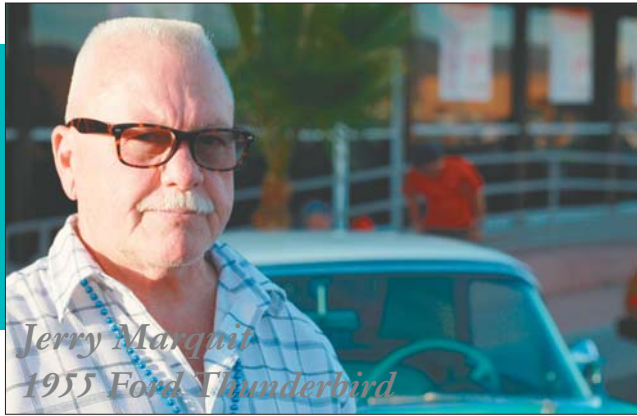
1st: Jared Brase  
2nd: Kevin Dougherty  
3rd: Nathan Pratt

#### **Age 9-14 Stock Division**

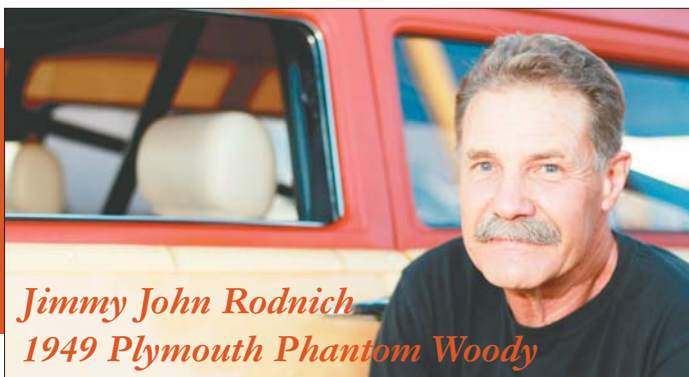
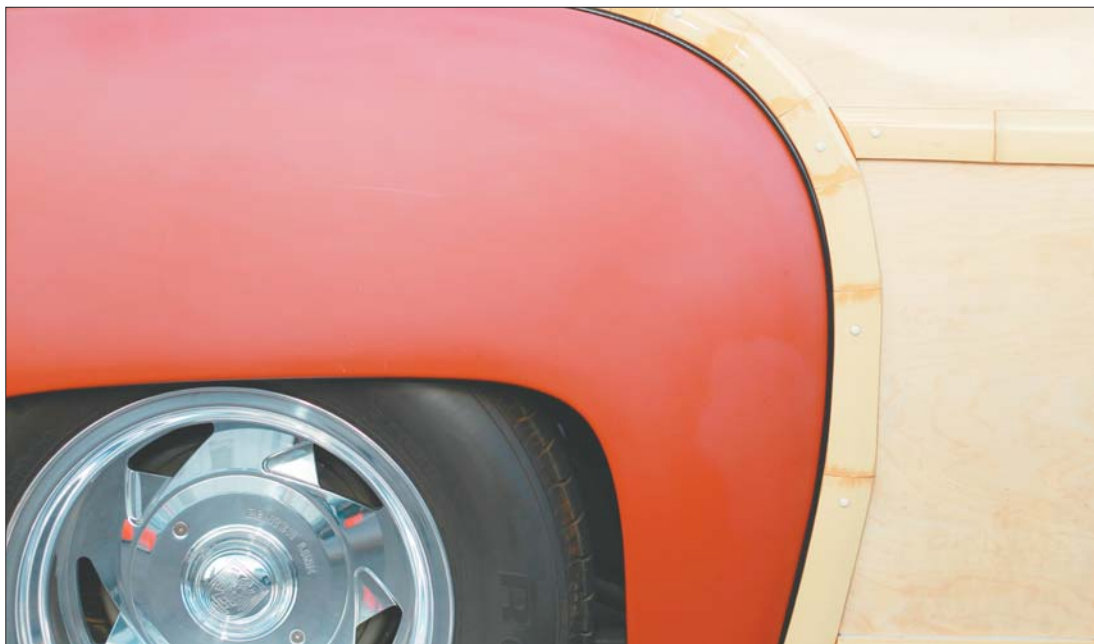
1st: Jenna Zamora  
2nd: Kyle Murray  
3rd: Jack Livingston

#### **Age 9-14 Super Stock Division**

1st: Sean Salinas  
2nd: Brennan Dougherty  
3rd: Allison Pratt



Jerry Marquit is the owner of a 1955 Ford Thunderbird. Marquit was participating in the 13th Annual Twentynine Palms Car Show. I've owned it for about a month and a half," said Marquit. "I just had it delivered. I had a 1964 T-Bird, same exact color. I gave it to my son because he loved it so much. He's a master sergeant and I gave it to him as a retirement gift."



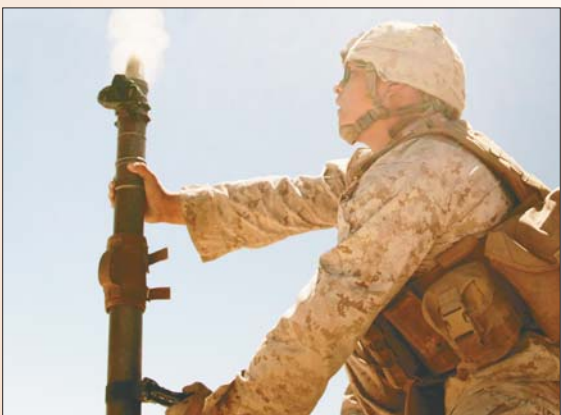
**Jimmy John Rodnich**  
**1949 Plymouth Phantom Woody**

Jimmy Rodnich is the owner of 1949 Plymouth Phantom Woody displayed at the 13th Annual Twentynine Palms Car Show. Twentynine Palms hosted the 13th Annual Car Show and Street Fair on Highway 62 June 1. "I was driving to work one day and I found it in a field in Joshua Tree," Rodnich said. "It was quite a ways away and I could see a split-frame windshield, that kind of gives a way an old car. The owner had it parked there since 1972. They're not attractive cars but I chopped it, sectioned it and it turned out looking ok."









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