

THROUGH THE LENS

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

2015



“Through the Lens 2015: Commitment to Excellence” was produced by the Marine Corps Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Community Plans and Liaison Office

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“ **Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.** ”

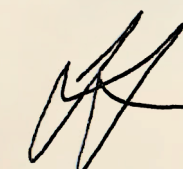
-Aristotle

Just as the infantry Marine aims to become the best at his craft through training and repetition, so does the photographer. Time and again, the photographers of record for the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MAGTFTC, MCAGCC) in Twentynine Palms, Calif., go into the field or to events both on and off the installation, focusing on their mission, trying new techniques and honing their skills with one goal in mind — to capture the images that will best tell the Marine Corps’ story.

Can anyone take a photo? Absolutely. But not just anyone can capture the intensity and concentration on a Marine’s face during a live-fire exercise, or the emotion on family members’ faces as they watch their Marine or sailor head off into the unknown on yet another deployment.

Not everyone can capture the unique individual and collective stories that play out daily aboard the Combat Center and throughout the training command, but our Marines can, and do, to ensure the Marine Corps’ story is told with visceral accuracy.

We hope you enjoy the photos in this latest edition of “Through the Lens,” aptly named “Commitment to Excellence,” to reflect the dedication our talented Marines bring to their jobs as they strive to communicate the MAGTFTC, MCAGCC and Marine Corps stories.



Capt. Justin Smith
MAGTFTC, MCAGCC
Public Affairs Officer



TRAIN TO STANDARD, NOT TO TIME

Responding immediately to a crisis anywhere across the globe to stabilize any situation isn't a job for the faint of heart, and it isn't a job for those who aren't prepared. That's why Marines — the nation's Expeditionary Force in Readiness — train constantly, both at their home bases and at the Combat Center, where they bring together all of the elements they need to ensure mission success. From the combined-arms training of the Integrated Training Exercise (ITX) to joint/coalition-level exercises like Black Alligator, there isn't anything Marines and sailors who train here don't prepare for; because they all know that it isn't a matter of if the call comes, it's when.

Clockwise from top: An M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank crew with Company A, 4th Tank Battalion, fires its 120 mm main gun during the company's pre-qualification tank gunnery at Range 500, Aug. 4, 2015. (Cpl. Julio McGraw)

Cpl. Austin McGregor, administrative specialist, Headquarters Battalion, demonstrates swimming with a rifle during a High Intensity Tactical Training session at the Combat Center Training Tank, July 23, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Cpl. James McCurdy with Battery C, 1st Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, annotates grid coordinates and fire mission instructions in preparation for fire support coordination drills, July 27, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Clarence A. Leake)

Lance Cpl. John R. Camp, squad leader, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, leads his squad through an assault course during Exercise Chosin, a squad-level training evolution, at Range 410, Aug. 26, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)





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Clockwise from top: Light armored vehicle crewmembers with 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion prepare their anti-tank LAV for action during Exercise Desert Scimitar aboard the Combat Center, April 14, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Lance Cpl. Dakota Martin, combat engineer, Marine Wing Support Squadron 371, watches his post using an M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle during a mission rehearsal exercise at Command Observation Post 5, Feb. 17, 2015. (Cpl. Medina Ayala-Lo)

1st Lt. Joseph Carroll, Company I executive officer, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, watches an MV-22B Osprey take off during a Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation Exercise, Jan. 16, 2015. (Cpl. Julio McGraw)



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Clockwise from top, left: Cpl. Randolph S. Pritchard, right, motor transportation operator with Combat Logistics Battalion 6, Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, talks with role players during vehicle recovery and convoy operations on urban terrain during Integrated Training Exercise (ITX) 3-15, May 24, 2015. (Staff Sgt. Keonaona C. Paulo)

Marines with Alpha Battery perform maintenance on an M77A2 Lightweight Howitzer during ITX 2-15, Jan. 30, 2015. Weapons are cleaned multiple times daily to ensure they function properly. (Lance Cpl. William Hester)

Two AV-8B Harriers assigned to Marine Attack Squadron 214, Marine Aircraft Group 13, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., await launch at the Combat Center's Strategic Expeditionary Landing Field during ITX 2-15 nighttime operations, Feb. 11, 2015. (Staff Sgt. Kyle Brasier)

A 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force assault breacher vehicle races toward an objective as artillery provides suppressing fire Feb. 9, 2015, during ITX 2-15's battalion assault course. ABV's are used to clear areas of mines and other ordnance for ground troops and vehicles to move through. (Lance Cpl. William Hester)

This page, top: Sgt. Andrew Norberg, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, emerges from freezing water during a Winter Mountain Leaders Course (WMLC) 1-15 Ice-Breaker Drill at Levitt Lake, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MCMWTC), Bridgeport, Calif., Jan. 30, 2015. Marines learn how to extricate themselves from the ice if they fall through. It was the first time in nearly three years the training was conducted. (Cpl. Medina Ayala-Lo)

This page, center: Pfc. Johnathan Deadman, assaultman, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, carries the receiver of a .50-caliber machine gun as he trudges through deep snow during Mountain Training Exercise (MTE) 2-15 at MCMWTC, March 23, 2015. (Sgt. Charles Santamaria)

This page, bottom: Staff Sgt. John Freeseha, instructor, Animal Packers Course, begins singing "The Marines' Hymn" after completing a plunge into freezing water during the Ice-Breaker Drill, Jan. 30, 2015. (Sgt. Charles Santamaria)

Opposite page, top: Pfc. Shawn Blaine, rifleman, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, provides security during cliff assault training as part of MTC 5-15 at Levitt Training Area, Sept. 9, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Connor Hancock)

Opposite page, bottom: Cpl. Issac Hampton, rifleman, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, climbs a rock face during cliff assault training at Levitt Training Area, Sept. 9, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Connor Hancock)



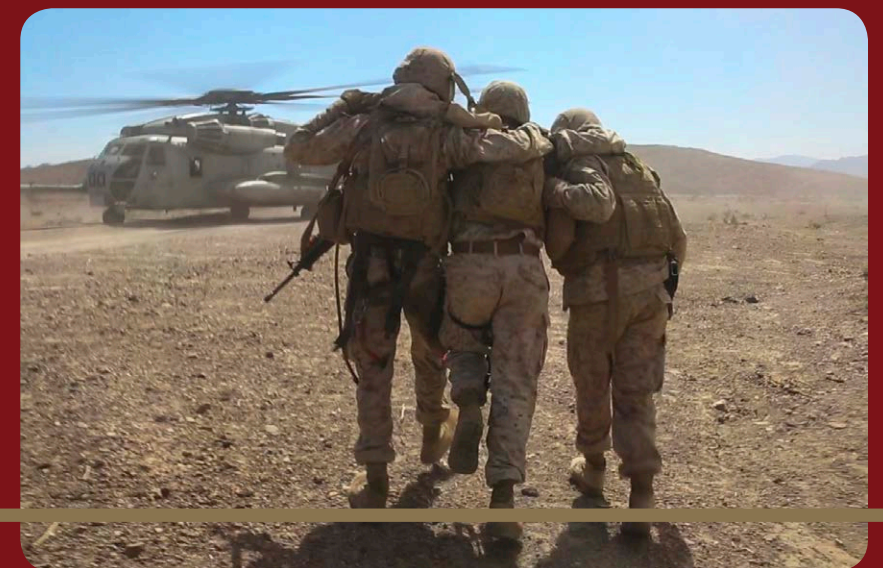


Clockwise from left: Lance Cpl. Kevin Eagleheart and Lance Cpl. Jonah Chalk, both with Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, conduct security force operations as a part of Large Scale Exercise (LSE) 15 at the Combat Center, Aug. 18, 2015. LSE-15 is a joint forces exercise conducted at the brigade level designed to enable live, virtual and constructive training for participating units. It also allows participating nations to strengthen partnerships and their ability to operate together. (Lance Cpl. Clarence A. Leake)

Staff Sgt. James Hohenstein (left), crew chief, Medium Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 167, Marine Aviation Group 29, 2nd Marine Air Wing, assists Brigadier Charlie Strickland (right), Royal Marines, Commander 3 Commando Brigade, aboard a UH-1Y during LSE-15, Aug. 14, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Samantha A. Barajas)

Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 1, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, help a simulated casualty to a CH-53E Super Stallion during a casualty evacuation drill Aug. 10, 2015. A simulated improvised explosive device attack during the drill left the Marines with a disabled vehicle and two wounded Marines awaiting evacuation by helicopter. (Cpl. Sullivan Laramie)

Marines with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, prepare to start the movement to contact training event during LSE-15, Aug. 14-15, 2015. American, Canadian and British troops participated in the brigade-level exercise. (Lance Cpl. Chris Garcia)





Clockwise from top, left: British Royal Marines with 42 Commando Group provide suppressive fire on an objective during Exercise Black Alligator 2015 aboard the Combat Center, Sept. 30, 2015. The joint exercise allowed the British to integrate Marines from Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division, into their own scheme to engage a variety of targets. (Cpl. Demetrius Morgan)

Members of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) load onto an Amphibious Assault Vehicle during Exercise Iron Fist 2015, Feb. 13, 2015. This year marked the 10th anniversary of bilateral training between the Marine Corps and JGSDF, meant to strengthen interoperability between the two military forces. (Cpl. David Gonzalez)

Marines with 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, and with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit show members of the JGSDF one of the Combat Center's training ranges during a site survey as part of an Exercise Iron Fist mid-planning conference, Sept. 30, 2015. Iron Fist is a bilateral amphibious training exercise designed to enhance teamwork between the two military forces, develop JGSDF amphibious capability and build JGSDF and Marine Corps relationships. (Gunnery Sgt. Rome M. Lazarus)





Clockwise from top, left: Exercise Steel Knight 2016 marked the first time the F-35B Lightning II participated in an integrated live-fire exercise with the 1st Marine Division at the Combat Center. Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121 provided close air support for division units maneuvering throughout a realistic training environment to develop skills necessary to maintain a fully capable Marine Air Ground Task Force. (Cpl. Cameron Storm)

A Marine with 1st Combat Engineer Battalion scans for improvised explosive devices and enemies from the turret of a Mine-Resistant, Ambush-Protected (MRAP) vehicle during Steel Knight 2016, Dec. 12, 2015. (Sgt. Eric Keenan)

Marines with Battery I, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, fire an M777 Howitzer during the opening day of live-fire operations for Steel Knight 2016, Dec. 10, 2015. (Sgt. Eric Keenan)

Navy surgeons operate on a simulated casualty during Steel Night 2016's mass casualty drill, Dec. 12, 2015. The drill tested the 1st Marine Division's ability to react to a large influx of injuries and wounds. (Sgt. Justin Boling)

Lance Cpl. David Wadleigh, a military working dog handler, and Nicky, a military working dog with 1st Law Enforcement Battalion, I Marine Expeditionary Force, provide security during a simulated mass casualty drill during Steel Knight 2016, Dec. 12, 2015. (Cpl. Will Perkins)



DEVOTION TO STEWARDSHIP



Training is the Combat Center's primary mission, but it isn't the only mission. The command is committed to being good stewards of natural and cultural resources both on the installation and in the surrounding communities. Energy, water and waste management programs conserve resources and save the installation millions of dollars annually while others preserve ancient rock art and other cultural sites. Still others help protect species like the threatened desert tortoise.

Above: The Combat Center, as seen from the air Oct. 1, 2015, is not only the Marine Corps' premier live-fire training installation, it's also a leader in energy management, as numerous rooftop solar arrays attest. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Left: Dunham Hall, the Combat Center's newest dining facility, uses about 30 percent less energy than standard dining halls. Built in 2012, it is named for the late Medal of Honor recipient Cpl. Jason L. Dunham, 22, of Scion, N.Y. A member of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Dunham died April 22, 2004, eight days after throwing himself on a grenade to save fellow Marines after they came under attack in Karabilah, Iraq. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Right: Joe Woods, a field technician with Statistical Research Inc., holds a red chert discovered during an archaeological dig at a site in the Lava Training Area, Jan. 13, 2015. Cherts are hard pieces of opaque rock that native peoples could use as tools. The site, discovered in 1990, is one of thousands on the Combat Center undergoing evaluation to determine their cultural significance. (Kelly O'Sullivan)

Below: Joe Woods, left, and Garnet Smith, field technicians with Statistical Research Inc., conduct a surface scrape of a site in the Lava Training Area, Jan. 13, 2015, to determine if it contains anything of cultural significance. The men were looking for prehistoric stone tools. (Kelly O'Sullivan)





Clockwise from top: The Marine Corps stopped dropping munitions near the Foxtrot Petroglyph Site in the Lava Training Area in the 1970s, but evidence of training remains in the gouges left behind when shrapnel hit the rock faces where ancient people carved images. (Kelly O'Sullivan)

The Foxtrot Petroglyph Site is one of several rock art sites aboard the Combat Center. It has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1995. (Kelly O'Sullivan)

Archaeologists can't say for sure what all of the symbols carved into rock faces at Foxtrot depict, but they are confident that bighorn sheep, which are found on the installation, are depicted in the ancient artwork. (Kelly O'Sullivan)

John Hale, an archaeologist with the Combat Center's Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Division, points out ancient rock drawings at the Foxtrot Petroglyph Site, Jan. 13, 2015. The site contains both petroglyphs (images carved into rocks) and pictographs (images painted on rocks). (Kelly O'Sullivan)





Above: Timothy Christian, left, work leader, Hazardous Waste Management Branch, and Patrick Mills, program manager, Qualified Recycling Program, review items available via the Combat Center Hazardous Materials Reutilization Program, Nov. 3, 2015. The program provides excess unused items like oil, paints, thinners and more to Combat Center units. (Kelly O'Sullivan)

Right: Jay Jones, work leader, Range Sustainment Branch, holds discs made of zinc and aluminum during a tour of the Combat Center's range recycling lot Nov. 5, 2015. The branch processes recyclable items collected after training exercises. (Kelly O'Sullivan)

Opposite page: Ammunition containers collected after training await processing at the Range Sustainment Branch lot. Recycling profits are used to fund quality of life projects benefiting Combat Center Marines, sailors and their families. (Kelly O'Sullivan)



Clockwise from top: Dr. Ken Nagy, University of California, Los Angeles research professor, holds No. 2-4, a female tortoise ready for release Sept. 30, 2015, nine years after she hatched at the Combat Center Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Division's Tortoise Research and Captive Rearing Site. No. 2-4 was among the first 35 tortoises released; 440 will be released in the coming years. (Kelly O'Sullivan)

No. 2-4 takes her first steps in the wild, Sept. 30, 2015. Biologists determined that at 4 1/2 inches long, she was strong enough to fend off predators as well as keep from dehydrating during high summer temperatures. (Lauren Kurkimilis)

Combat Center Chief of Staff Col. James F. Harp gently sets No. 2-4 next to a burrow that biologists dug for her near her old home Sept. 30, 2015. After a few minutes, she left the burrow to explore her new environment. She later chose another burrow and settled in. (Kelly O'Sullivan)



THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

There's always something going on aboard the Combat Center if one takes the time to look. Those who live and work here have many options to occupy their leisure time. It may be a change of command, a battalion run, a youth or adult sporting event, a concert or just good, old-fashioned fun organized by Marine Corps Community Services, Lincoln Military Housing or one of the units and organizations that call the installation home.

Inset: Isaac Vanegas, 11, son of Ivette Vanegas, dons Combat

Center firefighting gear during the Behavioral Health Family Fun Night at Heritage Park, Aug. 28, 2015.

The event highlighted the resources available to families aboard the installation. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Right: Nora Hotch, biological science technician, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs (NREA) Division, holds Thelma, a captive adult female desert tortoise, for Jensen Bundick, 5, daughter of Sgt. Patrick Bundick, substance abuse control officer, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and Jessica Bundick, during the Earth Day Extravaganza at Lincoln Military Housing's athletic field, April 24, 2015. Thelma and Louise, another captive female tortoise who lives with her, were featured at the event. (Lance Cpl. Thomas Mudd)





Clockwise from left: The Silent Drill Platoon performs a movement, extending the muzzles of their rifles with attached bayonets, for hundreds of Combat Center patrons during the platoon's performance at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, March 11, 2015. (Sgt. Charles Santamaria)

A 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion color guard stands at parade rest during a building dedication ceremony at unit headquarters, April 30, 2015. The ceremony honored Cpl. Adam A. Galvez, mechanic, Lance Cpl. Justin D. Reppuhn, motor transportation operator, and Seaman Chadwick T. Kenyon, corpsman, for their valiant actions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Marines with 1st Tank Battalion stand in formation at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field during the retirement ceremony for Company A 1st Sgt. Nelson A. Hidalgo, Aug. 7, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)





Above: Chief Petty Officer Curtis A. Harmon, 7th Marine Regiment, hugs his daughters, Jayleme Harmon, 12, and Anya Harmon, 6, during the regiment's homecoming at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, Oct. 23, 2015. The "Magnificent Seventh" deployed as part of Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force — Crisis Response — Central Command 15.2. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Right: Cpl. Ronald Navarrette, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, embraces his wife, Jasmine Navarrette, and their 1-year-old daughter, Iris, during the battalion's homecoming at Del Valle Field, April 11, 2015. Marines and sailors of 2/7 served as part of the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force — Crisis Response — Central Command 15.1. (Lance Cpl. Medina Ayala-Lo)

Opposite page, clockwise from left: Petty Officer Third Class Joshua Garcia, corpsman, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, hugs his wife, Cindy Garcia, during the battalion's homecoming at Del Valle Field, Oct. 19, 2015. The "Cutting Edge" deployed as part of Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force — Crisis Response — Central Command 15.2. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Sgt. Michael Mendez, network administrator, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, kisses his girlfriend, Aubrie Helper, after getting off a bus at Desert Winds Golf Course during the battalion's homecoming, Oct. 18, 2015. CLB-7 deployed as part of Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force — Crisis Response — Central Command 15.2. (Lance Cpl. Thomas Mudd)

Chelsea Hall, wife of Capt. Trevor W. Hall, assistant operations officer, 7th Marine Regiment, and their daughter, Violet, 9 months, wait for their Marine to return home during the regiment's homecoming at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, Oct. 23, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Lance Cpl. Jerome Lacaden, rifleman, 2/7, kisses his wife, Ignacia Lacaden, during the battalion's homecoming at Del Valle Field, April 14, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Medina Ayala-Lo)



Clockwise from above: Ariana Denny, 3, daughter of Petty Officer 3rd Class Jerred Denny, corpsman, 7th Marine Regiment, looks at a comic book during the inaugural Free Comic Book Day at the Combat Center Library, May 2, 2015. (Cpl. Medina Ayala-Lo)

Cpl. Eryck Alleyne, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, plays a game of ring toss with fellow Marines during 7th Marine Regiment Appreciation Day at Desert Winds Golf Course, June 26, 2015. It was the first appreciation day the city of Palm Desert held for the regiment. (Cpl. Medina Ayala-Lo)

Adam Gonzalez, administrative assistant, Installation Personnel Administration Center, throws a bean bag during the Headquarters Battalion Appreciation Day at Desert Winds Golf Course, Sept. 18, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Thomas Mudd)

Anacaren Porras, wife of Cpl. Hugo Porras, aircraft rescue and firefighting specialist, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, climbs over a log at the High Intensity Tactical Training obstacle course during MWSS-374's Jane Wayne Day, May 8, 2015. Spouses and family members were shown the different equipment Marines and sailors use to train. (Cpl. Julio McGraw)





Combat Center Marines and sailors are no strangers to concerts and comedy shows, both as audience members and as performers.

Clockwise from top: Out of Regs, a band comprised of Marines, performs during the annual Marines Got Talent show sponsored by the Single Marines Program (SMP) at Sunset Cinema, Aug. 21, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Connor Hancock)

Lance Cpl. Justin Cox tunes his guitar before his Marines Got Talent performance at Sunset Cinema, Aug. 21, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Connor Hancock)

Anaheim, Calif.-based rockers Buckcherry perform at the annual We Salute You Fest at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, May 8, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Tennessee native and country music star Rodney Atkins performs May 9, 2015, during the We Salute You Fest at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)



Clockwise from top: The Combat Center Color Guard presents the colors during the annual Marine Corps Birthday Uniform Pageant at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, Nov. 10, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Cpl. Brandie Lane represents the modern blue dress "B" uniform during the pageant. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Marines with Headquarters Battalion don garb from different eras of Marine Corps history during the pageant. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)



The Commanding General's Tours Program gives civilians from the surrounding communities a chance to see how Combat Center Marines and sailors train. This page, clockwise from top:

Instructor Ryan Brown explains to former Marine Jerome Owens how combat convoy simulations work at the Battle Simulation Center at Camp Wilson, July 24, 2015. Owens, a retired Texas judge, was stationed in Twentynine Palms in the 1960s before leaving the Marine Corps to pursue a law degree. (Kelly O'Sullivan)

Tour guests explore a market area at Range 200, one of several Military Operations on Urban Terrain (MOUT) villages aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 12, 2015. (Kelly O'Sullivan)

Instructor Jim Garza demonstrates how Marines and sailors use a small hatch to exit a Mine-Resistant, Ambush-Protected (MRAP) vehicle used in rollover simulations at the Battle Simulation Center, April 9, 2015. (Kelly O'Sullivan)

Right: Volunteers with the Palms Springs United Services Organization (USO) experience what it's like for Marines and sailors to ride in an MRAP during a tour of the rollover simulator at Camp Wilson, March 17, 2015. (Kelly O'Sullivan)



Above: Carolina Herrera, 9, and David Herrera, 6, children of Staff Sgt. Jose Herrera, telecommunications systems chief, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School (MCCES), decorate cookies for service members during Treats for Troops at the Frontline Restaurant, Dec. 8, 2015. A portion of the cookies made were given to MCCES Marines staying aboard the Combat Center during the holidays. (Lance Cpl. Connor Hancock)

Right: Raija Ginder, 3, daughter of Zachary Ginder, college counselor, Base Programs Office, shows off her Christmas artwork during Treats for Troops, Dec. 8, 2015. Artwork created by event participants was displayed at the Marine Corps Exchange. (Lance Cpl. Connor Hancock)

Bottom, right: Brinley, 6, and Jocelyn Long, 8, daughters of Staff Sgt. William Long, unit leader, 1st Tank Battalion, sit on Santa's lap during his visit to the Marine Corps Exchange, Dec. 11, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Thomas Mudd)

Opposite page, top: MCCES Marines participate in a Toys for Tots Fun Run aboard the Combat Center, Dec. 9, 2015. More than 2,000 participants purchased and ran with toys to donate to the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots Program. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Opposite page, bottom: MCCES Marines display toys to be donated during a Toys for Tots Fun Run aboard the Combat Center, Dec. 9, 2015. Toys collected during the run went to Toys for Tots for distribution to less fortunate families in the surrounding communities. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)



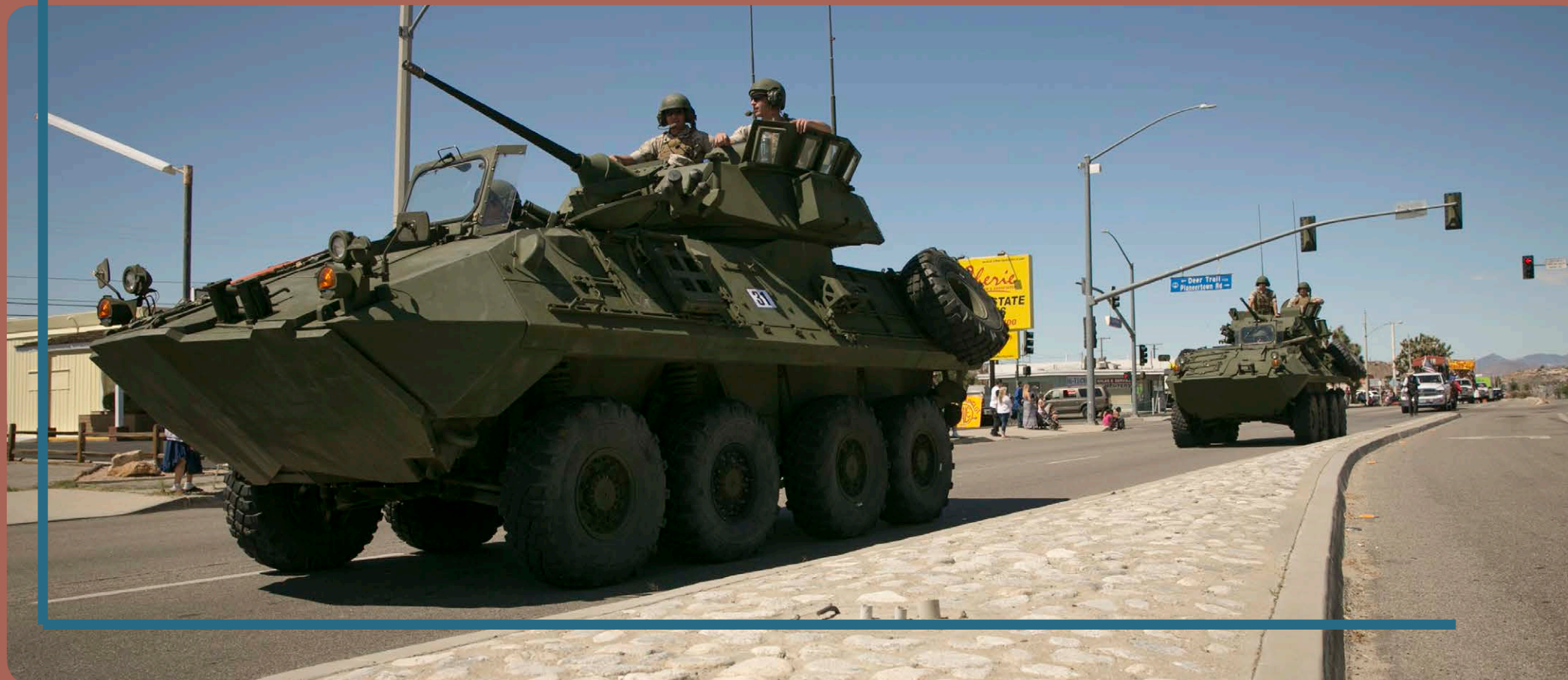
PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Combat Center Marines and sailors are a familiar sight in the communities surrounding the installation. They regularly participate in organized events in the Morongo Basin and Coachella Valley, from patriotic celebrations to clean-up projects and much more. Individually, they volunteer with local schools, churches and service organizations, lending their expertise wherever and whenever it's needed.

Left: Marines from 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, watch the fireworks finale during the Independence Day celebration in Landers, July 3, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Connor Hancock)

Below: Marines with Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 enjoy fireworks from atop a Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement during the Twentynine Palms Independence Day celebration at Luckie Park, July 4, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)





Clockwise from top, left: Pfc. Quami Dixon, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, salutes the American flag during the Banque Nationale de Paris Paribas Tennis Open's Salute to Heroes ceremony in Indian Wells, March 13, 2015. The flag the Marines held spanned the area of the main court. (Cpl. Julio McGraw)

Firefighters Dylan Hubbard, left, and John Hart, Combat Center Fire Department, show Joshua Tree Elementary School fifth-grader Rodney Frazier, 10, some of their gear during the school's annual Winter Festival, Dec. 4, 2015. (Kelly O'Sullivan)

Baby, a member of the Provost Marshal's Office K-9 unit, bites Staff Sgt. Charlie Hardesty, kennel master, as children watch during a military working dog demonstration at Joshua Tree Elementary School, Jan. 29, 2015. (Cpl. Julio McGraw)

Chase Gantz, 5, son of Capt. Wayne Gantz, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, races Kanen Sanmateo, 7, son of Philip and Melanie Sanmateo, during the Twentynine Palms Car Show and Street Fair at Luckie Park in Twentynine Palms, April 24, 2015. The Soap Box Derby races took place on Joe Davis Drive between Marine and Wainwright avenues. (Cpl. Julio McGraw)

Light Armored Vehicles from 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion participate in the 2015 Grubstake Days Parade in Yucca Valley, May 23, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)



Above: Sgt. Griselda Gomez, Headquarters Battalion, reads to students at Friendly Hills Elementary School in Joshua Tree as part of Read Across America, March 2, 2015. (Cpl. Medina Ayala-Lo)

Below: Cpl. Markchristopher Miral, Center Logistics Division, and Sgt. Heather Keasler, Center Personnel Office, help Desert Arc campers at Camp Ronald McDonald in Idyllwild, Oct. 3, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Thomas Mudd)



Above: Marines with the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School clear out debris at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, Morongo Valley, on National Public Lands Day, Sept. 26, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Connor Hancock)

Below: Lance Cpl. Cole Nelson and Lance Cpl. Kyle Benson, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, collect trash from a yard during Reach Out Morongo Basin's community service cleanup, Jan. 30, 2015. (Cpl. Julio McGraw)





Opposite page, top: Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, chats with retired Master Sgt. Cleve Spaight, left, retired Col. Max Proudfoot and Proudfoot's granddaughter, Katherine, after the 2015 Memorial Day ceremony at the Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery, May 25, 2015. (Kelly O'Sullivan)

Opposite page, center: Laurie Craparotta, far right, wife of Maj. Gen. Craparotta, and representatives from community organizations wait to present wreaths honoring America's fallen service members during the 2015 Memorial Day ceremony at the Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery. (Kelly O'Sullivan)

Opposite page, bottom: Maj. Gen. Craparotta delivers the keynote address during the 2015 Memorial Day ceremony at the Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery. To his left, Marines from Headquarters Battalion stand in formation, waiting for their cue to perform a customary rifle salute. (Lauren Kurkimilis)

This page, clockwise from top, left: Maj. Gen. Craparotta speaks to veterans and families during the 2015 Morongo Basin Veterans Day Tribute at Veterans Park in Twentynine Palms, Nov. 11, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Connor Hancock)

Pfc. Dalton Stracner, light armored vehicle crewman, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, shows Boy Scouts from Troop 72 the different parts of an LAV during the 2015 Morongo Basin Veterans Day Tribute, Nov. 11, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Connor Hancock)

The Combat Center Color Guard carries the national and Marine Corps colors, followed by vehicles from Combat Logistics Battalion 7 and 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, during the 19th annual Palm Springs Veterans Day Parade in Palm Springs, Nov. 11, 2015. (Cpl. Julio McGraw)





Above: The American Veterans Traveling Tribute Wall stands on the field at Twentynine Palms Junior High School's Tom Nicoll Memorial Stadium, Oct. 16, 2015. The wall, an 80 percent replica of the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C., was brought to Twentynine Palms as part of the city's Salute to Those Who Serve celebration held in conjunction with 2015 Pioneer Days. During the day, Combat Center Marines and representatives from installation organizations interacted with visitors and provided static displays and information to the community. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

Side bar, top to bottom: Sgt. Maj. Karl Villalino, Combat Center Sergeant Major, his daughter and grandson represent the Combat Center in the 2015 Pioneer Days Parade, Oct. 17, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz). Marines with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, pass out candy during the parade. (Lance Cpl. Connor Hancock). The Combat Center Color Guard marches in the parade. (Lance Cpl. Connor Hancock). Twentynine Palms High School student Tyler Ammerman, 17, dons an Explosive Ordnance Disposal 8 Bomb Suit during the Salute to Those Who Serve celebration at Tom Nicoll Memorial Stadium, Oct. 16, 2015. (Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz)

