



April 6, 2012

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS OBSERVATION POST

Since 1957

www.marines.mil/unit/29palms



Vol. 56 Issue 12

MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING

MCMWTC teaches Marines with unusual class environment

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI**

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, Calif., is the only training center that provides high altitude cold-weather training for Marines. Knowing how to deal with this type of environment could mean the difference between life and death if a Marine is found on similar battlefields around the world.

"The environment can kill you much faster than the enemy can," said Sgt. Matt Simpson, red hat instructor, MCMWTC.

Red hat instructors educate Marines on survival in the mountainous environment through the pre-environmental training class. These classes cover everything from survival techniques, such as water procurement, to the effect of the cold-weather environment on Marines' health, weapons and movement.

However, these classes aren't in the usual classroom setting with chairs and a powerpoint. Instructors lead Marines up through two miles of steep hills into the mountains to conduct the classes.

"It gives Marines more of a feel of the environment," said Staff Sgt. Brandon Miller, red hat instructor, MCMWTC.

Marines in the course strap on their cold-weather gear and hike up with snow shoes, boots and ski poles to assist them through the snow. What Marines don't realize is their class began with their first step.

As they use the gear to get up the hills, they learn from trial and error about the equipment and the environment. By the time they sit down for their first lesson, they already have an idea of what they are learning and how it applies to them during the training.

The students then learn about the gear in a more formal manner. As the class training continues, they realize

See BRIDGEPORT, A5



[Above] Headquarters and Services Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Marines take a pre-environmental training class at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center April 2. Field classes familiarize the Marines with their new environment.

[Left] Marines carry their ski poles behind their heads as they head back down from their classes in the mountains of MCMWTC April 2.

Combat Center personnel to receive new CAC

DIANE DURDEN

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

We all take for granted the ability to log onto the computer when we come to work at the Combat Center. You slide your Common Access Card into the card reader expecting the dialog box to pop up asking for your personal identification number. That is what's expected. However, October 1, 2012 that may not happen if your CAC is not the updated version.

MARADMIN 171/12, released March 27, provides initial guidance for the re-issuance of Marine Corps sponsored CAC.

An upgrade to the encrypting programs associated with the cards requires personnel to possess the new version by October.

Notifications from the Defense Manpower Data Center will be emailed to card holders still in possession of the outdated version, directing them to report to their local Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System office within 30 days.

Combat Center personnel are cautioned not to simply walk into the DEERS office.

"There's a huge inconvenience to the customer if there's a line out the door," said Larry Ward, officer in charge, Combat Center Personnel Office. To alleviate long waits, DEERS personnel are working with the Combat Center commands to coordinate and schedule times for

See CAC, A3

Tech Expo visits Combat Center

Biannual exposition brings new ideas to installation

LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

New technology is always in demand, whether it's from advancements in military technology or increasing efficiency in the office.

The Technology Expo comes to the Combat Center twice a year to show off the latest and greatest technology the industries have to offer.

The expo brings things in demand for the Combat Center community. Request for vendors and specific technologies go through the Combat Center's G-6.

This year the majority of the expo focuses on audio technologies.

"We're always looking and listening to what each installation needs, so we know what vendors to invite," said Kristan Hawkins, event coordinator. "We have more than 25 companies out here this year."

The TechExpo travels to multiple installations displaying technologies catered to each location. The on-site visits allow more people to come see the emerging gear advancements in person and to form relationships with vendors.

"Many of the companies have already worked with units here on the base," Hawkins said. "It's more of a networking event for everybody."

Hawkins and the event organizers, National Conference Services, Inc., serve as bridges between the Combat Center and the companies at the expo.

"We met with people with Mojave Viper and others out in the field and asked what they wanted," Hawkins said.

"We have relationships with all these companies. So when a unit tells us what they want to see, we try and get those companies out here."

Also, with one of the Marine Corps' largest schools, the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, a school based on technology, the TechExpo provides learning opportunities for the students and their instructors.

"I'm out here looking at the new technology to see what we could use at the school house," said Master Sgt. Wilbert Hill, chief instructor, Company A, MCCES. "We also have the students coming out here to see the new tech as well."

The TechExpo's multi-faceted approach had a wide reach of audiences at the Combat Center and only looks to get wider.


"We're always looking and listening to what each installation needs,"

— Kristan Hawkins

April is

Sexual Assault Awareness

Month



COMMANDING GENERAL

MARINE AIR GROUND TASK FORCE TRAINING COMMAND

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIFORNIA

2 April 2012


Combat Center Observation of Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Nationally, April is being recognized as National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Throughout this month, the Combat Center will take the opportunity to highlight the importance of intervention in preventing sexual assault each and every day of the year.

Whether you are a Marine, Sailor, Civilian Marine or a family member, the Marine Corps is your family! Preventing sexual assault throughout our Combat Center community requires an all-hands effort to eliminate its occurrence. Sexual assault prevention takes many forms, beginning with the continued education of all hands and the steadfast attention of commanders and leaders at every level. As importantly, all members of our community must demonstrate the moral courage to intervene when their instincts tell them that a situation is deteriorating and the potential of sexual assault emerges. Far too often, alcohol is the common denominator that fuels the rise of such dangerous situations, but alcohol is not an excuse for violating the clear standards for our behavior, or for committing a crime.

We must also have the commitment to victims of sexual assault that they will be treated with dignity, sensitivity, and respect and that they receive the appropriate medical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual assistance. I can think of no more important example of our Commandant's priority of "Keeping Faith with our Marines, Sailors and families."

I am proud to lead the Combat Center's charge against sexual assault. Those who commit sexual assault have no place in our Corps or aboard our Combat Center. "Hurts one. Affects all," the theme for 2012, succinctly captures our collective challenge. Please join me during this month, and throughout the year, in reinforcing in every corner of our community our steadfast commitment toward eliminating sexual assault.



G. W. SMITH, JR.

Brigadier General, U. S. Marine Corps

Relax with the paper

Wednesdays and Saturdays with the Hi-Desert Star

Thursdays with The Desert Trail

Fridays with The Observation Post



Hi-Desert Publishing Co.

Your community newspapers working to serve you better



OBSERVATION POST	
Commanding General - Brig. Gen. George W. Smith Jr.	Correspondents
Public Affairs Officer - Capt. Nick Mannweiler	Cpl. William J. Jackson
Deputy Public Affairs Officer - 1st Lt. Sin Y. Carrano	Cpl. Andrew D. Thorburn
Public Affairs Chief - Gunnery Sgt. Leo A. Salinas	Lance Cpl. D. J. Wu
Press Chief/Editor - Sgt. Heather Golden	Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi
Layout, Design - Cpl. Sarah Dietz	Lance Cpl. Lauren Kurkimilis
	Diane Durden

The Observation Post is published by Hi-Desert Publishing, a private firm in no way connected with the Department of Defense or the United States Marine Corps, under exclusive written contract with the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. This commercial enterprise newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the military services. Contents of the Observation Post are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the United States government, the DOD, or the United States Marine Corps. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts and supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the DOD or Hi-Desert Publishing of the services advertised.

Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation, or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. Editorial content is prepared by the Public Affairs Office, MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif. 92278. All photos, unless otherwise indicated are Official USMC Photos. Questions can be directed to the Public Affairs Office, located in building 1417, during normal working hours at 830-6213 or FAX 830-5474. The Observation Post is made with 60 percent recycled paper.

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.

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.marines.mil/units/29palms>

HOT TOPIC

SCUBA DIVING CLASS SOON ON BASE

Get Wet Scuba will be hosting scuba diving lessons on base, starting April 10. Become a certified PADI scuba diver, master diver or even an instructor. For more information call 377-7160

SUDOKU #2495-M

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


PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2011 HOMETOWN CONTENT

OFF THE MAINLAND

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10		11	12	13
14						15						16		
17					18							19		
20						21						22		
			23			24		25			26			
27	28	29			30		31		32					
33				34				35		36		37	38	39
40				41					42					
43						44						45		
			46		47		48				49			
50	51	52				53		54		55				
56				57			58		59			60	61	62
63				64				65						
66				67						68				
69				70						71				

ACROSS		DOWN	
1. Some tuskers	43.Cabinet department	1. Tampa Bay team, for short	37.Batik artisan
6. Mariner's "Halt!"	44.Does a checkout chore	2. Fall birthstone	38.Parks in 1955 news
11.GPs et al.	45.Often non-?PC suffix	3. "___ sow, so shall ..."	39.Boot out
14.Turn topsy-?turvy	46.Audiophile's stack	4. Mended, in a way	41.Work with acid
15.Track official	48.Proprietary symbols: Abbr.	5. Moundgreat Carlton	42.Like some jokes or jobs
16.Hamelin casualty	49.Baby-?sitter's nightmare	6. ___ snail's pace	47."Cheers" perches
17.Doris Day hit, off the mainland?	50.Sunflower State city	7. Carpenter's tool	49.Bible ___ (certain fundamentalist)
19.Sidewalk stand purchase	54.Stable parent	8. "... ___ bagatelle"	50.Wined and dined
20.Place for an ace?	56.Hydrogen's atomic number	9. Mariachi's wrap	51."Ocupado"
21.Bull pen stats	57.Forever, seemingly	10."Circular files"	52.Dwarf planet in the asteroid belt
22.Soccer star Hamm	59.Digs deeply	11.Soap opera, e.g.	53.Those against
23.Flogging memento	63."___ Mutual Friend"	12.Pie chart lines	55.Flinch, say
25.Patriarch of a tribe of Israel	64.Two shakes of a lamb's tail, off the mainland?	13. Propellant for Casey Jones	58.Trig ratio
27.Marshall ___ (Truman implementation)	66.Journal conclusion?	18.Visit through primal therapy	60.Lemming kin
30.Tick off	67."Crazy" singer Patsy	24.Snake, to Medusa	61.First name in scat
32.Euro forerunner	68.Bull fiddles' little brothers	26.Crosspiece	62.Rode the banister
33.Part of RSVP	69.___ Plaines, Illinois	27.Trident-?shaped letters	65.Kasparov's sixteen
34.Plain to see	70.Ruhr industrial hub	28.Pre-?discount price	
36.Male: Prefix	71.Word on a revolutionary flag	29.___ breve (2/2 time)	
40.Parting words, off the mainland?		31.At attention	
		34.Fido's field of study?	
		35.Shirts and skins, e.g.	


Prefer your news from the web?



29palms.usmc.mil

or

HiDesertStar.com/Obse
rvation_post/



Visit the official MCAGCC facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/the-combatcenter>



Journey

through the

Snow

(Part1)

>> Beginning of a desert Marine’s travels to the snowy mountains of Bridgeport

Editors note: This is the first of a three-part series written from the perspective of a combat correspondent new to cold weather and high altitude training

AS TOLD BY

Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi, combat correspondent

I’m not an infantryman. I’ve never been part of a grunt unit. But, I’ll be spending the next month with them in the wilds of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

I’ve been attached to 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment as they complete their cold-weather training evolution.

I’ve never been to Bridgeport before either. As I understand it, it is the only place in the United States that offers high altitude, cold-weather training to Marines. In my mind, all I can imagine is Mount Everest with a barracks building halfway up, where we will acclimatize to the high elevation the first week.

My entire Marine Corps career has revolved around the desert. Since bootcamp to my first and current duty station at Twentynine Palms, the only things I’ve been taught and thought I’d need to be prepared for involved hot weather and sand. And I grew up in Los Angeles, so snow is completely foreign to me.

The Battalion outfitted me for the next month in the snowy mountains. I received my cold-weather gear, half of which was almost extraterrestrial to me. Some of it I recognized, such as the fleece tops and bottoms. But other things took me by surprise. Nevertheless, I signed for it all, assuming I’d need it at some point. The last thing I want is to be left freezing in the snow.

After arriving in my barracks room, I dumped all my gear onto the floor to examine everything a little more closely. Then of course, came the packing.

The first thing that caught my attention were the “Mickey Mouse” boots. These white boots are larger than my head, and looked like my everyday, issued combat boots easily fit inside. Although they seemed like they’d be practical in a snowy environment, they still looked ridiculous.

Next to it lay the “Happy Suit,” a giant fluffy, tan-colored top and bottom that I’m sure has got to keep me warm, even in the icy mountains. It would keep me “happy.” I imagined myself wearing it, and got even happier. I’m pretty sure it’s going to make me look like a medium-toasted Pillsbury doughboy.

All the gear I had received seemed to be created with more thought toward warmth rather than ease of movement. Then again, if all my limbs are frozen, then I can’t move at all. So this makes sense.

Along with the cold-weather gear, I’m also packing my personal issued gear. I haven’t hiked with a pack since Marine Combat Training, and now I will have to do it at more than 6,000 ft. above sea level in snow.

The morning of the trip, all of 2/7 staged their gear in a large parking lot before sunrise.

By the time light began to show, the Marines were loaded onto the buses and set to go. There were restrooms in the back of each bus and the Marines were each given a package of Meals, Ready to Eat. The unit was determined to make as little stops as possible.

The Marines made small talk as the buses headed out, laughing and joking about one thing or another.

Two Marines sitting behind me on the bus continued a conversation about the dreaded trip to the snowy hilltops.

“This is the best part of the trip,” one said leaning back in the bus seat.

“Sadly, that’s true,” responded the other.

Five minutes into the bus ride, the bus became dead silence. The Marines had entered into a state of hibernation.

It has never ceased to amaze me, Marines’ ability to fall asleep under any condition. Snow, desert, lying down or standing up, if a Marine is given the opportunity to rest, he appreciates every minute of it.

Within ten minutes I joined them in the deep slumber. The only time we woke up was at the few stops we did make during the long nine-hour drive.

After arriving at our destination, we stepped off the bus into a gloomy, brisk atmosphere. The sky was white as if the snow had ascended into the air, a possible omen of our next three weeks here. Whatever comes, we will be ready.

CAC, from A1

CAC re-issues.

Card holders are asked to verify which version they have. The CAC version is found on the back of the card just above the magnetic stripe. Older versions can be identified with the numbers 64, 72, or V5.2.

The newer CAC versions are identified with 128 or 144, and those issued aboard the Combat Center since June 2010, don’t need to be re-issued. Marines that graduated recruit training after July 2011 should also have the updated version.

Personnel with the older version are being asked to contact their unit’s administration section for guidance on when to report to DEERS for a new CAC.

Cards needing a PIN reset should be addressed with Combat Center G-6 helpdesk located in Building 1529. Only CAC versions 128 and 144 can be reset. All others must be reissued before the PIN can be reset.

For more information, contact your unit’s administration section.

Relax with the paper

Wednesdays and Saturdays with the Hi-Desert Star

Thursdays with The Desert Trail

Fridays with The Observation Post

Hi-Desert Publishing Co.

Your community newspapers working to serve you better





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

WARRIORS

in the

MAKING

(Part 3)

“These young men are ready to take 40 Marines into combat.”

– Col. Julian Alford

Photos by Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi

Story by Lance Cpl. D.J. Wu

Editor's Note: This is the third of a three-part series showcasing IOC and what the Corps does to get new lieutenants ready to lead in combat.

The Marines of Infantry Officers’ Course performed a mountain attack in the culminating event during their Palm Field Exercise in the Combat Center’s Bullion Training Area March 21.

This final and intense exercise puts their training to the test. “It’s focused on everything they have learned since the beginning of IOC,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Shelby Lasater, IOC gunner. “The platoon commanders are here making the decisions.”

The mountain attack saw the student platoon commanders in control of the operation. The leaders have to gather intelligence and then plan accordingly to complete the mission.

“They have to figure out their geometries of fires as well as everything else it takes to get to the objective and take control,” Lasater said.

The first platoon to take on the scenario, executed in a quick and quiet fashion. This aroused little advice and varied praise from the instructors overseeing the operation.

First platoon’s plan went smoothly compared to second platoon’s less-stealthy maneuver. Second platoon’s Marines were crushed by enemy fire, their approach avenues blocked and they struggled to recover.

“We’re watching to see if they learn from their mistakes,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Bob Tagliabue, The Basic School gunner.

This course is designed to make these officers into infantry platoon commanders.

There are very few places in the Marine Corps where the

officers can conduct a mountain attack like the one they did.

“The Combat Center’s mountains are very similar to the ones found near Kandahar and Helmand provinces in Afghanistan,” said Col. Julian Alford, commanding officer, The Basic School, IOC.

The mountain attack is a recent addition to PALM FEX. “This is our fifth iteration of the attack,” Alford said. “We wanted something that would simulate conditions they would find in Afghanistan.”

PALM FEX was already established in the course. Adding a mountain attack just made sense, Alford said.


The officers went on to make their final attack of PALM FEX on range 210A.

The students integrated techniques they learned earlier in the course, including combined operations between armor and infantry.




[Above] Marines with the Infantry Officers’ Course, carry a simulated casualty down a steep hill during a mountain attack in the Bullion training area March 21. The mountain attack was part of their four-day culminating exercise from PALM FEX.

[Left] 2nd Lt. Gregory R. Jaunal, student, Infantry Officers’ Course, fires a mortar round during a mountain attack in the Bullion Training Area March 21.




Visit the official
MCAGCC
facebook page at
<http://www.facebook.com/the-combatcenter>



Relax with the paper

Wednesdays and Saturdays
with the Hi-Desert Star
Thursdays with
The Desert Trail
Fridays with
The Observation Post

**Hi-Desert Publishing Co.**
Your community newspapers working to serve you better



BRIDGEPORT, from A1

why they were so affected by their warming layers, the cold temperature and the elevation.

“Walking in snow shoes wasn’t that different, you just have to pick up your feet more,” said Lance Cpl. Michael Mennemeyer, mortarman, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. “What really gets you is the elevation.”

The combination of the class and experiences the hike gave them, make the knowledge stick more firmly.

All the while, as they sit in the freezing, high-altitude environment they will soon be training in, they acclimate to the temperature and elevation and learn how to use their warming layers efficiently.

The pre-enviromental training teaches Marines not only how to survive a mountainous combat-zone but to function, fight and move efficiently in cold, high altitude environments.

“I can’t guarantee you’ll be comfortable,” Miller said. “But you’ll be alive.”



PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

[Top] Headquarters and Services Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Marines hike back down after reaching an elevation of approximately 7,600 feet at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport March 30. **[Bottom Left]** H&S Co., 2/7, Marines complete two sets of 20 pull-ups and push-ups, with their gear on after taking a hike in the mountains of MCMWTC March 30. **[Bottom Right]** 2/7 Marines stand in formation in their warming layers just before they hike through the snow covered MCMWTC April 2.



Visit the official
MCAGCC
facebook page at
<http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS	BOARDS	AVAST	DRS
	UPSET	TIMER	HAI
	CAYSE	ASINA	ADE
	SILVE	TERAS	MTA
	WELT	EPHRAIM	
	PLAN	FIRE	ECU
	SIL	OVERT	ANDRO
	ISLE	SEE	INGYOU
	STATE	SCANS	ESS
	COSE	TMS	SEAT
	WICHITA	SIRE	
	ONE	IONS	DELIVER
	OUR	NOTIME	ATOLL
	ERE	CLINE	CELLI
	DES	ESSEN	TREAD

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

Paid Advertisement

Raise GT score with college prep class

Story by Lance Cpl. Lauren A. Kurkimilis

Every Marine is held to a set of standards, physically and mentally. Every unit is responsible for ensuring their troops are physically fit and can meet certain standards. However, it is an individual Marine’s responsibility to seek higher education and intellectually develop themselves.

The Combat Center’s Base Education Office, in conjunction with Copper Mountain College, provides military members and their families a way to improve their academic skills through the Military Academic Skills Program.

“MASP was originally a means whereby Marines could raise their GT scores to allow them to change military occupational specialty or to improve their chances for promotion,” said Randy Fischer, MASP English teacher. “But in recent years the overwhelming majority of our students are those who are separating from the Corps or those who want, while still in the Corps, to begin college work and feel the need to brush up on their basic skills.”

The class has recently grown in popularity and in some cases they have had to create a waiting list for the next class, Fischer said.

“I decided to take it because I’m going to go to college,”

said Cpl. Paul M. Childers, field radio operator, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment. “I went through the application process and got accepted, so I just wanted to get back into the school mindset. I needed a refresher after being out of school for four years.”

The class is completely free-of-charge. The only thing you’ll have to spend is time and energy toward learning. The course is four weeks long, and classes run Monday through Friday in Building 1526.

“Math is held in the morning from 8:00 to 11:30 a.m., and English is in the afternoon from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m.,” Fischer said.

To sign up, you’ll need to obtain a contract from Copper Mountain College Base Programs Office in Building 1526 that will need to be signed by your command, giving you permission to be absent from work to attend the classes.

“As far as the Department of Defense is concerned, the entire parameter is pre and post,” said Fischer. “They want to see a dramatic improvement between a test taken in the beginning of the course and a similar test taken at the end, and we achieve that.”

The program accepts students with high school level academic skills down to elementary school levels.

“The average improvement in scores is really significant, in fact it’s dramatic,” said Fischer. “They’ll jump typically three, four and five grade levels along the course of this class. Our goal is to get them up to 12.9, which is the first year of college.”

MASP teachers are highly qualified and curriculum caters to a wide spectrum of learning levels and styles.

“We are all adjunct teachers, which is to say that we are contracted by Copper Mountain College to come out here and teach the Marines,” Fischer said. “The teachers vary in teaching styles, and we are all required to have a Master’s Degree.”

“The teachers are all different and very personable,” Childers said. “They all have different ways of teaching, which for me was good. I can sit there and listen to them. They’re interesting and intelligent, which helped me a lot.”

For more information contact CMC Base Programs Office at 830-6133. The next orientations for upcoming classes will be held on May 14.



Visit the official MCAGCC facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>



The Combat Center has its own YouTube channel. Find it at <http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>



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



NEED TO FIGHT

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. D. J. Wu

Fight Club 29 is an interesting group. Just about all the members are part of the military in one way or another. But it's not about the military when it comes to the team. The team is a family and they act like it too.

It was another early morning. It was cold. I knew there were going to be nine fighters in the tournament but I didn't know what to expect.

I went to the meet up spot a little early as usual, just so I wouldn't miss anything.

The first two people I met were a couple of guys I've never seen before. It turned out that one of them was a visiting coach from Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., and the other was a student from the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School and new to the team.

Finally the van came and one Dahlen Wilson was the driver. You could tell it was Dahlen because the van approached cautiously, well below the speed limit.

Shortly after Dahlen arrived, Arthur "Neno Brown" Powell got there and we were off to coach's house.

Coach Mark Geletko is a character. He's a retired sergeant major, former professional Muay Thai fighter and boxer. Coach knows a bit about fighting.

That's one thing about this fight club, it's all fun and games until it gets down to fighting. The guys on the team are always talking shop. Everyone has advice for each other to get better.

We got to coach's house and "Big" Mike Smith was with him. They loaded up and coach sat in the driver seat. I cracked a joke at coach's expense. I think it was something about his driving or how sitting directly behind him is a danger zone. And coach was going to remember that crack and give me a hard time for it the rest of the trip.

So after three hours of giving directions, in and out of sleeping, we got to the famed Randy Couture's gym, Xtreme Couture for the 2012 USA Pankration World Team Trials and North American Championship.

Now I can get to work.

The guys are serious about the way they fight and the way they prepare to

fight. For example, maybe one of the fighters was a few pounds over their weight class, they would work hard to the last minute to drop the the pounds and make weight, then have to do a hasty rehydrate to get ready.

The team has a reputation with the event organizers now. Fight Club 29 cleaned up the tournament last year, winning multiple gold medals and having members representing the United States at the world championship in Russia.

This year would be much of the same.

Fight Club 29 had nine competitors in this year's national tournament.

The team fought well in each of their bouts with only a few hiccups.

All the guys fought in caged rings. It is different from an open-mat environment. The cage can be used to a fighter's advantage as well as disadvantage.

The guys on the team are hard workers. They trained intensely to qualify just to get to the world trials. This training showed in their matches.

The team showed, in force, just how good they are. Tom Eaton won two gold medals, one in an impromptu entry to the gi competition and one in his schedule no-gi bracket. "Big" Mike fought hard in his heavyweight bracket combined with super-heavyweights to win gold. Dahlen took silver on losing to his teammate Brandon Collins. "Neno" and Nick Kaluza also took silver.

After the tournament, the guys showed a bit more of their human side. They showed how tired they were and how they were proud or how disappointed they were on how they did.

The team looks ahead to their trip to Russia to represent the United States in the world championship. Mark Geletko is scheduled to be head coach of the world team and is pleased to be taking his own guys. The silver medalist may also get their opportunity to fight, currently sitting as back-ups.



[Top] Dahlen Wilson (left) throws a kick at his teammate Brandon Collins in the match for the light-heavyweight gold medal at USA Pankration World Team Trials and National Championship at Xtreme Couture in Las Vegas March 31.
[Center] Fight Club 29 coach, Mark Geletko (right) talks to Dahlen Wilson before the first set of matches.
[Left] "Big" Mike Smith takes on his opponent for the gold medal.