MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS
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Lance Cpl. Dakota Martin, combat engineer, Marine Wing Support Squadron 371, watches his post using an M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle during MWSS-371's Mission Rehearsal Exercise at Command Observation Post five aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 17. This training allows Marines that are not accustomed to different types of ground force support to break out of their comfort zone.

'Sand Sharks' conduct MRX aboard Combat Center

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

It is mid-day and the unrelenting Mojave Desert sun beats down on the face of a young Marine. As he stands post at the entry control point, beads of sweat roll down his face and into his eyes. He adjusts his body ever so slightly and continues to watch his post. With every steady breath he is reminded of the role he plays in completing the task at hand.

Marine Wing Support Squadron 371 conducted a Mission Rehearsal Exercise at Command Observation Post five aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 17, 2015. The unit was evaluated on their level of readiness in preparation for a deployment in support of Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Relief Central Command 15-2.

"What's unique to our mission, as opposed to others, is not only are we conducting security type action, we're also responsible for aviation-ground support as well as a security force mission," said Gunnery Sgt. Michael Zunino, air base ground defense staff non-commissioned officer, MWSS 371, native of Oakland, Calif.

MWSS 371 provides aviation-ground support which includes air crash fire rescue, fuel re-supply, local maintenance and aircraft recovery. They are also responsible for providing the wing a place to rest and resupply while overseas. This additional security force mission will help ensure operations aren't interfered with and that the wing can execute their missions.

"We don't deploy like a standard battalion would, we deploy in squadrons most of the time," Zunino said. "The squadron that goes out on the deployment is dependent on what areas are in need of support. The entire squadron is going forward because of this additional security force mission."

Training for this upcoming deployment began in September. During that time, MWSS 371 was able to practice a number of individual and small unit skill sets to include vehicle check point procedures, detainee procedures and patrolling procedures. Marines also learned how to man an entry control point and the involvement of the role players made

See **Sharks pg.** A6

Sgt. Jordan Munk, bulk fuel specialist, Marine Wing Support Squadron 371, native of Dell Rapids, S.D, communicates with a role player acting as a local national during MWSS-371's Mission Rehearsal Exercise at Command Observation Post five aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 17. Training for this upcoming deployment began in September. During that time, the Marines were able to work on individual and small unit skill sets to include vehicle check point procedures, detainee procedures and patrolling procedures.

Combat Center launches Resident Advisory Board

STORY AND PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

The Combat Center is promoting community in base housing with the creation of a Lincoln Military Housing Resident Advisory Board for housing areas both on and off the installation. The purpose of the board is to facilitate open and productive communication between base housing residents and Lincoln Military Housing.

"The Board gives the residents a voice," said Col. John Kasperski, assistant chief of staff, G 4 Instillation and Logistics. "The residents can provide input for improvements on military housing."

The first RAB meeting is scheduled for March 19 at the Ocotillo Heights community center at 1 p.m. and is meant to solicit and encourage family housing residents to become RAB members. Periodic meetings will be scheduled throughout the year to discuss the status of the housing program, along with tracking the needs and trends of service members and their families. Additionally, RAB meetings will promote the sharing of information to resolve issues and facilitate positive changes, to improve the quality of life for service members and their families who live in base housing.

"We are doing this because this type of board has been successful on other Marine Corps installations," said Ken Tinquist, housing officer, Military Family Housing. "This is a chance for residents to have a voice and be part of the solution for problems that are perceived."

Meetings are scheduled six times annually on a rotational basis in various family housing community centers, but can be done more frequently based on the needs of the board.

With the creation of the RAB, multiple volunteer positions are open for residents of the LMH community. The volunteer positions will be comprised of members who will represent all of the housing districts.

"This is long past due and now we are seeking members of the community who are committed toward this initiative." Kasperski said.

To fill a volunteer position, residents must meet eligibility standards, which include; residence in the respective community with at least one year remaining on station, have no housing violation reports on file with the MHO, LMH or Provost Marshall's Office, and must volunteer to speak for the community as a whole at the RAB meetings.

"If a volunteer has had experience on a housing board in the past that is helpful, but the positions are open to anyone who is willing to be a voice and also a part of the solution for the community." Tinquist said.

With the creation of the RAB, the Combat Center hopes to find committed and enthusiastic family members to participate and improve the quality of life for residents who live aboard the combat center by enhancing the communication between the communities and Lincoln Military Housing.

For more information about the RAB contact Ken Tinquist via e-mail at kenneth.tinquist@usmc.mil

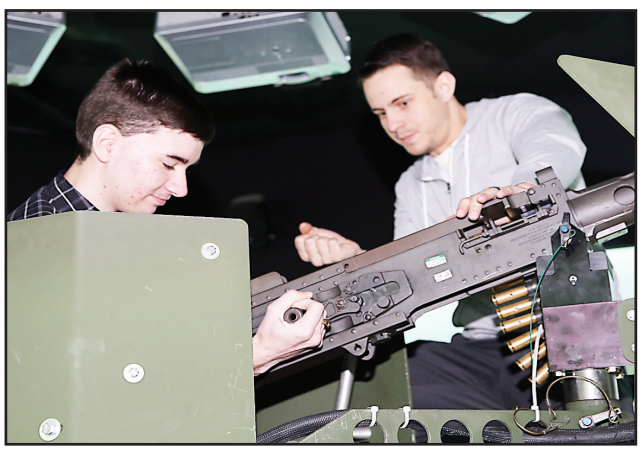
Combat Center hosts students from Morongo Basin schools

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

A group of excited students mount a mock High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle to get a taste of what Marines experience. The glow from the screens surrounding the room illuminates the students' faces as they watch in awe while the Combat Convoy Simulator generates an entire city, filled with people, before their eyes.

The Combat Center

See **Hosts pg.** A6



Ryan Brown, field service representative, Combat Convoy Simulator, helps Alexander Kunze, student, Yucca Valley High School, load a M2-.50 Caliber Machine Gun at the Combat Convoy Simulator aboard Camp Wilson during Job Shadowing Day, Feb. 18. Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, Combat Camera and the Provost Marshall's Office, were amongst the 19 occupations that participated in the program.

3rd LAR Marines test new LAV-ATWS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

A gunner takes position, stoic and still, in a Light-Armored Vehicle as he spots an enemy. He engages the target, firing a Tube-launched Optically-tracked Wire-guided missile. As it propels through the air, the gunner maintains a steady aim, guiding the TOW missile until it impacts the target; confirmed hit.

Marine Corps Operational Test Evaluation Activity section began operational testing of the Light-Armored Vehicle Anti-Tank Weapons System aboard the Combat Center and is scheduled to continue until March 8, 2015.

The demonstration spotlighted the versatility of the system, which can carry communications equipment, as well as Mobile Electronic Warfare Support Systems, providing a self-contained and highly mobile combined arms force. An LAV detachment conducts security, reconnaissance and screening operations for a larger force, as well as limited independent operations on its own.

The LAV-ATWS is a Marine Corps Systems Command program, which addresses issues of the legacy Emerson 901 turret by replacing the turret system with a modern launcher. The Program Manager, Col Mark T. Brinkman, is confident that the system provides the Marine Corps with substantial improvements over the previous anti-tank system.

"The ATWS concurrently addresses obsolesce and maintenance issues, while keeping the LAV Anti-Tank capability relevant for future conflicts," Brinkman said. "We have just upgraded the Marine's capability, making us more efficient, effective and lethal."

A Light-Armored Vehicle equipped with a new Anti-Tank weapons system sits stationary at the 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion ramp prior to operational testing with Tube-launched Optically-tracked Wire-guided missiles on range 500 aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 10. During testing, 3rd LAR Marines got a first-hand look at what the new system will add to the Marine Corps' arsenal and combat readiness. New capabilities include mobility while firing TOW missiles and improved optic magnification for enhancead target acquisition.

The modernized LAV-ATWS will give the Marines additional capabilities to acquire targets, have a far- target capability, and include an advanced thermal sight in addition to an advanced guidance control system. The program is completing the Systems Demonstration phase of the program with an operational test.

3rd LAR Marines were among the first to operate the LAV-ATWS, allowing MCOTEA to evaluate the use of and gather feed-

See **Test pg.** A6

This Week in Combat Center History

Reprinted from the Observation Post
February 27, 1981

Two Exceptional Marines promoted and commended

After distinguishing themselves over all other marines stationed at the Combat Center, Sgt. Wendy A. Dennison and Lance Cpl. Theodore J. Moody were honored last Friday during a morning colors ceremony. Sgt. Dennison was honored as the Combat Center's Marine Non-Commissioned Officer of the Quarter and Lance Cpl. Moody as the Marine of the Quarter.

Sgt. Dennison received the honor for her exceptional demonstration of leadership, devotion to duty, military bearing and understanding of her job. Sgt. Dennison is a radio repairman with the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School.

Through a very stern, competitive process, she was selected by a board of senior staff NCOs as the best NCO stationed here. Sgt. Dennison previously selected as the MCCES NCO of the Month and NCO of the Quarter, for which she received two Meritorious Masts.

"I'm proud that I was selected as the Combat Center's NCO of the Quarter," said Sgt. Dennison. "I worked hard for it." She admitted that her selection motivated her attitude toward the Marine Corps. "Anytime you're recognized for something you do, it's nice."

For her selection as the NCO of the Quarter for the Combat Center, Sgt. Dennison received a meritorious promotion to her present rank, a Certificate of Commendation, a copy of the Non-Commissioned Officer's Handbook signed by the Commanding General, Brigadier General H.G. Glasgow, and a 96-hour liberty pass.

The 24-year old native of San Bernardino, Calif., enlisted in the Marine Corps in May 1978. She arrived at the Combat Center in November of that year to attend MCCES. After being graduated from MCCES she remained there as permanent personnel. Sgt. Dennison is married to Staff Sgt. Richard W. Dennison; they have a seven-month-old daughter, Yoma. The Dennisons will be departing the Combat Center soon on permanent change of station orders to Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Also honored during the ceremony, as the Combat Center's Marine of the Quarter, was Lance Cpl. Theodore J. Moody.

Lance Cpl. Moody was selected by a board of senior staff NCOs as the best of all lance corporals and below stationed at the Combat Center. A patrolman and desk sergeant with the Military Police Department here, he received the honor for his exceptional devotion to duty, outstanding appearance and excellent professional knowledge. He's a member of Company B, Headquarters Bn.

"I think it's a great honor," said Lance Cpl. Moody about his selection, "and I feel pretty good about getting it." He plans to "continue to work in the manner that I have been, which is the best that I can."

The 19-year-old Marine will receive a meritorious promotion to corporal for his selection as the Combat Center's Marine of the Quarter, a copy of the NCO Handbook signed by the Commanding General and a 96-hour liberty pass.

Lance Cpl. Moody was born in Hot Springs, Arkansas. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in July 1979 in Las Vegas, Nevada, and arrived at the Combat Center in October of that year. Lance Cpl. Moody and his wife, Terri Lynn, currently reside in Twentynine Palms.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

AUBREY OLIVIA DELOREZ
Born on Jan. 15, 2015
Born to Shaun and Julia Delorez

AERISS AVRIE FIRKUS
Born on Feb. 15, 2015
Born to Justin and Jamie Firkus

MIA ERIEANNA GUNNELLS
Born on Feb. 11, 2015
Born to John and Tara Gunnells

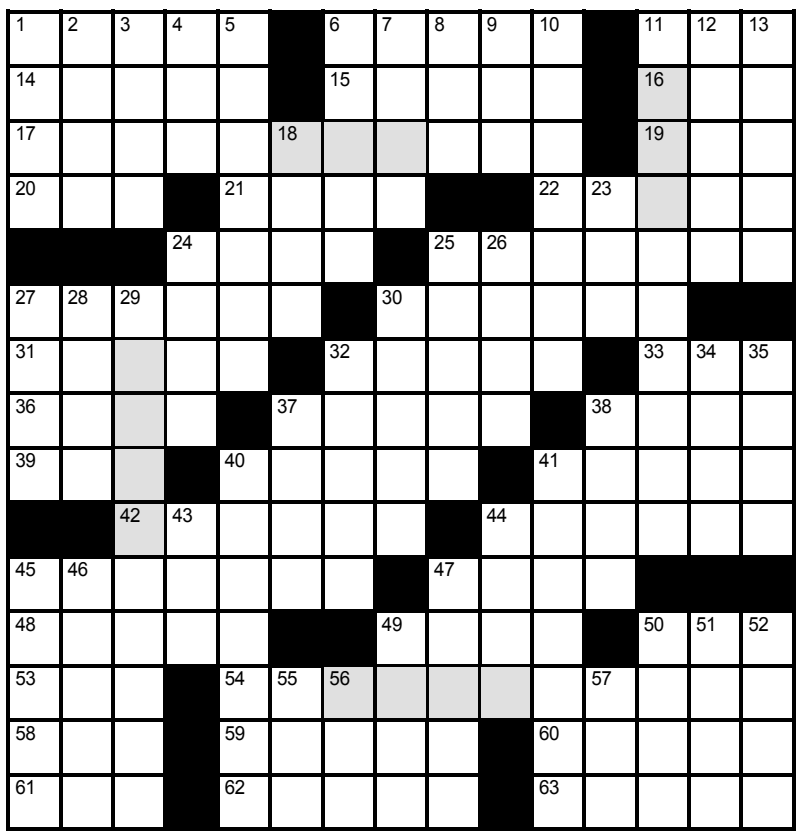
ARABELLA FAITH JIMENEZ
Born on Feb. 8, 2015
Born to Maranda and Raul Jimenez

BENJAMIN WAYLON SPRACKLIN
Born on Feb. 7, 2015
Born to Ben and Alyssa Spracklin

MAKSYM XAVI BELINOWSKI
Born on Feb. 5, 2015
Born to Taylor and Lorena Belinowski

CHARLOTTE GRACE MACY
Born on Feb. 3, 2015
Born to John and Abigail Macy

CROSSWORD



Across
1 Melonlike fruit
6 S sound-alike
11 Physical "Psst!"
14 Ferric ___ (rust)
15 Bridle path
16 "To a Skylark," e.g.
17 Taco Bell competitor
19 "You are here" prop
20 Simple top
21 Storm
22 Overly wet
24 Hobble severely
25 Shows disdain
27 Everglades beasts
30 "I'm Sorry" singer Lee
31 Stage mutter
32 With us
33 Exasperate
36 Soil conditioner
37 Dye-job option
38 Big fibber
39 Volcanic debris
40 Chill out
41 High IQ org.
42 Eggy intake
44 Fine point
45 Waterwheel reservoir
47 Iditarod command
48 "___ greatest!" (Ali)
49 Word before starter or control
50 Vacation spot
53 Religious ideal
54 Cat owner's purchase
58 Newsy network
59 "O come let us ___ him"
60 Domain for Charlemagne
61 Belonging to him
62 Round table topic
63 Applies rickrack to

Down
1 Donne, for one
2 Toll unit for trucks
3 Crude conduit
4 Bustling commotion
5 State support
6 Tornado, e.g.
7 French airport
8 Toy-seller ___ Schwarz
9 One might be verbal
10 Contract signing
11 1995 World Series MVP
12 Common observation
13 "And so to bed" writer
18 San ___ Obispo
23 Unclassifiable
24 Function
25 New York City borough
26 Divide
27 Pricey event
28 Just like
29 Canadian coffe chain
30 Become inflated
32 Spare site
34 E, on a map
35 Medical photo
37 Jazz banjoist Fleck
38 Solidarity co-founder Walesa
40 Joseph's grandmother
41 Failed intention
43 "So what?"
44 Invalid
45 Abercrombie partner
46 Certain Mideast native
47 Mobster Lansky
49 Houston player, informally
50 Kind of party
51 Santos rookie of 1956
52 Lethal weapons
55 Bride's oath
56 Heavyweight
57 TV's Turner

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Last week's answers

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■	S	C	U	D	■	■	■	■
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■	E	L	L	■	■	■	■	■
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P	A	N	E	■	R	E	N	D

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

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- 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.

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In Twentynine Palms:
- Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Rd.
- STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.
- K Smoke Shop, 5865A Adobe Rd.

In Yucca Valley:
- Yucca Tobacco Mart, 57602 29 Palms Hwy.
- Puff's Tobacco Mart, 57063 29 Palms Hwy.

In Palm Springs:
- Village Pub, 266 S. Palm Canyon Dr.
- Whispering Palms Apts., 449 E. Arenas Road
- NYPD Pizza, 260-262 N. Palm Canyon Drive

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

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Catherine MARSHALL

Brooklyn Park, Minn. 30, Motor transportation operator, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374

Marshall began training in Mixed Martial Arts in 2007, with her first and primary style being Muai Thai, also known as the 'Art of the Eight Limbs.' She also served as a firefighter for five years before deciding to enlist in the Marine Corps in 2011. She continues to train with Fight Club 29.

> I began [exploring] the world of Mixed Martial Arts in 2007 at the Minnesota Martial Arts Academy by studying the fighting style of Muai Thai.

> Muai Thai is my first and preferred fighting style. It is nicknamed the 'Art of the Eight Limbs' because it teaches you to utilize everything from normal strikes with your arms and legs to follow-on strikes which [incorporate] the knees, feet and elbows.

> I worked as a firefighter for five years before joining the Marine Corps. After firefighting, I wanted to continue to do something where I helped people.

> I was very steady in Muai Thai and I began practicing American boxing with a small amount of Jiu Jitsu when I was stationed in Okinawa, Japan.

> While stationed in Okinawa, I trained with Joey Gomez, who is in charge of the Team Quest fight team. After arriving in 29 Palms, I began training with Fight Club 29 under Ret. Sgt. Maj. Mark Glecko.

> Moving around in the Marine Corps has given me an open mind when it comes to fighting. When I got to Okinawa, Muai Thai wasn't as available as Jiu Jitsu, so it made me explore other styles of fighting.

> MMA has taught me a lot about humility. The key to learning new things is staying humble; if you're the best one anywhere it's probably not a good training facility. I take pride in the fact that I acknowledge where I need work and how I can improve to get better.

> A lot of people ask if my age is a factor when I joined the Marine Corps with Marines younger than me telling me what to do, but it just comes back to humility. I never expect anything and I use my discipline to understand that I can learn from anyone regardless of age.

> MMA has helped me learn to listen to people, which has contributed to my leadership style. Just like fighting, there are times when you have to take a step back, analyze the situation, and create a plan.

> I haven't participated in any recorded fights, only 'smokers' which are fights that are not recorded.

> I remember the frustration I felt in one of my first fights. My opponent's name was 'Big Katie,' she had a good five inches of height above me and I couldn't reach her. I trained punching strikes primarily leading up to this fight but I had to change my approach to mostly leg strikes to adjust.

> Moments like the one I had with 'Big Katie' taught me everything doesn't always go according to plan and you have to roll with the situation.

> Leading up to a fight is very nerve-racking. There is a team, but it is still a very individual sport, at the same time you think about all those people supporting you. I worry more about letting them down than I do about getting punched in the face.

> My mom has always hated the fighting, but my brother thinks it's pretty neat.

> I would love to continue fighting and see where it goes. I'm going to give it everything I've got every day.

> I currently fight at 155 pounds and my first amateur fight will be in American-style boxing.

> Fight Club 29 feels like a family. One of our fighters is preparing for an upcoming fight and every time a fighter begins that process, the entire team begins training as if they are getting ready for the fight as well. It's like we are conditioning to face the [opponent] together.

> For Marines who want to pursue MMA while they are active duty, I would say they have to understand it takes commitment. You're not going to walk in and start [over-powering] people because you go to the gym often.

> Technique is learned [over time]. After seven years I still get beat by people and I accept that, because the other part Marines have to understand is humility when it comes to fighting.

> On top of my normal job description I also serve as MWSS 374's Combat Fitness Instructor. I lead Marines in the Body Composition Program and I really enjoy it because I get to help them make the weight standard while also training myself in the process, so it feels like a perfect fit.

> I've thrown thousands of punches and it's more than just a sport or hobby, it's a true passion for me.

> An important part of my journey with MMA while in the Marine Corps has been support from my command. [MWSS 374] has been amazingly supportive every step of the way when it has come to allowing me to train and giving me that time.

> There's still people out there who think women shouldn't fight professionally but I've seen, more recently, that view has begun to change. Especially with the skill of fighters like Ronda Rousey in the UFC, and that's awesome.

> You're never too old to try something new. I've got people who don't realize how old I am and say 'I'm too old to start now' when they're [only] 23 years old.

> For me, age is more of a mental feature than anything and you won't know if you're good at something until you try.

INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

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Both exhibits will be on display from March 5 to April 25, 2015 with an opening reception on Saturday, March 6 from 5 to 7pm. Free to the Public.

Hi-Desert Nature Museum
57116 Twentynine Palms Hwy, Yucca Valley, CA 92284
(760) 369-7212 • Hours: Thur. - Sat. 10 am - 5 pm

Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps

PHOTO BY SGT. ALLISON BEISWANGER

Sgt. Maj. Barrett passes the sword of office to Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Joseph Dunford during Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps' appointment and relief ceremony, at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Washington, Feb. 20. The rank of Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps is selected by the Commandant, and typically serves a four-year term, though his service is at the pleasure of the Commandant.

PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. REMINGTON HALL

Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett salutes Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr. during his relief as Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps at the Marine Corps War Memorial, Arlington, Virginia, Feb. 20.

PHOTO BY CPL. CLAYTON FILIPOWICZ

Marines attached to Marine Corps Barracks Washington form up during the Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps' appointment and relief ceremony, at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Washington, Feb. 20. The post of Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps was established in 1957 as the senior enlisted advisor to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, the first such post in any of the branches of the United States Armed Forces.

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s Relief and Appointment Ceremony

PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. REMINGTON HALL

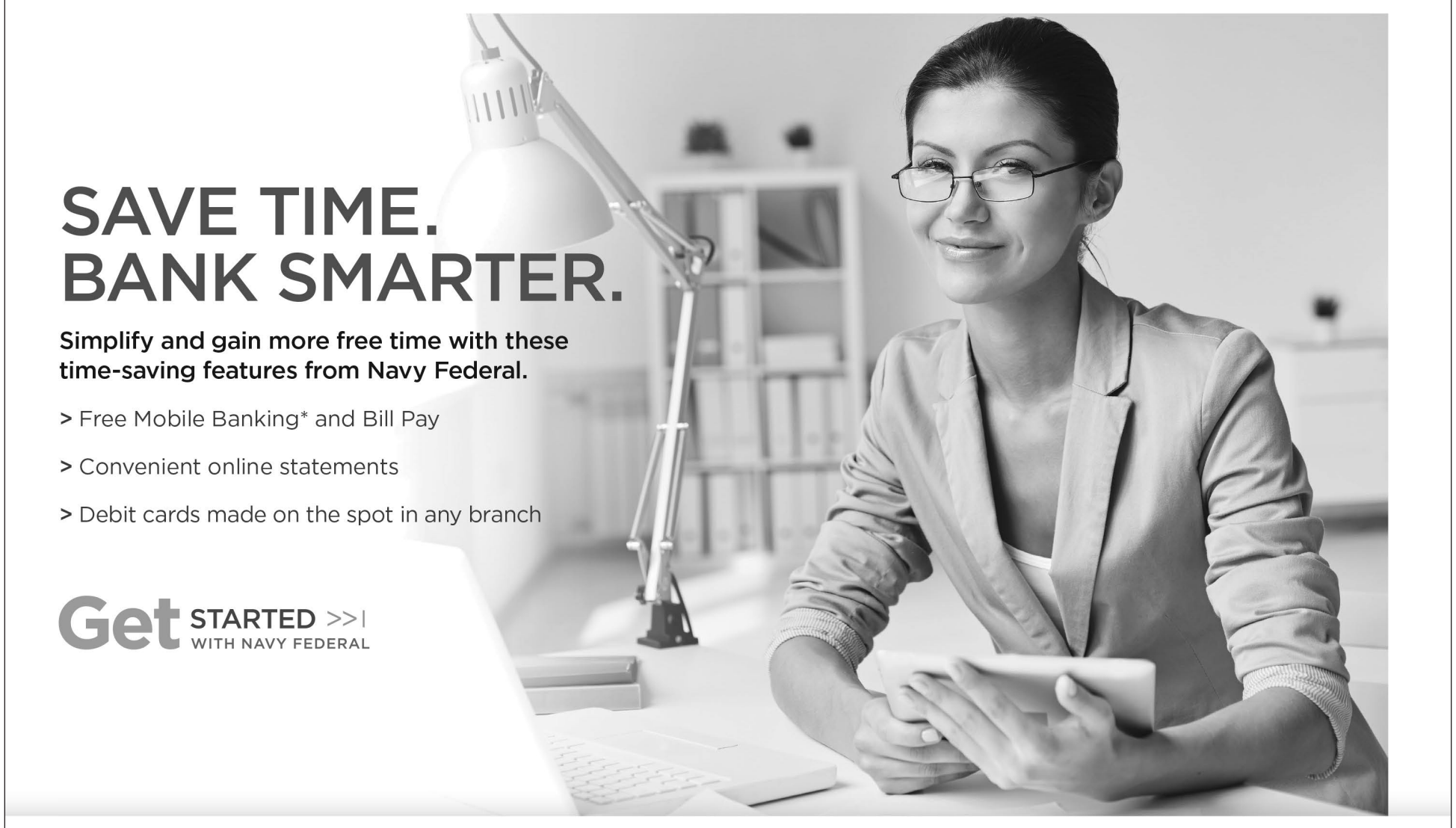
Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett addresses the crowd after his relief of Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps, at the Marine Corps War Memorial, Arlington, Virginia, Feb. 20.

PHOTO BY SGT. ALLISON BEISWANGER

Sergeant Major Ronald L. Green relieves Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett during the Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps relief and appointment ceremony at Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, Feb. 20.

PHOTO BY SGT. ALLISON BEISWANGER

Sergeant Major Ronald L. Green relieves Sergeant Major Micheal P. Barrett during the Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps relief and appointment ceremony at Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, Feb. 20.



Sharks from A1

the scenarios the Marines were participating in all the more realistic.

"The ECP is really good because Marines have to execute everything that's expected in country," Zunino said. "They get to practice their rules of engagement and escalation of force. All the classes they've been to and all the training they have received is executed here."

An added element of support came from the Aviation Ground Support Operation Center which is primarily used for tracking day to day functions of aviation-ground support. During the MRX it was also used as a multipurpose operation center, which allowed a more accurate assessment of the security force's capabilities in conjunction with Integrated Training Exercise 2-15, which is currently being conducted.

"We are trying to get our watch crew familiar with just how demanding it would be when you have the fog of war and units providing lots of information at once and still having to send that information

Sgt. Luis Martinez, heavy equipment operator, Marine Wing Support Squadron 371, native of San Diego, Calif., communicates via radio to allow role players acting as local nationals access into the forward operating base during MWSS-371's Mission Rehearsal Exercise at Command Observation Post five aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 17. The unit was evaluated to determine their level of readiness in preparation for a deployment in support of Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Relief Central Command 15-2.

up to higher," said Maj. Andrew Kano, executive officer, MWSS 371, native of Las Vegas, Nev. "With the AGSOC, we have the capability to completely monitor 360 degrees around the air field at all times, which is something that we'll definitely need being charged with the security force mission."

Throughout the MRX, MWSS 371 was evaluated on their mission readiness. Having the ability to secure a perimeter, deflect a hostile situation and maintain a consistent and accurate line of communication were among the skill sets they were expected to have and carry-out to completion.

"Coming out to ITX is paying off. The Marines are starting to identify what it is we need to work on and doing this in conjunction with everything else, we're able to see what's good and what we need to refine," Zunino said. "We're on the right course for the deployment and I think after this everyone is confident that it's going to work out."

Hosts from A1

hosted students from the Morongo Unified School District to participate in the Job Shadowing Program, Feb. 18, 2015. The program allows students to visit the base and observe service members performing the jobs in which the students have an interest.

Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, Combat Camera and the Provost Marshal's Office, were among the 19 departments that participated in the program. More than 30 students attended the event.

"The Marine Corps has been a great partnership for this program," said Lori Jo Cosgriff, Morongo Unified School District's job developer, native of Twentynine Palms, Calif. "We can match our students with someone who has the career field that they're interested in and they can ask the questions in a free, comfortable environment."

The program takes place annually with this year's students coming from Twentynine Palms, Blackrock and Yucca Valley High Schools. The students connected with an employer for approximately three hours, and each employer developed a small itinerary for the students, allowing them to get a feel of what it would be like to perform that particular job. Planning for the event included coordinating with the different departments on base and making sure they were able to mentor students for the day.

"I think it bridges a gap in the community," said Thomas Cruz Jr., school liaison, Marine Corps Community Services, native of Austin, Texas. "We're a big employer in the local area and a lot of students understand that. I think this is one of the most important things; learning what types of skills you're interested in, getting into that career and seeing them first hand."

1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment and 1st Tank Battalion have adopted schools in the local area and participate in school-related events when the opportunity arises. The Job Shadowing Program was established approximately 10 years ago in an effort to show students that many jobs in the civilian world exist on base. Having a wide array of occupational specialties to choose from provided the students a variety of choices when it came to the jobs they wanted to observe.

"In this welcoming environment we see that it's not as intimidating out here as we perceive it to be," Cosgriff said. "The students understand that the men and women they meet out here are friendly and welcoming. I think the Marine Corps base is a great asset to our community and definitely a great asset to our schools [through these programs]."

Test from A1

PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion Marines operate a Light-Armored Vehicle equipped with a new Anti-Tank weapons system to their next objective during testing at range 500 aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 16. The testing of the new system began Feb. 9 and is scheduled to end March 8.

back regarding the new system.

"We are currently in operational testing, which allows us to see how the system performs in training," Capt. Zachary Stanley, operational test project officer, LAV-ATWS Modernization program, MCOTEA, said. "We gave it to the Marines and units it's going to be fielded in for them to operate side-by-side with platoons using the previous model, the Emerson 901. We can compare times and accuracy through these trial runs."

Through the new anti-tank weapons system and optics, the vehicle will be able to engage armored targets on the move while providing another vantage point for commanders on the battlefield.

"It gives commanders another set of eyes as opposed to the old system, which has to wait for another vehicle to spot the threat before anti-tank vehicles can respond," Stanley said. "The gunner is located inside the LAV with a bi-optical screen he constantly looks at to analyze the battlefield and engage targets."

During this stage of testing, LAR Marines got a first-hand look at what the new system will add to the Marine Corps' arsenal and combat readiness. New capabilities include mobility while firing TOW missiles, allowing for shooting on-the-move, and improved optic magnification for enhanced target acquisition.

"The turret doesn't have to be stowed for us to move and the optics allow for an enhanced view of the area," said Cpl. Brandon Jones, vehicle commander, TOW missile section, 3rd LAR. "These new systems and capabilities would make us more of an asset to the LAR community."

When a missile is launched, the computer in the vehicle communicates with it through a wire connected to the turret, as the gunner maintains a set of crosshairs on target. This process allows the Marine to guide the missile until contact is made.

"Speaking from experiences I had as a gunner, it can be very disorienting to look at a screen for so long," Jones said. "The amount of focus needed to keep the crosshairs steady leads to a lot of stress behind the sticks. Although it doesn't make the job easier, it allows us to operate as an anti-tank crew more effectively."

3rd LAR has been training alongside 1st Tank Battalion and 1st LAR during the testing of the new anti-tank system. The operational testing has given Marines using the new LAV-ATWS an opportunity to give their input on the system and shape the future of the Marine Corps' anti-tank light-armored reconnaissance capability.

"Our Marines really enjoyed giving input on the system," said Capt. Charlie Richardson, Company B light-armored vehicle officer, 3rd LAR. "MCOTEA has done a great job of collecting the [feedback] by giving Marines an opportunity to tell what does and does not work. Through these tests, the Marines are making a direct [impact] on the future."

Successful completion of this test will support a decision to begin production of the new Anti-Tank Weapon System for the LAV, with fielding of the system to the operating forces projected for 2017.

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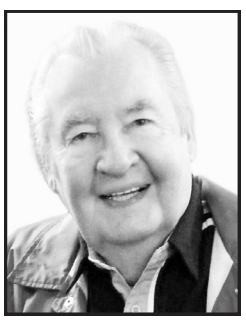
TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



At my request my friend Derwood Andrews has written the following brief essay that you should find helpful in your daily meditative thoughts:

Repurpose

The desert is a perfect place to repurpose. I was recently asked to make a dog bed from an old suitcase as a Do-It-Yourself project for Desert Lifestyle magazine. Happily, my dog loved it. A lot of the inventive works of art 'round these parts are repurposed objects; things given a second chance, a new life and usefulness.

Rusty gold abounds in people's yards; wagon wheels as tables, old truck beds filled with growing cactus, rocks piled up to make boundaries; and that's just outside. Inside people whittle away with old wood, rusty metal, paint, beads and more.

I think the desert is also a good place to repurpose yourself. A lot of us retire here and the danger of stagnating should be taken seriously. Ask yourself how you can stay useful and youthful and if you can, go out and do something; for yourself or for someone who needs a hand.

So grab a suitcase, hacksaw the lid off, put legs on it, add a pillow and whistle for your dog…keep on changing things up. To quote author Steve Supple "To repurpose an old thought, idea or memory to a new purpose is the height of creativity."

This column sponsored by:

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WeekINPhotos

Integrated Task Force Provisional Rifle Platoon conducts magazine drills

PHOTO BY: CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ

Marines with Provisional Rifle Platoon, Company A, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, conduct buddy rushes aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 23.

PHOTO BY: SGT. ALICIA R. LEADERS

Sgt. Radmila M. Allen, team leader, and Cpl. Chris T. Port, rifleman, both with Provisional Rifle Platoon, Company A, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, conduct magazine drills while combat gliding aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 23.

PHOTO BY: SGT. ALICIA R. LEADERS

Marines with Provisional Rifle Platoon, Company A, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, conduct magazine drills while combat gliding aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 23.

PHOTO BY: CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ

Corporals Sierra Tilson, left, team leader, and Jessica Stewart, rifleman, both with Provisional Rifle Platoon, Company A, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, conduct magazine drills while combat gliding aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 23.

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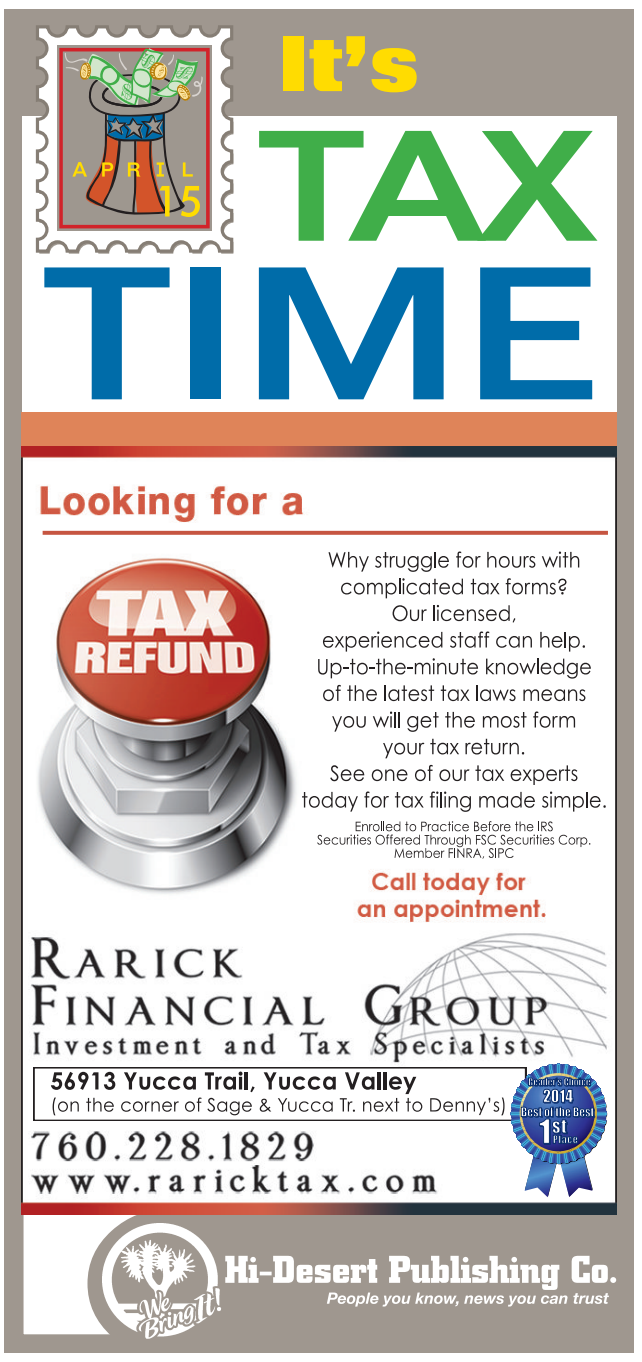

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MTU shooting team holds 3rd Annual Smallbore, Air Rifle Competition

Cpl. James Marker, Marksmanship Training Unit Shooting Team, native of Wild Rose, Wis., shoots a Harrington and Richardson .22 caliber rifle during the 3rd annual Smallbore and Air Rifle Competition at Range 3 A, Feb. 21. The targets were spaced out at the 40, 60, 77 and 100 yards.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

The shooter raises the muzzle of his rifle into the air and takes in a deep breath. As he lowers his sights onto the target he, slowly exhales. The sights line-up on the silhouette, he pulls the trigger, marking the start of the 3rd Annual Nation Rifle Association Rifle Silhouette Smallbore and Air Rifle Competition.

The Marksmanship Training Unit Shooting Team held the competition at Range 3 A, Feb. 21. This was an opportunity for families in the community to go out and have some fun.

"This is a great way to get kids into shooting," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Hardiesty, staff non-commissioned officer in charge, MTU, native of Londonderry, Ohio. "The guns don't have a lot of recoil and ammunition is also inexpensive."

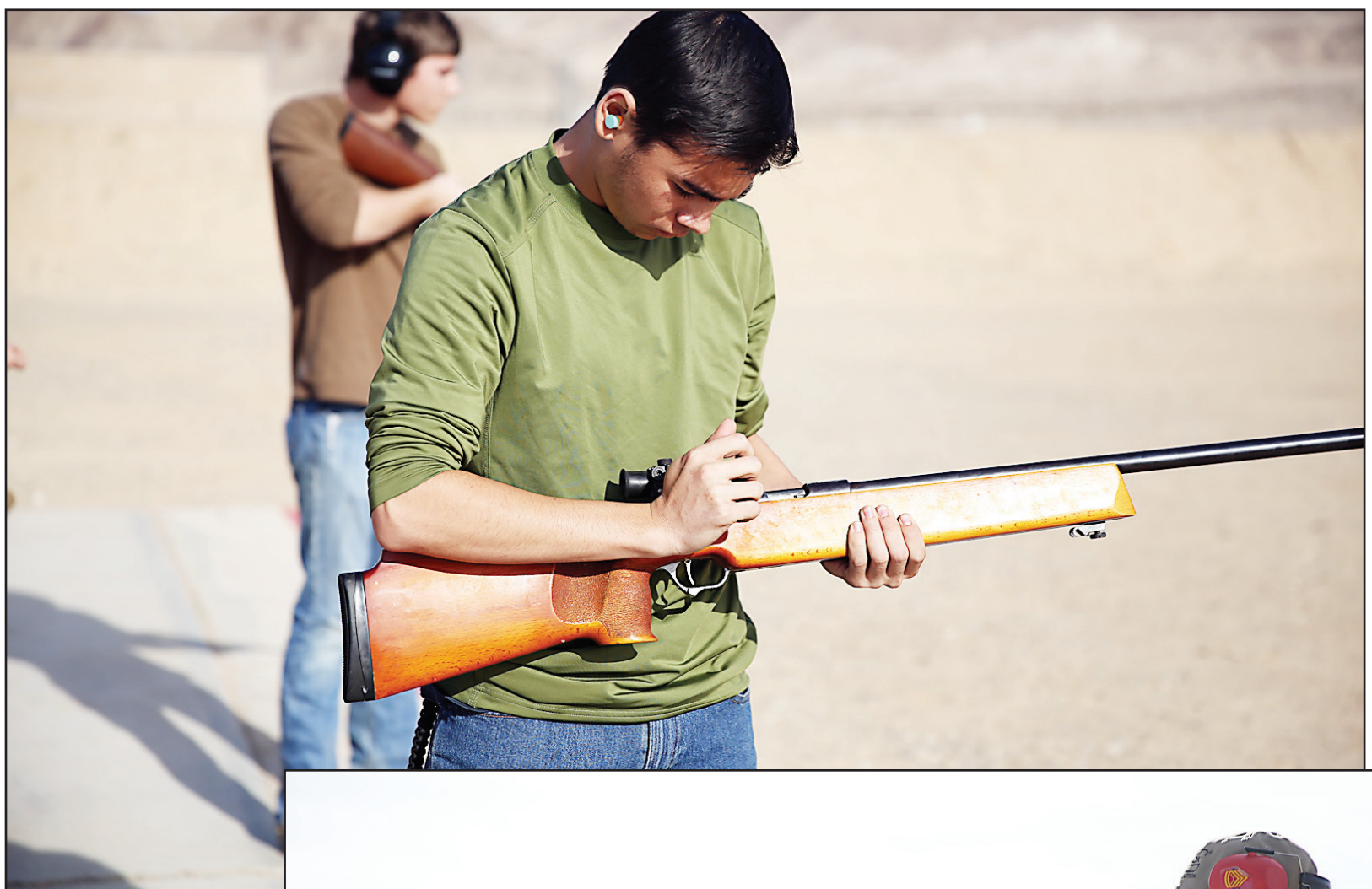
The competition is a small tournament where participants shoot at animal-shaped silhouettes. There are four shapes the shooters fire at: chickens, pigs, turkeys and rams. Competitors shoot at five of each of the targets at varying distances from 40 to 100 yards.

"The targets of the tournament are shaped like animals and fall when they are hit, which is more entertaining than shooting paper," Hardiesty said.

Some of the challenges the shooters face include aiming at small targets and only being allowed to shoot while standing.

"You think going up there that it going to be easy," said Cpl. James Marker, MTU shooting team, native of Wild Rose, Wis. "When you start shooting, you realize it is actually pretty hard. It is fun and something different."

According to Hardeisty, the shooting team hopes to put on this event twice a year and they encourage future participation.



Logan Hardy, son of Master Sgt. Jeff Hardy, shoots a Henry Lever Action .22 caliber rifle during the 3rd annual Smallbore and Air Rifle Competition at Range 3 A, Feb. 21. The participants shot at silhouettes of chickens, pigs, turkeys and rams.

Ret. Gunnery Sgt. Keith Brownmiller shoots at Henry Lever Action .22 caliber rifle during the 3rd annual Smallbore and Air Rifle Competition at Range 3 A, Feb. 21, 2015. Each participant fired a total of 40 rounds during two courses of fire.

DMG, NREA discuss preservation in wildlife, history

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

A handful of desert environment advocates walked along the remains of an ancient volcanic eruption. Etched into the surfaces of the solidified magma where petroglyphs, left behind by natives from approximately 12,000 to 15,000 years ago. These civilians paid witness to one of the Combat Center's most well-preserved sites in order to further strengthen the relationships between the instillation and its surrounding community.

The National Resource and Environmental Affairs Division met with the Desert Managers Group at the Combat Center Officers' Club, Feb. 18, to discuss mission sustainment regarding the Land Acquisition Project and Environmental Protection Integration programs, which are put in place to ensure preservation of the desert wildlife and its habitats which exist aboard the Combat Center.

NREA also provided a tour of the Combat Center to DMG, which is comprised of several agencies that look after California's desert resources. The tour included tours of the Recycling Center, the Archaeology and Paleontology Curation Center and the petroglyph sites at Range F, Lava Training Area.

"The petroglyphs are symbols carved into stone in various areas to act as a form of communication to other scavengers and hunters in the area," said Dr. Marie Cottrell, private consultant on archaeology, Archaeology and Paleontology Curation Center. "It is also believed that the symbols were created by shamans during various rituals."

The DMG had the opportunity to see several images believed to be created by different culture groups that passed through the area more than 12,000 years ago.

"Each tribe [etched] these symbols differently," Cottrell said. "Some made the [human figures] as very simple stick figures while others added digits to them. Right now we are unable to completely confirm what the different symbols mean entirely, but we can make out what most of them are supposed to look like."

After seeing the petroglyph sites, the DMG toured the Range and Ordnance Residue Recycling Center, where the base recycles left-over materials from training areas.

"This waste management facility takes all of the scrap metal that is left behind from training, like spent brass, ammo cans, pieces of aluminum and other things left over from training and breaks them down or pulls them apart to be recycled," said Lt. Col. Timothy Pochop, NREA director, G4 Instillation and Logistics. "We are able to recycle [contaminated] dirt, as in places where a small amount of oil spilled from a vehicle leak, as well as [taking] wood that we put through a wood chipper here and use as a cover for the base's land fill."

The last stop for the DMG representatives was the Archaeology and Paleontology Curation Center. Many artifacts are found through the Combat Center's training areas. These items sometimes date back centuries.

"We built the Curation Center to display the [artifacts] that have been discovered on the base," Pochop said.

The meeting was held to maintain good relations with the members of the DMG and to show what the base has done to preserve the wild life and historical artifacts located aboard the instillation. NREA hopes to hear the ideas and concerns of the members of the DMG to promote good relations with the surrounding community and so that the Combat Center can continue to serve as the Marine Corps' premier pre-deployment training venue.

Dr. Marie Cottrell, private consultant on archaeology, Archaeology and Paleontology Curation Center, presents different etchings to the representatives of the Desert Managers Group located on Range F, Lava Training area, Feb. 18. The petroglyphs are believed to be part of rituals that the tribe shamans preform.

Kevin Chang, representative of Senator Feinstein's office, explains the key parts in the Land Acquisition bill currently in legislation at the Officers' Club, Feb. 18. Chang explained where the training areas are going to be and how the bill will work in conjunction with several agencies to preserve the surrounding wildlife and historical significance of the new training areas.

Dr. Marie Cottrell, private consultant on archaeology, Archaeology and Paleontology Curation Center, points out petroglyphs etched on rocks to some of the representatives of the Desert Managers Group located on Range F, Lava Training area, Feb. 18, as part of a tour of the Combat Center. According to Cottrell, the symbols are believed to be etched by Native American shamans.

YouTube

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