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Combat Center patrons express appreciation

INTERVIEW AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

What do you appreciate about America's military?

I appreciate the military because they fight for our freedom. I have a lot of family members that are in the military and my understanding of the military has definitely grown deeper since being with my husband.

— Crystal McFarlane, sales associate, Marine Corps Exchange

What do you appreciate about America's military?

I appreciate that our military is willing to put it all on the line to protect what we have. My husband is currently deployed and I tell him every day that he's my hero. Every veteran I come across I thank them for their service because I'm grateful for all that they do.

— Alice Henderson, life guard, Marine Corps Community Services

See **Appreciate pg.** A6

First Lady announces jobs, training for vets, spouses

STORY BY TERRY MOON CRONK

First Lady Michelle Obama announced that numerous technology and energy companies have committed to hire or train 90,000 veterans and military spouses in the next five years as part of the Joining Forces initiative.

Celebrating the fourth year of Joining Forces this month, the first lady spoke to an audience of veterans, family members, business owners and government leaders here at Micron Technologies, which produces memory-storage devices.

Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, launched Joining Forces in 2011 to honor and support service members, survivors, veterans, and their families, according to the initiative's website.

Joining Forces began at a time when the unemployment rate was 12 percent for service members returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. One in three of the youngest veterans who sought work could not find jobs, Obama said.

"We issued a call to people all across the country," the first lady said. "We challenged folks to ask themselves one simple question: 'What can I do to honor these families who have given us so much?' And we were overwhelmed by the response we received."

Shortly after Joining Forces was launched, President Barack Obama also challenged the private sector to hire 100,000 veterans and military spouses, the first lady said.

Now, less than four years later, "America's businesses have continued to race past my husband's initial goal, and together, those businesses who answered the president's call have hired or trained more than 850,000 veterans and military spouses," she said.

Additionally, federal government hiring produced a workforce that now comprises 30 percent veterans. By making a commitment to hire veterans and military spouses, such companies are shining examples of what's possible, the she said.

"Altogether, the unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans has fallen by almost five points, and for those youngest veterans, it's been cut by almost half from its peak," the first lady said.

As companies hired veterans and military spouses, they learned about the skill, character and resilience that "define our veterans and military spouses," she said.

"Veterans and spouses were excelling in their companies … getting promotion after promotion and inspiring their colleagues with their talent and with their determination," the first lady said.

During today's announcement, the first lady pointed out that the technology and energy sectors are driving national economic growth. "These are industries full of good, high-paying positions where our vets can continue to thrive for years and even decades to come," she said.

And because the solar industry is "adding jobs 10 times faster than the rest of the economy," the first lady said, President Obama earlier this month announced "a significant expansion of our successful pilot program to train transitioning service members

See **Training pg.** A6

'War Dogs' are back

PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

Lance Cpl. Joseph Dworkin, rifleman, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, embraces his loved ones during the battalion's homecoming at Del Valle Field, April 25.

Marine Corps' Top Shot

[Every week, thousands of fans cast their votes for the best photograph posted on the Corps' Facebook page. This week's top shot comes from Pfc. Casey Scarpulla.]

Capt. Devin Taylor, an AV-8B Harrier pilot with Marine Attack Squadron 211, returns home from a six-month deployment to his wife at MCAS Yuma, Arizona, Saturday, April 11, 2015.

This Week in Combat Center History

Reprinted from the Observation Post
May 2, 1980

Pendleton's 3/7 begins live fire exercise

The second Combined Arms Exercise of this year, CAX 4-80, will culminate in a three-day, live-fire, exercise today through Sunday. In preparation for the CAX, two weeks of pre-exercise training, during which skills employed in the actual live fire portion of the exercise are polished, began at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, April 22.

According to Lieutenant Colonel K. R. Liston-Wakefield, deputy, Tactical Exercise Evaluation and Control Group, the exercise is designed to train exercise forces, focusing on the infantry battalion and their ability to coordinate all of the supporting arms that would be available to a Marine combat unit.

This will be accomplished through the combined efforts of the 3d Battalion, 7th Regiment from MCB Camp Pendleton and almost every unit at The Combat Center, with close air support provided by the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing at MCAS El Toro, and combat service support from 1st Force Service Support Group.

Tank-infantry coordination and basic infantry tactics will be emphasized using the live fire ranged at The Combat Center. The exercise forces will be required to conduct a series of attacks using live-fire, against an array of targets which stimulate a Warsaw Pac, trained and equipped, enemy. Chemical agents and electronic warfare measures will also be employed against the exercise force.

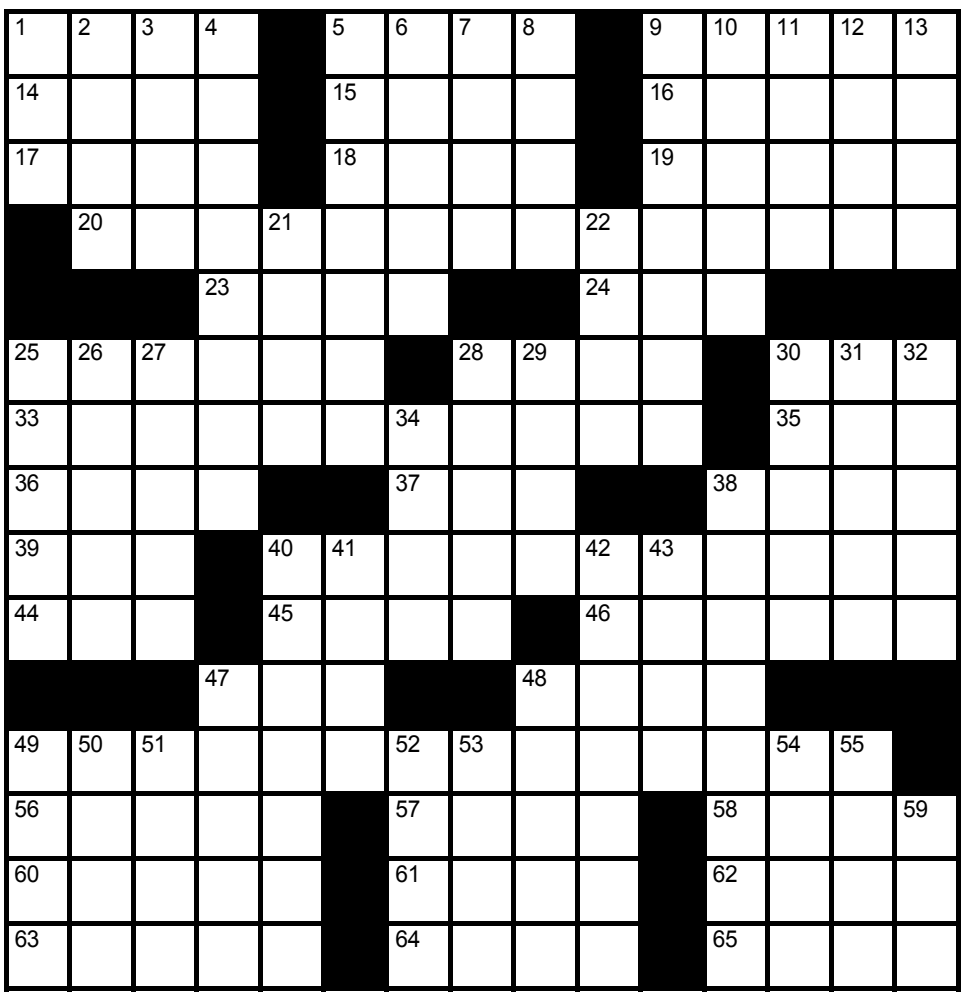
The night defensive firing, multi-company, infantry assaults and the use of live ammunition, both air and ground delivered, in close proximity to the ground troops, combine to make this one of the most realistic combat type exercises that the armed forces conduct, according to LtCol Liston Wakefield who explained that the CAXs "simulate, as close as we can get, actual combat." This situation occurs when troops are maneuvered in the same area as the firing is conducted.

The control of the Combined Arms Exercises is charged to The Combat Center which is also responsible for conducting a two-day evaluation critique at the conclusion of the exercise. During this time the lessons that have been learned during the exercise and the unit's training is evaluated.

Direct support for the CAX will be provided by the 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment: 4th Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment: 3d Tank Battalion: Communication Support Company and Detachment A, First Force Service Support Group. However, all Combat Center units will participate in the CAX, supporting the Marines from Camp Pendleton and El Toro.

According to LtCol Liston-Wakefield, the CAXs allowing Marines to "train in a way that they cannot train anywhere else."

CROSSWORD



Across

1 Shower bar
5 Packs
9 Roughnecks
14 Almanac contents
15 ___ rug (small floor covering)
16 His cube was a craze
17 Post-bottle sound
18 University VIP
19 Make reparations, e.g.
20 Starch from San Francisco
23 Petits ___ (tiny peas)
24 Penny figure
25 Beads up
28 Isle near Mull
30 "Never heard of him"
33 Not-so-sharp dairy item
35 "I'm for it!"
36 Some poems
37 Give relief to
38 Breathe heavily
39 Mattel doll
40 Meeting all requirements
44 Epoch
45 Grouse house
46 Coffee orders with foamy tops
47 Racket's ending
48 Wrap for some parties
49 NBA team
56 Ecstatic
57 Graceful steed
58 Directs toward
60 Make the morning paper?
61 It can be high
62 Granny or bowline
63 Golfer Vijay
64 Nasty look
65 Antsy

Down

1 Kinsman
2 Grave responsibility
3 Bushy hairstyle
4 Browser bothers
5 A little crazy
6 Snacks with milk
7 Regular guy?
8 ___-froid (calmness)
9 Wall-mounted safety device
10 Startlingly unusual
11 Orchestra pitch-setter
12 One of Columbus's fleet
13 List of appts.
21 Mil. recruiter at colleges
22 US Open winner Mandlikova
25 Blazing speed
26 Comparatively spread out
27 Justice Kagan
28 A genius, no
29 Probabilities
30 "Easy Rider" biker
31 Away
32 Scouts take them
34 Goes to a restaurant
38 Kids' game
40 Find after digging
41 Arequipa's land
42 Hit with a haymaker
43 Milan meat sauce
47 "Dallas" clan name
48 Kid with
49 Janitorial tools
50 Letters on the cross
51 Rested (on)
52 Stylish Lagerfeld
53 Ohio native
54 Good-hearted
55 City haze
59 Muddy pen

SUDOKU

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Last week's answers

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

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OFF-LIMITS ESTABLISHMENTS

MCIWest off-limits establishments guidance prohibits service members from patronizing the following locations. This order applies to all military personnel.

In Oceanside:
- Angelo's Kars, 222 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054
- Angelo's Kars, 226 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054

In San Diego:
- Club Mustang, 2200 University Ave.
- Club San Diego, 3955 Fourth St.
- Get It On Shoppe, 3219 Mission Blvd.
- Main Street Motel, 3494 Main St.
-Vulcan Baths, 805 W. Cedar St.

In National City:
- Dream Crystal, 15366 Highland Ave.
- Sports Auto Sales, 1112 National City Blvd.

Local off-limits guidance prohibits service members from patronizing the following locations.

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

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

In Palm Springs:
- Village Pub, 266 S. Palm Canyon Dr.
- 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

Katherine ROBERTS

Twentynine Palms, Ca. Library technician, Combat Center Library

Katherine Roberts grew up in a military family that consisted of Marines and sailors. She was born in Twentynine Palms, Calif. and later began working at the Combat Center Library. Roberts enjoys reading on her spare time and owns approximately 1,000 books of her own.

>I was born in Twentynine Palms and coming back here to work at the base library is like returning home.

>My mother was a Marine, which is why working on base feels normal to me. Growing up, I was around Marines often.

>I have [always] loved reading. I remember my sisters used to hate reading until they left to attend college. I could never understand why because I have always found reading to be fun.

>I probably own more than 1,000 books. For me a good book is one that changes my perspective. If I think a book is great, I keep it so that I can read it again. I will never understand people who can read a book, say they love it, and then never pick it up again.

>I enjoy getting the chance to read new books. My favorite genres in literature are romance and young adult. Although I didn't know 'young adult' was a genre until later on, they are still great books to read.

>The first book I bought as a child was a collection of Edger Allen Poe's stories. It was not what I was expecting and I didn't know what kind of book it was until after I read it.

>When I first got here I was a librarian working with [Combat Center patrons] who came here to find information or a specific book. Now as a technician, I keep the library running smooth behind the scenes.

>I feel like being able to provide these services on base helps [Combat Center patrons] relax from work and unwind from the day-to-day stress they deal with.

>Working here is fun, I get to help the people on base with the things they want to do or find. I love seeing someone's expression of gratitude when I'm able to help them find something they were searching for.

>There is something about reading a book to children in different voices and seeing their faces light up as they listen to the story. It gives me the feeling I'm doing a good job.

>We provide so much for the [service members] here, giving them a place where there is internet, movies or books for recreational use or to help with a project.

>I love the fact that the library has programs and events for the children on base. A great example is Mother's Day and Father's Day. We have card-making arts and crafts events so the children can come in to the library and make something for their parents.

>What really makes working at the library [great] is the people who come here. When I get to work with people who are really grateful for the help I give them, it makes all the effort I put in worth-while.

Interview and photo by Lance Cpl. Thomas Mudd

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Earth Week concludes with extravaganza

Nora Hotch, biological science technician, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs, holds Thelma, a 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 the Lincoln Military Housing Athletic Field, April 24.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Approximately 3,700 Combat Center patrons celebrated the Earth Day Extravaganza hosted by Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs and Lincoln Military Housing at the LMH Athletic Field, April 24.

LMH and NREA gave Combat Center service members and their families a chance to learn about the ample network of Combat Center programs and facilities that support the installation's progressive conservation standards and energy initiatives. NREA co-sponsored the event with LMH to provide an entertaining and informational experience for those who attended.

"The goal, while planning this event, was to give the families a chance to have fun while exposing them to the information," said Monalisaleilani Atuatasi, administrative assistant and events coordinator, LMH.

NREA provided representatives from its various departments, such as the Archaeology and Paleontology Curation Center, Hazardous Waste Management, Range Sustainment Branch, Environmental Law Enforcement, and Water Resources, to give information on the conservation programs aboard the base.

Parents and children were also given the opportunity to observe and interact with desert tortoises, Thelma and Louise, from the Curation Center.

According to Atuatasi, the celebration was set up in a circle to draw the families toward the booths of information about the programs aboard the base.

Additionally, booths from the other base programs were present, such as Commissary, "Cooking Matters in the Store" program and TruGreen LandCare.

"I think it's great to see so many people come together and learn about these things," said Cat Arias, program coordinator, Cooking Matters at the Store. "Having all of these people here means we can hopefully teach them new things."

LMH offered different rides including: a miniature Ferris wheel, a giant inflatable slide, and a miniature train ride for participants to enjoy. The event also provided a live performance from local band Desert Soul.

According to Atuatasi, the goal of this celebration was to give service members and their families an informative and entertaining experience.

Mike Schmitt, volunteer, Sky's the Limit, shows Marines the sun through a Lunt Solar Systems telescope during the Earth Day Extravaganza, at Lincoln Military Housing Athletic Field, April 24.

Combat Center families enjoy a ride on a miniature train through Lincoln Military Housing Athletic Field parking lot during the Earth Day Extravaganza, April 24.

Road Bike Criterium promotes Earth Day

Emily Richey, 2, daughter of Lacy Richey and Chief Petty Officer Joseph Richey, chief hospital corpsman, Adult Medical Care Clinic, pedals to the finish line during the Earth Day Road Bike Criterium, aboard the Combat Center, April 23.

Retired Mater Sgt. Tom Gardner races in the Earth Day Road Bike Criterium, aboard the Combat Center, April 23.

Combat Center participates in Earth Day Fun Run

Sgt. Todd Knight, logistics non-commissioned officer, Combat Camera, G3 Operations and Training, pushes a stroller carrying his daughter, Juniper, across the finish line of the Earth Day Fun Run at Desert Winds Golf Course, April 24.

Gunnery Sgt. Aaron Matura, crash chief, and Staff Sgt. Julia Criqui-Matura, food service specialist, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, run with their child, 9-month old Izabella, in a stroller during the five-kilometer Earth Day Fun Run at Desert Winds Golf Course, April 24.

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Marines, sailors conduct FHA exercise

A CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter departs Kiwanis Park, Yuma, Ariz., after dropping supplies for Marines and Sailors with 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment who were providing security during a foreign humanitarian assistance exercise as part of Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course 2-15, April 17.

Marines and sailors with 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, transport notionally-injured role-players to be medically evacuated by a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter during a foreign humanitarian assistance exercise at Kiwanis Park, Yuma, Ariz., as part of Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course 2-15, April 17.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CPL. CHARLES SANTA MARIA

YUMA, Ariz.—Foreign refugee role-players rattle the gate surrounding Kiwanis Park as they plead for food, water and medical attention. Moments later, a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter arrives to deliver supplies in the foreign humanitarian assistance exercise portion of Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course 2-15, at Yuma, Ariz., April 17.

The FHA served as a part of the seven-week WTI course ran by Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron 1, which provides advanced tactical training to certify Marine pilots as weapons and tactics instructors.

"The course gives pilots the experience," said Capt. Johnathan Bryant, CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter instructor, MAWTS 1. "The Marine Corps is called upon often to provide humanitarian assistance and in many cases it's after natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, or hurricanes."

For more than 10 years, the city of Yuma, Ariz. has afforded parts of their city for the humanitarian assistance exercise with MAWTS 1. This iteration of the FHA used five UH-1Y Venoms and two CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters. The mission was planned and executed by the students who participated in the assault support department of the course while instructors evaluated their performance. The exercise also challenged pilots by using other locations in the city to act as refugee camps, which lead to more transports they had to conduct and consider during the exercise.

"Trinity Christian Center and Crane Middle School served as notional refugee camps awaiting support or supplies for the training evolution and Kiwanis Park served as the hub of humanitarian assistance," Bryant said. "In order to initially set up an [FHA], you have to set up security to prevent the possibility of hostile refugees stealing medical supplies, food or water. In scenarios like this, everybody wants the care and many people need the care, so desperation is high."

1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, served as the ground element for the FHA and provided approximately 100 Marines to serve as security for the center of humanitarian assistance, located at Kiwanis Park. In the scenario, role players acted as hostile foreign refugees seeking food, water and medical attention.

"Having the role players create friction and add [simulated] casualties into the training helps add urgency to the Marines and sailors thinking and planning," said Chief Petty Officer Oscar Baldevia, foreign humanitarian assistance exercise triage officer, 1/5. "Because of that urgency, we move quicker and it feels real. If we could do something on this scale every day, we would."

Role players added pressure to the environment by acting as aggressors to the Marines providing security or by painting lacerations and burns on several parts of their body to give the image of severe injuries. Each casualty was brought to the casualty control point, where 1/5 corpsmen organized role players into several groups based on the severity of their injuries. The red group consisted of the most critically injured casualties who needed to be evacuated, the yellow group consisted of role players with injuries that did not require an evacuation, and the colorless group was designated for role players with minor injuries that could be treated on site.

"It's good training for the corpsmen," Baldevia said. "It's a steady flow of casualties with different injuries that vary in urgency. This is important for corpsmen to learn how to treat casualties in a timely manner and [distinguish] which people should be treated first while communicating which need to be evacuated."

Although WTI is an advanced course for aviation officers, infantry battalions that participate also gain experience working in humanitarian scenarios by communicating air support for evacuations, transport and resupply.

"We're dealing with real battalions, real companies and real rifleman that are part of the mission." Bryant said, "If students can't integrate with the ground element they fail the mission because, as assault support pilots, if we can't effectively support the infantry we lose our relevance. The realism we get from the WTI course by integrating the infantry battalions and allowing them to develop their plan while pilots still maintain their flexibility is important."

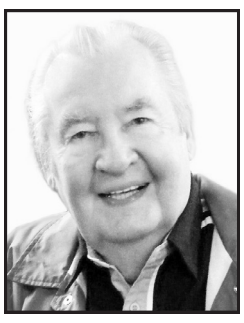
The goal of MAWTS 1's WTI course is to refine Marine Corps aviation with each class by creating weapons and tactics instructors who will serve in key officer training billets. This allows the school to create aviation officers with advanced skills, tools and tactics they can apply to the implementation of the aircraft they operate in the operating forces.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Robert Newkirt (left) and Petty Officer 3rd Class Sebastian Quiceno (right), corpsmen with 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, check the vitals of a role-player with notional symptoms of concussion at the casualty control point during a foreign humanitarian assistance exercise at Kiwanis Park, Yuma, Ariz., as part of Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course 2-15, April 17.

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

TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



Sometime back I was lunching with a large group when a dear friend asked me to recommend a continuing care facility for her friend's husband. I immediately recommended Hi-Desert Continuing Care Center on White Feather Road in Joshua Tree.

Imagine my satisfaction when I learned a couple of days later that the Hi-Desert Continuing Care Center had been selected by the participants in the Hi-Desert Publishing Co. annual survey as the "best of the best" senior care facility in the Morongo Basin.

Patty and I have lived in the Morongo Basin for almost 20 years and I know what a fine place the Hi-Desert Continuing Care Center is. I have walked their halls, visited in room after room, conducted worship services of various kinds, eaten their nutritious meals, been good friends with many of the dedicated staff, and I know for a fact it really is an excellent "home away from home."

These words from their own literature say it best:

"At the Continuing Care Center, we pride ourselves on being a place that's most like home—but with the support services necessary for those in need of nursing care and other care assistance.

We customize our services to meet each of our residents' personal preferences, special needs, strengths and capabilities. We offer the latest medical advancements along with comprehensive activities and socialization programs."

The Administrator of the national award winning facility is Michelle Amdahl.

This column sponsored by:

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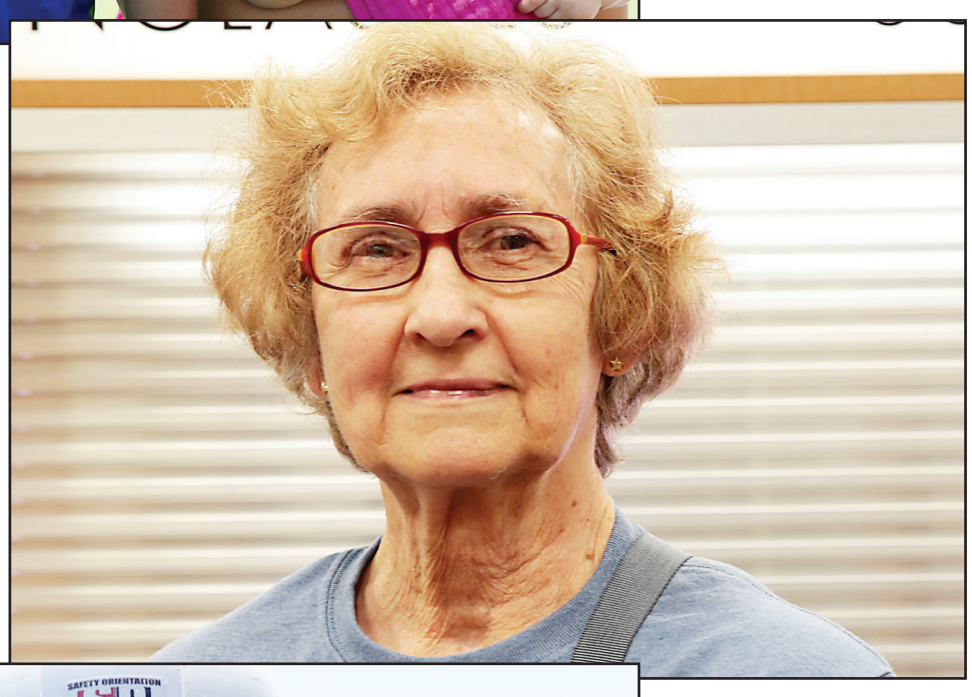
Appreciate from pg. A1

What do you appreciate about America's military?

I appreciate them for the sacrifices that they make, the long hours the work and the time they spend away from their families in order to keep us safe.

— Amanda De Lara, military spouse. Atty, son, 4 years old, and Willa, daughter, 5 months old



What do you appreciate about America's military

My husband was a Marine and so is my grandson. I appreciate our military for everything that they do, because freedom is not free.

— Donna Fogle, grandmother of Marine

What do you appreciate about America's military?

This country is built on freedom. I appreciate our military for the sacrifices they make to protect that freedom.

— Michael Jordan, project superintendent, Silver Strand Construction

Training from pg. A1

for careers in solar jobs."

To make sure there's a job waiting for veterans when they leave the military, the Solar Energy Industries Association is pledging to hire or train 33,000 veterans and spouses over the next five years, she added.

"These companies know that many of the jobs they're hiring for require specialized training," the first lady said. "So in many cases, they're not just hiring these veterans; they're actually partnering with a variety of educational institutions to create internships and apprenticeships, job-training programs."

Micron is in a pilot program through the Northern Virginia Technology Council to match student veterans at local institutions of higher learning to 50 high-tech companies throughout the area, she said.

"Veterans get hands-on experience and the companies connect with a pipeline of top-notch talent," the first lady said. That kind of win-win partnership is one of many across the country helping veterans and military spouses, she added.

Long-term Commitment: While the first lady called her announcement an amazing accomplishment, she added that more work is required.

"That includes connecting our vets not just with any job, but with good jobs -- jobs you can raise a family on, the kind of high-growth jobs of the future," she said.

Obama said she's calling on all companies across the nation in every industry and of every size "to do their part to provide even more opportunities for our military families."

The first lady added, "Keep asking yourselves that same question we posed four years ago: 'What can I do to give back to our veterans and their families?' Can you make a commitment, or another [one] to hire more veterans and military spouses? Can you partner with a local school or veterans service organization on job-training opportunities? There are so many ways you can make a difference, whether you're a multinational name-brand, or a startup that's just getting off the ground."

The first lady praised the veterans, transitioning service members and military spouses in the audience.

"I can't thank you enough. This nation can't thank you enough for your service. What you do is rare. What you do is needed. What you do is special. And I want you to know that we're nowhere near the finish line," she said. "Joining Forces is a long-term commitment to you and to your families, and we're going to do whatever we can to serve you as well as you've served us."

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America's Prepare-A-Thon

STORY BY PFC. LEVI SCHULTZ

The Combat Center will be participating in America's Prepare-A-Thon 2015, a campaign designed to better inform Combat Center residents on how to prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters and man-made incidents.

The Prepare-A-Thon is a presidential initiative, overseen by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, with the intent of encouraging the nation to become proactive and plan ahead for emergencies.

In an effort to keep people informed FEMA has enacted a text message program, which can be used in two ways:

• To receive regular safety tips for specific disaster types.

• To search for open shelters and open disaster recovery centers.

To find out more information about the program visit https://www.fema.gov/text-messages.

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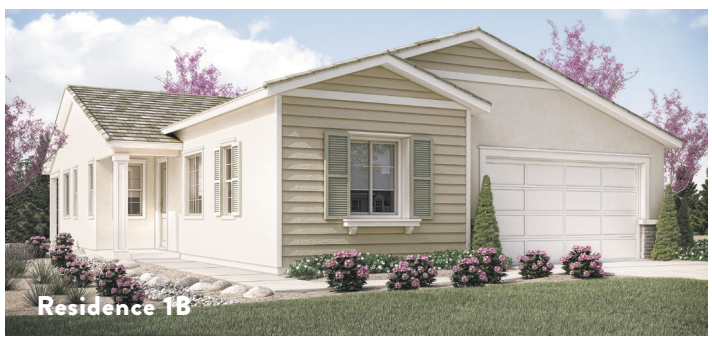

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Combat Center supports car show, street fair

Lance Bowden, 7, son of Chris Bowden, lowers himself into the driver's seat of a static Light Armored Vehicle during the Twentynine Palms Car Show and Street Fair at Luckie Park in Twentynine Palms Calif., Saturday. 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion and Combat Logistics Battalion 7 provided the static display for the event.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. - Combat Center Marines and sailors displayed their love for cars and interest in the community during the annual Twentynine Palms Car Show and Street Fair at Luckie Park in Twentynine Palms Calif., April 25, 2015.

The Combat Center and members of the High-Desert community came together to put on a car show, soap-box derby races and booths with vendors from around the Morongo Basin in the this year's 15th iteration of the event.

The Combat Center demonstrated static displays of military vehicles from Combat Logistics Battalion 7, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, the Combat Center Fire Department and Provost Marshal's Office. Additionally, PMO held a K9 demonstration and the Explosive Ordinance Disposal team displayed their operational equipment.

"We love it when the Marines come out here into the community," said Melanie Robbins, Chamber of Commerce president, City of Twentynine Palms. "They play a pivotal role in this event. Without them there would not have been a lot of things that we could accomplish."

Participants entered more than 80 cars and motorcycles in the car show, with vehicles ranging from Harley-Davidson Motorcycles and classic muscle cars like a 1971 Plymouth Roadrunner to modern-day cars like a 2015 Ford Mustang. Col. James Hanlon, Combat Center Chief of Staff, was a guest judge for the car show.

"I'm glad that we are able to interact and be out in the community," said Hanlon. "We get to see their beautiful vehicles and they get to see ours."

CLB-7 provided static displays of two Oshkosh Multi-Mission Recovery Systems, and 3rd LAR displayed a static Light Armored Vehicle and a High Mobility Multipurpose Vehicle.

"We like being out here explaining to the community the equipment that we use, especially to the children, who are fascinated by all of it," said Sgt. Ian Stevenson, platoon sergeant, Transportation and Service Company, CLB-7. "Most people hear the 'booms' coming from the base and events like this give them a chance to ask what we do and see the equipment."

In Conjunction with the car show, a soap-box derby took place on Joe Davis Dr. between Marine Ave. and Wainwright Ave., where approximately 35 children raced hand-built cars down the hill. Sixty-five Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School students volunteered alongside the Armed Services YMCA to aid in the derby's success.

"The community of Twentynine Palms welcomes all of the Marines and their families," said Robbins. "By hosting events like this one, we hope to have them look forward to being stationed here and also show them that there are a lot of fun things to do in the area."

A Light Armored Vehicle static display sits next to a miniature LAV soap-box car driven by Brooke Conklin and built by her father Sgt. Josh Conklin, LAV mechanic, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, during the Twentynine Palms Car Show and Street Fair at Luckie Park in Twentynine Palms Calif., Saturday. The Conklin's car won the overall soap-box derby race which more than 35 hand-built cars entered.

Sgt. Alexander Strait, explosive ordnance disposal technician, Combat Center EOD team, shows Jared Brase, 10, son of Staff Sgt. Joel Brase, watch commander, Provost Marshal's Office, how to control an EOD bomb disposal robot during the Twentynine Palms Car Show and Street Fair at Luckie Park in Twentynine Palms Calif., Saturday.

CChaz, Military Working Dog, Provost Marshal's Office, demonstrates an attack on Lance Cpl. Preston Ford, Marine On-the-Job Training, PMO, during the Twentynine Palms Car Show and Street Fair at Luckie Park in Twentynine Palms Calif., Saturday. The PMO K9 unit displayed their capabilities and the Explosive Ordinance Disposal team displayed their operational equipment at the event.

See more car show photos pg. B6

Liberty Call

Combat Center Events

Register for a chance to win a spot in the Choose-a-Ride Sweepstakes. Participants will have a one in eleven chance of winning a brand new car. This event is open to active duty military and their spouses only. Visit the MCCS Facebook page for more information. The page can be found at facebook.com/MCCS29 palms.

Come visit Sandy Hill Lanes Bowling Center. With well-maintained lanes, large screen televisions, and a digital jukebox, it's a great facility for indoor recreational fun and relaxation. Tournaments are offered regularly and cosmic bowling runs every Friday and Saturday evening. For more information, contact 760-830-422.

The Combat Center Library will be participating in National Free Comic Book Day. Visit the library May 2 at 10 a.m. to select a free comic book. Each person will receive one comic book while supplies last. For more information, visit MCCS29Palms.com, or contact 760-830-6875.

For country music and a family friendly event visit the 'We Salute You Fest'. The event will be held at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Grey Field, May 8-9. Live performances from Rodney Atkins and Buckcherry will be the feature of the event. Other attractions include a magician, balloon artist, henna tattoo station, face painting, a Ferris wheel ride, and inflatable games. For more information, visit the MCCS Facebook at facebook.com/MCCS29 palms or contact 760-830-5086.

Attend the Mother's Day Brunch at the Mameluke Officer's Club, May 10. The brunch will consist of a full buffet featuring a carving station, waffle station, omelet station, chocolate fountain and more. The event is open to all ranks and civilians, however, space is limited and reservations are highly recommended. For more information and reservations, contact 780-830-6610.

Sunset Cinema

Friday – May 01
6:00 p.m. The Divergent Series: Insurgent PG-13
8:30 p.m. Get Hard R
11:00 p.m. The Gunman R

Saturday – May 02
10:30 a.m. Earth to Echo PG
12:30 p.m. Home PG
3:00 p.m. The Divergent Series: Insurgent PG-13
6:00 p.m. The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel PG
8:30 p.m. Cinderella PG
11:00 p.m. Run All Night R

Sunday – May 03
12:30 p.m. Home PG
2:30 p.m. Cinderella PG
5:00 p.m. Woman in Gold PG-13
7:30 p.m. Furious 7 PG-13

Monday – May 04
6:30 p.m. Furious 7 PG-13

Tuesday – May 05
7:00 p.m. The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel PG

Wednesday – May 06
5:00 p.m. Home PG
7:00 p.m. Woman in Gold PG-13

Thursday – May 07
5:00 p.m. Cinderella PG
7:30 Run All Night R

Friday – May 08
4:00 p.m. Penguins of Madagascar PG
6:00 p.m. The Divergent Series: Insurgent PG-13
11:00 p.m. The Gunman R

A Lotta Bull

Latest Nicholas Sparks movie adaptation really piles it on

NEIL POND

"The Longest Ride"
Starring Scott Eastwood, Britt Robertson, Jack Huston, Oona Chaplin & Alan Alda
Directed by George Tillman Jr.
Rated PG-13

Maybe The Notebook didn't make you sigh, sob or swoon enough. Perhaps you really liked Channing Tatum in Dear John, but wondered… hmmm, how would he look on top of a big, bucking bovine? Or maybe, even with fireworks, a huge explosion and a character that turned out to be a ghost (!), there still wasn't quite enough going on for you in Safe Haven.

If, somehow, none of the other nine movies made from romance novelist Nicholas Sparks' popular, heart-tugging tearjerkers had enough whatever-it-is that you go to Nicholas Sparks movies for, well, the tenth might just be the charm.

First of all, The Longest Ride doesn't just give you one love story, but two—a pair of parallel passion tales stretching across more than two hours of screen time and four-fifths of a century. And it's positively loaded—with sorority girls, hunky cowboys, country music, horses, bulls, modern art, love letters, World War II battlefield heroics, playful beach frolics and a sex scene so hot and steamy it seems to smoke up the whole Smoky Mountains.

It also has massive amounts of hoke, contrivance and manipulation. The plot, driven by a series of outrageously ramped-up coincidences, sets up a tale so implausibly fluffy, you wonder if the characters would be able to set foot on anything solid if they happened to come across it. A slow-mo shot of snortin' bull snot is about as close as things gets to a sense of gritty reality.

Britt Robinson (who played Angie McAlister on TV's Under the Dome) is Sophia, a Wake Forest University student who falls for professional bull rider Luke (Scott Eastwood, son of Clint), which threatens to put a wrinkle in her plans for a post-graduate internship at a prestigious New York art institute. One dark, rainy night after their first date, they come across a wrecked car and its badly injured driver, Ira (Alan Alda), whose own story then begins to unspool in flashbacks as the rapt Sophia visits him in the hospital, reading aloud to him from the box of letters he's saved over the years from the love of his life, his late wife, Ruth.

Like the big bowl of mac and cheese Luke says is his favorite dish, it's all mostly a bunch of squishy, deep-dish goo—but hey, it does look pretty good. The on-location photography, in and around Wilmington, N.C., is picture-perfect, which adds to the feel of dreamy romantic fantasy. Scott Eastwood—who bears an uncanny resemblance to his famous father in his early acting days—is a bona fide hunk, and time seems to slow down every time the camera pans across his sculpted, shirtless torso (which is often). Pay attention to the actors who play the younger versions of Ira and Ruth, Jack Huston and Oona Chaplin, not only because they make Ira and Ruth's story so much more interesting and compelling than Luke and Sophia's, but because you're watching the progeny of Hollywood royalty: He's the grandson of legendary actor-director John Huston, and her granddaddy was silent-movie icon Charlie Chaplin.

The Longest Ride likely won't convert any newcomers to the Nicholas Sparks fold. But if you're already a fan, hey, saddle up: This bull's for you.

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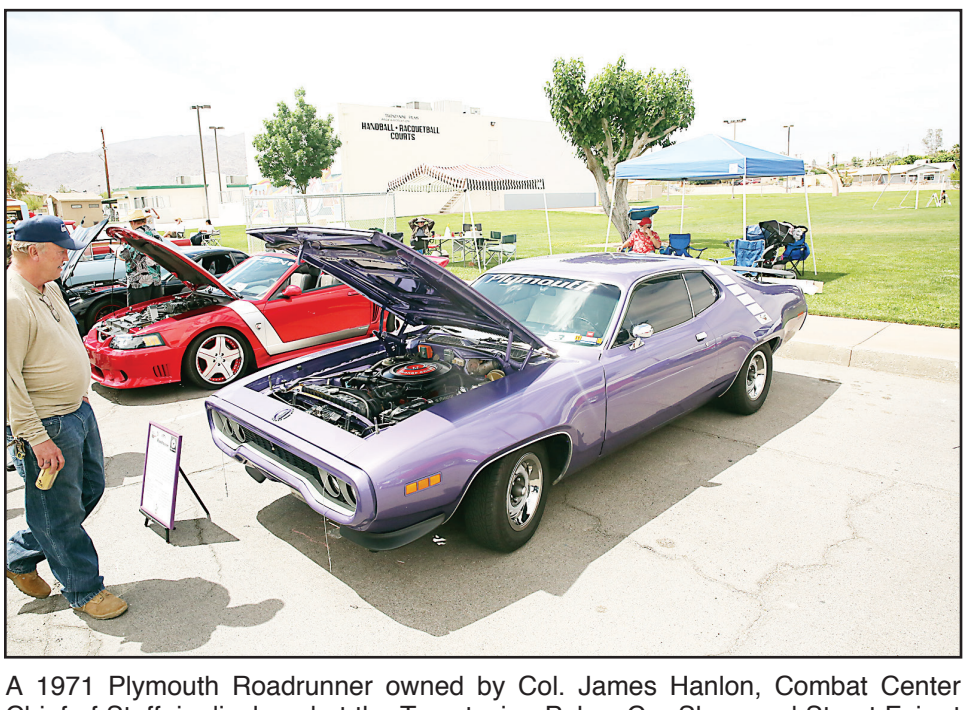
Combat Center Firefighters talk about the installations fire engine during the Twentynine Palms Car Show and Street Fair at Luckie Park in Twentynine Palms Calif., Saturday. The Combat Center demonstrated static displays of military vehicles from Combat Logistics Battalion 7, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, the Combat Center Fire Department and Provost Marshal's Office.



A 1971 Plymouth Roadrunner owned by Col. James Hanlon, Combat Center Chief of Staff, is displayed at the Twentynine Palms Car Show and Street Fair at Luckie Park in Twentynine Palms Calif., Saturday. Hanlon was a guest judge at the car show and handed out the Commanding General's choice trophy.

Raquel McBrayer, 9, daughter of Lesly McBrayer, tries on the Light Armored Vehicle driver's helmet as Lance Cpl. Davin Bentz, LAV Crewman, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, native of Neosho, Mo., explains what he does as the driver during the Twentynine Palms Car Show and Street Fair at Luckie Park in Twentynine Palms Calif., Saturday.

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 Calif., Saturday. The soap-box derby races took place on Joe Davis Dr. between Marine Ave. and Wainwright Ave.

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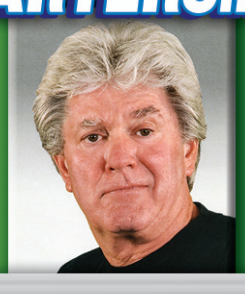
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Harley-Davidson motorcycles are displayed during the Twentynine Palms Car Show and Street Fair at Luckie Park in Twentynine Palms Calif., Saturday. More than 65 Vehicles were entered in the car show.