

ITF Engineer Platoon sets charges for MCOTEA assessment



Sgt. Brenton A. Slover, squad leader, Engineer Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, observes the detonation of M1A2 Bangalore torpedoes during a Marine Corps Operational Test and Evaluation Activity assessment aboard the Combat Center, Sunday.

INTERVIEW AND
 PHOTOS BY CPL. PAUL
 S. MARTINEZ

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. - Marines with Engineer Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, began their Marine Corps Operational Test and Evaluation Activity assessment at Range 107, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California, March 22, 2015.

The platoon began their assessment by breaking up into fire teams to conduct a 400 meter movement that would lead them to their first obstacle: an eight-foot tall steel storage container. Each fire team carried two kits of M1A2 Bangalore torpedoes weighing approximately 150 pounds. Teams worked together to get each other and their demolitions over the container.

Afterward, the teams prepared for a hasty breach by advancing over a berm and to their target: concertina wire. Moving behind the concealment of smoke



Marines with Engineer Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, sweep for mines during a Marine Corps Operational Test and Evaluation Activity assessment aboard the Combat Center, Monday.

grenades, the Marines snapped their Bangalore torpedoes in place. Once charges were primed, they took cover behind the berm, as the targets were destroyed.

Fire teams were randomized during the assessment to allow the data collectors to assess as many variables as possible. In addition, each Marine

wore a heart rate monitor and Global Positioning System device to accurately record data.

As we randomize, it gives (the engineers) a chance to experience multiple roles as a combat engineer, and it will later on make them better Marines once we conclude this assessment and send them

to their next command, said Sgt. Brenton A. Slover, squad leader, Engineer Plt., H&S Co., GCEITF.

Following their hasty breach, the Marines conducted a mile and a half movement with approximately 40 pounds of gear to Range 108 for their next task, using a shape charge to blow a hole in the ground, with a cratering charge set after.

"The hikes aren't too bad, but getting over the steel container is definitely a team effort," said Cpl. Joshua J. Syverson, combat engineer, Engineer Plt., H&S Co., GCEITF. "The hasty breach also requires Marines to work together down to the last man."

The following day, the platoon continued their assessment by conducting a four and a half mile movement to Range 110 with a fighting load of approximately 40 pounds. Upon arrival, the Marines switched to their 20-pound assault packs and moved on to using compact metal detectors to mine sweep a distance of 500 meters. Their goal was to detect and remove simulated

See **ITF pg. A6**

First RAB meeting held aboard Combat Center



Laurie Craparotta, Resident Advisory Board advocate and wife of Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, talks to Combat Center patrons about the RAB at the board's first meeting held at the Ocotillo Heights Community Center, March 19.

LANCE CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

Combat Center residents came together for the first Resident Advisory Board meeting at the Ocotillo Community Center, March 19.

More than 20 people from Lincoln Military Housing neighborhoods on and off base attended the meeting for an introduction to what benefits the RAB will provide for installation residents.

"[The Board], provides a voice for the community, connects residents to the instillation and facilitates positive change," said Laurie Craparotta, RAB advocate and wife of Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General.

According to the LMH office, the RAB was created to promote the sharing of information in order to resolve issues and facilitate positive changes to improve the quality of life for service members and their families who live in base housing.

According to Craparotta, the board is comprised of volunteers from the different neighborhoods throughout the Combat Center who have a genuine interest in maintaining and improving the housing community.

"We want RAB members to be a liaison to [LMH]

See **RAB pg. A6**

Marine Corps' Top Shot

Every week, thousands of fans vote for the week on the best photograph, posted on the Corps' Facebook page. This weeks top shot comes from Gunnery Sgt. Ismael Pena.



He captured this photo of Marines conducting nighttime boat operations aboard the USS, Green Bay, at sea, March 11.

SPMAGTF Marines Learn Close Air Support Procedures

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CPL. CARSON GRAMLEY

UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - U.S. Marines with Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force - Crisis Response - Central Command, used their joint fires and communication skills to teach a handful of infantry Marines the ins and

outs of close air support, in the Central Command area of operations, March 19.

The instructors, from 1st Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company and Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, were Joint Fires Observers and Joint Terminal Attack Controllers. They are trained in the 12-step process used to communicate

See **Support pg. A6**



Sgt. Frederick Miller, Joint Fires Observer, 1st Air Naval Ground Liaison Company, Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force - Crisis Response - Central Command, simulates a close air support scenario by communicating with a foot patrol during a training exercise in the Central Command area of operations, March 19.



Reprinted from the Observation Post
 Story by Cpl. Jack Rucker
 March 22, 1961

Landing field benefits while Engineer Company trains

Delta Company, Seventh Engineer Battalion is now conducting a full-scale training exercise that will serve a two-fold purpose here, according to Captain Gerald B. Cornwall, Company Commander.

In addition to the training value of the exercise the Company will accomplish a rehabilitation of the existing main runway at the landing field before the completion of the training on May 22.

The Company Equipment Officer, Warrant Officer Lonnie S. Chavaz is assisting the Company Commander in the overall supervision of the training exercise. WO Chavaz pointed out that the

Company has added 15 dump trucks with operators from their parent organization at Camp Pendleton for the exercise. For the duration of the exercise Gunner Chavez said the men will work a six-day week.

Captain Cornwall outlined the work which will be accomplished as they go through the various phases of their training. The main project is to lengthen the Base landing strip 1000 feet to make that strip a useable 5000 feet long and 200 feet wide.

Captain Cornwall said the dump trucks will haul approximately 50,000 cubic yards of gravel material during the exercise. This material

will be spread, compacted and graded on the runway once the old metal matting, now in place since 1940, has been removed.

Construction specialists of the Company will then be given further training in the laying of asphalt mat which will act as a dust pallet on the rehabilitated runway.

Once the engineers have completed the necessary base work they will undertake the task of putting down new pieced steel planking to replace the old worn matting removed earlier. The new matting will cover the entire 5000 feet of new runway which will then accommodate multi-engine aircraft.

Captain Cornwall pointed out that this is a very important training exercise and will in addition provide increased facilities vital to the landing strip.

Medical evacuation facilities will be increased as well as enabling many other aircraft to land, discharge and take on passengers here that previously had to fly on to larger fields in the area.

With the increased traffic on the highway to and from the airstrip caused by the dump trucks, Captain Cornwall has asked patience of motorists during the approximately 30 days the hauling phase of the training will continue.

CROSSWORD

- Across**
- 1 ___ moss (mulch for gardening)
 - 5 Cheapskate
 - 10 Fountain treat
 - 14 Quaint shoppe word
 - 15 Zola the writer
 - 16 A HOMES lake
 - 17 START OF A WORD LADDER
 - 18 Abducted
 - 19 WORD LADDER, step 2
 - 20 With 32-, 38-, 40-, 42-, and 48-Across, a weather saying
 - 23 Brackish
 - 26 Join up with
 - 27 Poisons
 - 28 Spheres
 - 32 See 20-Across
 - 33 Early start?
 - 34 Cable-modem alternative
 - 37 West of the movies
 - 38 See 20-Across
 - 39 ___ de Janeiro
 - 40 See 20-Across
 - 41 Medit. spouter
 - 42 See 20-Across
 - 43 Inclinations
 - 44 Frontiersman Daniel
 - 45 "Taken" star
 - 47 Not up to snuff
 - 48 See 20-Across
 - 53 WORD LADDER, part 3
 - 54 Clothing designer Perry
 - 55 END OF THE WORD LADDER
 - 59 Golf's ___ Aoki
 - 60 Detroit 11
 - 61 Toasted breakfast brand
 - 62 Bottled water brand
 - 63 Peanuts' Peppermint
 - 64 Floor model

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- Down**
- 1 Hill biggie
 - 2 Yale grad
 - 3 Brouhaha
 - 4 Like some long runs
 - 5 Measure in Manchester
 - 6 Desktop brand
 - 7 Turban sporter
 - 8 TVA product
 - 9 Clinton's A.G.
 - 10 Brawls
 - 11 Greet the morn
 - 12 Last straw
 - 13 State south of Ky.
 - 21 FAQ response
 - 22 "Tasty!"
 - 23 Marge Simpson's sister
 - 24 Like bustards and buzzards
 - 25 Felt good about
 - 28 Tees off
 - 29 Certain online request
 - 30 They comprise eternities
 - 31 Singer ___ Del Rey
 - 33 ___ Morgana
 - 34 Dangle limply
 - 35 Italian cathedral city
 - 36 Schlimazel
 - 41 "'Rent" heroine
 - 42 Talked turkey?
 - 43 "Rocky"
 - 44 Freeloader

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Last week's answers

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

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 - STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.
 - K Smoke Shop, 5865A Adobe Rd.
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 - Puff's Tobacco Mart, 57063 29 Palms Hwy.
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 - 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

Amber Albuquerque, N.M. Lifestyle Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills program manager

BILDERAIN

Amber Bilderain, program manager, Lifestyle Insights, Networking, Knowledge, and Skills, native of Albuquerque, N.M., has been involved with the Marine Corps for more than 18 years.

> **I've been part of** the Marine Corps for a long time, both as a Marine and as a spouse. I love the Marine Corps and I'm very passionate about it. It's definitely a big part of my life. I'm proud of being a spouse but I'm also proud of working with the spouses.

> **I joined the Marine Corps** in May, 1997 and I got to the Combat Center in December of that same year. I reached my end of active service in 2001 then came back on orders in 2003 with my reserve unit.

> **I joined because** I knew that I wasn't ready for college. I needed some discipline before trying to go to school full time and the Marine Corps got me settled down and focused.

> **I talked to** the Army Recruiter before the Marine Corps recruiter, and he was kind of appealing to the side of me that was a wild teenager. As soon as I talked to the Marine Corps recruiter it was more like 'we work hard, we play hard' and I thought if I'm going to be anything, I'm going to be the best.

> **My husband and I** went to [Marine Corps Base Camp Hansen] in Okinawa for three years, then we asked to come back here. We wanted to come back because we love the community and we love the small town. We had a lot of friends that retired here so we still had a big support group.

> **I'll be married** 14 years in May. We have three children, our oldest Jaden is 14, Gianna is 10 and Gena is 4, they keep me busy outside of work.

> **I like** hiking, snowboarding and I especially like Muay Thai boxing. I have spent about a year and a half training with Fight Club 29 on base.

> **Being here,** I love that I can go snowboarding within an hour and a half or I can go to the beach and try surfing in the same day.

> **I've been snowboarding** since I was 19. Over the years, I've tried to learn something new every time I go and now I get to teach my kids. I'm really drawn to the mountains and when I'm up there, my head's clear and it's just me time.

> **My oldest child** is not sure what he wants to do. This past Christmas we were out walking around and he says 'I really think I want to be either a Marine or a cop.' It's so important to me that he took an interest in the Marine Corps. I'm very proud and I would definitely support him.

> **When my husband** was deployed in 2003, I was here as a reservist. Getting involved as a spouse, I had to learn what it's like getting information and connecting with your Marine. It was a neat transformation and I definitely like that I can relate to both sides.

> **I've been with L.I.N.K.S** for seven years. In the program we teach family members about the Marine Corps lifestyle, and I get to talk about something I love. The most rewarding part of my job is working with our volunteers.

> **The history,** traditions and the pride we take in everything we do as Marines is something that is going to



stay with me for the rest of my life. I love the loyalty aspect of it and having that brotherhood, but the pride is something that has shaped my life.

> **What stands out** to me is the

people I served with. We still keep in touch and some of them are even my children's godparents, because that's how close we are. I can definitely say my favorite part about being a Marine was the Marines.

INTERVIEW AND PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

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INTERVIEW AND PHOTOS BY PFC. LEVI SCHULTZ

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. - 40 Marines from Marine Wing Support Squadrons 374 and 372 banded together to complete the refurbishing and extension project on the Strategic Expeditionary Landing Field at Camp Wilson, Monday.

The Marines worked together to replace the old sections of the runway and expand the SELF's taxiway from 72 feet to 96 feet in an effort to increase mission readiness and allow the airfield to accommodate the landing and takeoff of larger aircraft.

"Our goal is to get the airfield ready for use in between the [Integrated Training Exercises]," said Master Sgt. Thomas Davis, Expeditionary Airfield Services Chief, MWSS-374. "It's important that we keep it safe and ready for aircraft using the landing field."

Over time, rubber builds up on the aluminum landing field due to aircraft landing, resulting in the non-skid surface wearing out. This can affect aircraft landing if not properly maintained.

"Our work can be expected to take about a month," Davis said. "With about two or three projects a year, we get

busy at times."

The construction of a SELF begins with creating a sizable flat terrain using heavy equipment. Connectable panels are then laid down to create the runway.

"The heavy equipment operators do an awesome job," Davis said. "It's up to them to lay the foundation. If it's off a little bit that can be a big deal."

Davis estimates that the Marines lay approximately 40 thousand square feet of matting per day. The aluminum, 6-foot panels weigh 77 pounds whereas the 12-foot panels weigh 144 pounds and take two man teams to move effectively.

"The primary purpose of the SELF is to support the ITX and pre-deployment training," said Staff Sgt. John Schoolfield, quality insurance inspector, MWSS-374. "Supplies are often shipped on base through aircraft rather than ground transport."

The SELF, designed for sustained operations, plays a significant role in the training of Marines aboard the Combat Center. MWSS-374's maintenance process is an example of how the Marine Corps brings together Marines of different occupational specialties to form a powerful, cohesive unit.



Lance Cpl. Tanner J. Clayson, Expeditionary Airfield Systems Technician, Marine Wing Support Squadron 372, pounds an aluminum panel into place during a refurbishing project on the Strategic Expeditionary Landing Field at Camp Wilson, Monday.



Capt. Christian Carlson, Motor Transportation Company Commander, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, assists a Marine with an aluminum panel that is a part of the new matting on the Strategic Expeditionary Landing Field at Camp Wilson, Monday.



Marines from Marine Wing Support Squadrons 374 and 372 work together to lay new matting for the Strategic Expeditionary Landing Field at Camp Wilson, Monday.

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Combat Center facilitates fund drive breakfast for NMCRS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. - Members of the Active Duty Fund Drive hosted a breakfast in support of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society at the Officer's Club, Monday.

The ADFD was established to support NMCRS by the Secretary of the Navy and is an entity of the Navy and Marine Corps. NMCRS is a nonprofit organization that provides financial assistance, education, and other programs and services to Marines, sailors and their families in times of need.

"What I'm asking for this morning is 100% contact and I think it's important that it's quality contact," said Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General. "We'd like to have people from Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society go down to the units to give the brief and explain to the Marines and sailors exactly what the society does and demonstrate to them how we can rely on it."

ADFD is a critical source of NMCRS' revenue. This is the fourth year the drive has been held and it lasts for a four-week period on each base. Marines and sailors of the Combat Center can continue to donate until April 17. The money that is donated will be given back to a Marine, sailor or eligible dependents.

The purpose behind the breakfast was to introduce



Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, addresses attendees during a breakfast coordinated by members of the Active Duty Fund Drive at the Officer's Club, Monday.

the ADFD to unit commanders and solicit their support in making sure that the NMCRS is successful in raising the funds needed to sustain the program.

"When your senior leadership is involved, the ability for your active duty forces to understand the purpose of the fund drive is better translated," said Raymond Caldwell, director, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society.

The breakfast was organized and facilitated by ADFD coordinators. They coordinate events such as golf tournaments, car washes and food sales all with the intent of raising money for NMCRS. Units are permitted to raise money through various methods as long as it's approved by legal and supported by their respective command.

"Events like this bring awareness to the society,

how we operate, and the things that we do that are behind doors that people don't normally see," Caldwell said. "It shows the importance of the active duty forces supporting us, because when they do, we can continue to support them."

To donate to the NMCRS, or for more information contact 830-6323 or visit their website at www.nmc.rs.org.



Combat Center Marines help themselves to a breakfast coordinated by members of the Active Duty Fund Drive at the Officer's Club, Monday.

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ITF from pg. A1

enemy explosives buried beneath the sand. The 1371 military occupational specialty is open to females, but they are not currently operating in units within the Marine Divisions. Despite this, the Marines in the platoon call on their initial combat engineer training and teamwork to accomplish their tasks. "Sometimes (this assessment) is challenging," said Cpl. Alicia Hernandez, combat engineer, Engineer Plt., H&S Co., GCEITF. "Being that this is our (military occupational specialty), I think it has been manageable for all of us so far."

With their mine sweep complete, the Marines were transported to Range 114 for their final endeavor: cache reduction. Marines loaded 32 155mm shells weighing approximately 95 pounds each on the back of a seven-ton truck. The shells were then taken to the detonation zone, where the Marines used shovels to dig eight holes. They proceeded to place four shells in each hole, along with C4 charges and detonation cord in preparation for their reduction. Once charges were set, all Marines moved to a bunker where they observed the successful deto-

nation of their targets. "I feel this assessment is a really good thing because it shows where the Marines stand as engineers," Slover said. "It gives a fair chance for the Marines (to operate at different levels)." From October 2014 to July 2015, the GCEITF will conduct individual and collective level skills training in designated ground combat arms occupational specialties in order to facilitate the standards-based assessment of the physical performance of Marines in a simulated operating environment performing specific ground combat arms tasks.

RAB from pg. A1

and a friendly face that residents will not hesitate to go to and talk about the positive and negative issues concerning housing," said Eric Tili, district manager, LMH. RAB volunteer positions are still open in some neighborhoods. 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, no housing violation reports on file with the Military Housing Office, LMH or Provost

Marshall's Office, and must volunteer to speak for the community as a whole at the RAB meetings. As discussed in the meeting, board members might not see change right away, but their efforts now will pave the way for an improved housing community for future families that will call the Combat Center home. The next RAB meeting is scheduled for April 16. For more information on the RAB, contact Ken Tinquist via email at ken.tinquist@usmc.mil

Support from pg. A1

and guide fixed and rotary-wing aircraft into position to support ground units. The class was 10 days long and covered all the basics of when, where, why and how to use close air support assets.

"We really want them to walk away with a general understanding of how the whole close air support process works, from the beginning to the end," said Cpl. Michael Owens, JFO with Company E, 2/7, SPMAGTF - CR - CC. "They won't be perfect, but at least they'll know what needs to happen next and how to direct the aircraft onto the proper target."

The Marines began the class by learning the different roles they might assume when handling close air support. They watched videos and did practical exercises to get an idea of what the situation looks like from the perspective not only of the one calling for support, but the pilots as well.

"Typically the JTAC would be in the command building, but the JFO remains out on the ground with the patrol so he can give the pilots a good idea of what it looks like on the ground and request support from the aircraft," said Owens.

After learning the different roles and seeing some examples of their responsibilities, it was time for the Marines to go out and practice.

"We had them do a little patrol from one side of

the base to the other and we, the instructors, called out some targets so they can practice getting their 12-step process down to see what it really sounds and feels like to communicate with the pilots," said Owens.

The GCE was asked to host the class with hopes that they might be able to teach some of the junior Marines of 2/7 important knowledge they can use when they eventually start filling leadership billets within their companies and moving onto advanced courses.

"They're not qualifying as a JFO, but it's like a primer before that," said Owens. "This will get them a quick understanding into what close air support really is, so that way when they get into their advanced courses, like Advanced Infantryman's Course or Advanced Mortarman's Course, they will have some kind of background knowledge."

Aside from the school and leadership aspect, the instructors emphasize the importance of Marines getting the training; after all they're the ones on the ground who will need the support.

Owen said, the training is important for them because sometimes they might not have a JFO available to go out with the patrol, or he may get injured if the situation escalates; so having the capability to call for support could save lives.



Lance Cpl. Rico Heritage and Cpl. Timothy Russell, Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force - Crisis Response - Central Command, provides notional cover fire during a Close Air Support training exercise in the Central Command area of operations, March 19.

After attending the course, the instructors say they believe the Marines have a good knowledge base and understanding on how to use air assets. "Most of these guys

are mortarman and didn't really know much about close air support at the beginning of this one-week course, but they learned a lot and I feel confident with them con-

trolling or providing terminal guidance for close air support," said Sgt. Frederick Miller, a JFO with 1st ANGLICO and instructor for the course.

The GCE continues

to offer classes and training on close air support to improve the capabilities and readiness of SPMAGTF - CR - CC for the remainder of the deployment.

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Combat Center shooting team sets gold standard

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Gold shooting team was recognized by Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, and Sgt. Maj. Karl Villalino, Combat Center Sergeant Major, for their performance during this year's Western Division Shooting Competition, March 20, 2015.

The shooting team presented

Combat Center leadership with a pistol trophy earned during the WDSC, which started February 20 and ended March 16. It was open to all Marines stationed in the contiguous U.S., west of the Mississippi River.

Sgt. James Marker, coach, MCAGCC Gold, was presented a Navy Achievement Medal for his superior performance while serving as coach for the team and assuming a staff non-commissioned officer position as a NCO.



Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Gold Shooting Team was congratulated for its performance during this year's Western Division Shooting Competition, March 20. The Marine's collective effort earned them a pistol trophy which they presented to Combat Center leadership.

Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, presents the Navy Achievement Medal to Sgt. James Marker, coach, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Gold, for his performance coaching the installation's shooting team, March 20. The MCAGCC Gold shooting team presented Combat Center leadership with a pistol trophy awarded during this year's Western Division Shooting Competition.



Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, stands at attention during the reading of a citation for the Navy Achievement Medal to be awarded to Sgt. James Marker, coach, MCAGCC Gold, March 20. Marker received the medal for filling the role of a staff non-commissioned officer while ranked as a corporal and excelling in the position.



Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, gives a coin to Lance Cpl. Egber Piza, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Gold, for representing the Combat Center as a shooter at the Western Division Shooting Competition, March 20. The members of MCAGCC Gold received a coin from the commanding general for their excellent performance at this year's Western Division Shooting Competition.

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TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



I want to re-introduce you to a tremendous lady who is the epitome of what it is to be a positive thinker. In other words, a tough minded optimist.

I have had the joy of knowing Frieda Burdette almost 18 years. She is a wonderful person with a genuine concern for the welfare of others and a generous supporter of many worthy causes that really make a practical and pragmatic difference for the good in many lives.

Frieda is truly an amazing person at 76 years and has earned a well deserved reputation for leadership in sharing the beauties of our incredible world with her well publicized and documented group titled "Frieda's Happy Hoofers." They have been hiking together since 2008.

Frieda invites anyone and everyone of any age, Ethnicity, sexual orientation, church membership, political affiliation, etc. to join the group and simply enjoy. No pledge of regular participation is required. Why not give it a try. The first event is Monday, April 6—High View Nature Trail, Black Rock, a 2.3 mile moderately steep trail of 355 feet gain. Meet at the Black Rock Campground parking lot near the ranger station, 9 AM. Lunch at Carrows.

The next hike is Friday, April 17—Pipes Canyon, Pioneertown. We'll hike to the stone house and back at 2 1/2 miles. Meet at Pappy and Harriets's Parking Lot, 9 AM. Lunch at Pappy and Harriet's.

The third hike—Whitewater, an easy walk around the Fish Ponds. Meet at Park and Ride, Kickapoo Trail, Yucca Valle, 10 AM. Bring a picnic lunch.

Frieda's telephone number is 1-760-364-2872. Join the fun!

This column sponsored by:

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3rd LAR spouses get creative at Annual 'Wolfpack' Spouses Mixer



Tricia Biddle, spouse, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion speaks to Jillian King, family readiness officer, 3rd LAR during the 4th Annual 'Wolfpack' Spouses Mixer at Twentynine Palms Inn, March 19.

BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. - Small glass bottles, filled with an array of colorful candy, sit at the entrance of a sunny room. At the neck of each bottle, a note is attached which reads 'drink me'. Tables fill the room boasting decorative center pieces some shaped like different animals, others filled with vibrant flower arrangements. The guests are dressed in eccentric garments and they talk amongst themselves, happy to share in the wackiness of each other's company.

3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance

Battalion's family readiness program hosted their 4th Annual 'Wolfpack' Spouses Mixer at the Twentynine Palms Inn, March 19.

"It's great to see that the spouses are here," said Sgt. Maj. Edward Zapata, sergeant major, 3rd LAR. "They're taking an interest in the battalion and wanting to be a part of the battalion's family readiness. They have an opportunity to decompress and have fun."

Each year, the mixer is assigned a different theme and this year's theme was the Mad Hatter. The spouses had the opportunity to showcase their personalities through their vibrant hats. The event

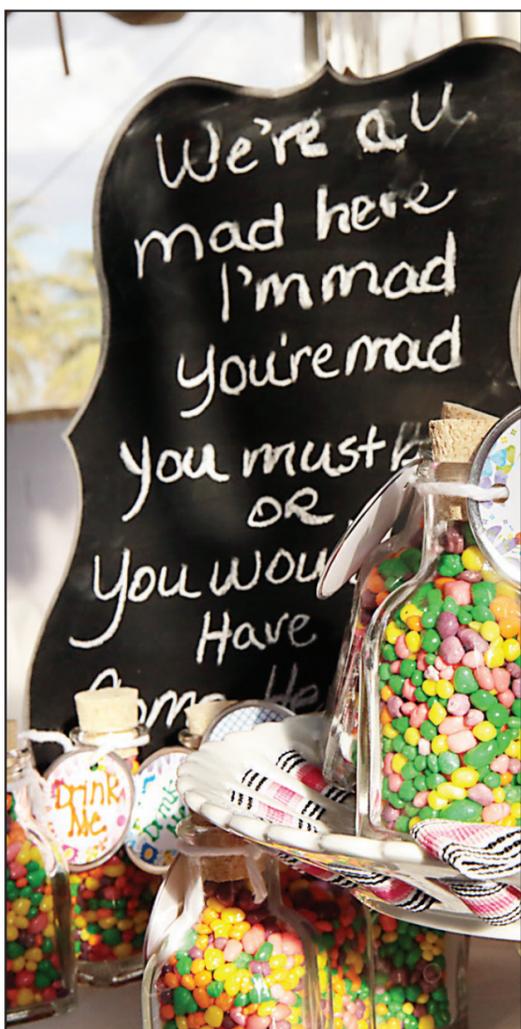
was held in an effort to foster a strong sense of community amongst the spouses and remind them that they are always part of the 'Wolfpack' family.

"When Marines walk into their unit, they immediately have that network of support. But that's not necessarily the case with spouses," said Jillian King, family readiness officer, 3rd LAR. "Events like this give the spouses the opportunity to cut loose and gain more confidence so that they feel comfortable reaching out to each other."

At the event, food was served, prizes were given away, and a guest speaker with Families Over Coming Under Stress

addressed the attendees. The guest speaker coordinated an activity for the spouses to get better acquainted with one another. Each woman was given a list of various hobbies and challenged to find a person who found interest in that activity. The game provided the spouses with a chance to learn more about each another.

"When you bring the wives in, you make them feel like part of the family," Zapata said. "The wives [whom] have been in this battalion a while can start communicating with the new ones. When they know that they can communicate with each other, they don't have to feel alone."



Small jars of candy sit at the entrance to the room of 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion's 4th Annual 'Wolfpack' Spouses Mixer at Twentynine Palms Inn, March 19.



3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion spouses attend the 4th Annual 'Wolfpack' Spouses Mixer at Twentynine Palms Inn, March 19.

3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion spouses talk amongst themselves during the 4th Annual 'Wolfpack' Spouses Mixer at Twentynine Palms Inn, March 19.



Liberty Call



Combat Center Events

The Wood Hobby Shop provides low-cost laser engraving services to imprint unique messages and designs onto almost any surface. Patrons can also purchase woodworking supplies and lumber to build or repair your own woodwork, craft and hobby items. Patrons using the woodworking machinery are required to attend a free safety class first. For more information, contact 760-830-7214.

The Education and Career Fair will be held at the West Gym bldg. 1518. If you are looking to further your education, develop new skills or looking to explore new career fields, come by and see what the fair has to offer. Be sure to bring your resume. Suggested attire is business dress or uniform. For more information, contact 760-830-7225.

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 Single Marine Program and MCCS will be holding a 6th annual Military Appreciation Day on March 29 at the Ironwood Country Club. The day will include lunch, dinner, round of golf and T-shirt prizes to all participants. The event is free and open to the first 65 Marines and sailors to register. Transportation there and back will be provided. For more information, contact 760-830-5054.

The Officer's Club will be holding an Easter brunch on April 5 from 10 a.m. to 1 a.m. It will cost \$19.95 for adults, \$7.95 for children ages seven to 12 and children seven and under eat for free. The brunch will be a buffet featuring a carving station, a waffle station, an omelet station, and a dessert station. It is open to all ranks and civilians. Reservations are highly recommended. For more information, contact 760-830-6610.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, March 27

6 p.m. – The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out Of Water, PG
8:30 p.m. – Seventh Son, PG-13
11 p.m. – Jupiter Ascending, PG-13

Saturday, March 28

10:30 a.m. – Wall-E, G, Free Admission
1 p.m. – McFarland, USA, PG
4 p.m. – The DUFF, PG-13
6:30 p.m. – Focus, R
9 p.m. – Hot Tube Time Machine 2, R
11:30 p.m. – The Lazarus Effect, PG-13

Sunday, March 29

12:30 p.m. – Kingsman: The Secret Service, R
3:30 p.m. – The Lazarus Effect, PG-13
5:30 p.m. – The DUFF, PG-13
7:30 p.m. – Hot Tube Time Machine 2, R

Monday, March 30

7 p.m. – The Duff, PG-13
Tuesday, March 31
7 p.m. – Jupiter Ascending, PG-13

Wednesday, April 1

5 p.m. – The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out Of Water, PG
7 p.m. – Seventh Son, PG-13

Thursday, April 2

5 p.m. – Hot Tube Time Machine 2, R
7 p.m. – Kingsman: The Secret Service, R

Friday, April 3

5:30 p.m. – Son of God, PG-13, Free Admission
8:30 p.m. – Focus, R
11 p.m. – The Lazarus Effect, PG-13



Walking Dead

Olivia Wilde gets lost in a clunky spook house of recycled sci-fi hokum

NEIL POND

"The Lazarus Effect"
Starring Olivia Wilde and Mark Duplass
Directed by David Gelb
Rated PG-13

From the opening shot, you know something bad's going to happen.

As a group of hot-shot young scientists, lead by Olivia Wilde and Mark Duplass, attempt to resuscitate a dead pig—their latest chapter in a search for a breakthrough they hope will ultimately benefit coma patients—you can sense the dread, even if they don't.

"You are playing God with a bunch of dead animals!" one of them later tells another.

Of course, that's it! But they learn that lesson too late. Perhaps if they'd only looked a little closer at the title of their own movie,

or watched any number of other films over the years, or even paid more attention to what they were doing. Lazarus, as many other folks seem to know, is a character in the New Testament who was reported to have died and been raised back to life by Jesus; his name has since become enshrined as secular shorthand for anything wrongly thought to be deceased.

The idea of "man playing God" is an ancient one, older even than the tale of Lazarus, as old as ancient mythology. But it really took pop-cultural root with the character of the Frankenstein monster, created by novelist Mary Shelley in the 1800s and later turned into an entertainment icon in movies, TV, cartoons and even breakfast cereal. The fingerprints of Frankenstein are all

over just about any sci-fi or horror "reanimation" tale that's ever followed it, including this one.

Here, Duplass's character is named Frank, and it's the beautiful Wilde who becomes the "monster" after an incident in the lab goes horribly awry.

The Lazarus Effect starts off with some smart, intense ideas, sharply batting around topics of science, faith, mortality and the financial realities that drive modern-day scientific research. But the dialogue soon enough veers into gobbledygook and the plot disintegrates into a clunky haunted-house hodgepodge: flickering lights, fiery visions of clawing hands and a little girl in hell, and Zoe popping up from the shadows—or from underneath a sheet.

Zoe can read people's thoughts, complete their sentences and move things with her mind. She has super-senses. "I think something's wrong," she tells Frank, in a moment of clari-

ty...and terror. "I can see things; I can hear things." Then she vomits up a torrent of white stuff. Turns out the lab accident has made her super-smart, utilizing all her brain instead of just part of it. And all that intelligence, for some unexplained reason, has made her angry...really, really angry.

Most viewers will be angry, too, at this mismanaged mess of a monster movie, which strands its two talented stars in a spook house of recycled sci-fi and horror-show hokum and loftier concepts lifted from other, far better films—like Carrie, The Shining, The Omen, The Exorcist...and, of course, Frankenstein. This sub-par scare-flick entry in the "back from the dead" genre starts smart but gets dumber as it goes, crash-lands on a downer note that I can't imagine will please anyone, and ultimately fails to bring any encouraging signs of new life to a tale that's nearly as old as life itself.

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