



# 2015

*Year in review*

Looking back on 2015, the Combat Center's achievements paved the way for excellence in 2016. The past year's accomplishments were met in the field, on base, and in the community. Coordinating realistic combat training exercises brought multiple units, services, and coalition partners together. Conducting relevant live-fire combined arms training, urban operations, and Coalition-level integration training as well as providing the facilities, services, and support responsive to the needs of resident organizations, Marines, Sailors, and their families has helped strengthen the Marine Corps as a force in readiness.

## A LOOK BACK AT **Marine Corps gains new leadership**

# 2015

BIOGRAPHY INFORMATION FROM WWW.DEFENSE.GOV

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### Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Robert Neller

General Robert B. Neller assumed the duties of Commandant of the Marine Corps on September 24th, 2015. A native of East Lansing, Michigan, he graduated from the University of Virginia and was commissioned in May 1975. He previously served as the Commander, Marine Forces Command from June 2014 to September 2015.

General Neller has served as an infantry officer at all levels. He commanded the Marine Security Force Company Panama during Operations JUST CAUSE and PROMOTE LIBERTY, 3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion during Operation RESTORE HOPE in Somalia, 6th Marine Regiment, 3d Marine Division and Marine Forces Central Command.

His Joint assignments include service in the Policy Division of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Casteau, Belgium, and as the Director of Operations (J3) of the Joint Staff in Washington, D.C.

He has also served as Executive Officer, 7th Marine Regiment, G-3, 2d Marine Division, G-3, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Assistant Division Commander for the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions, and Deputy Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM 05-07.

General Neller is a graduate of the Advanced Armor Officer Course, the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, the NATO Defense College and the Armed Forces Staff College. He holds a M.A. in Human Resource Management from Pepperdine University.



### Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Ronald Green

Sergeant Major Green assumed his current post as the 18th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps on February 20, 2015. A native of Jackson, Miss, he attended recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., in November 1983.

He has been meritoriously promoted to the ranks of private first class, lance corporal, corporal, sergeant and staff sergeant.

Throughout his career, Sergeant Major Green has been assigned numerous duties to include: field artillery cannoneer; field artillery nuclear projectileman; tower operator; drill instructor, senior drill instructor and drill master; battery section chief and battery gunnery sergeant, Assistant Marine Officer Instructor at Southern University and A&M College; first sergeant of Inspector-Instructor Staff, B Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment; and sergeant major of Headquarters Marine Corps Henderson Hall, Marine Corps Forces Europe/Marine Corps Forces Africa and First Marine Expeditionary Force.

He has deployed to Somalia with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) during Operation Restore Hope in 1993; to South America in support of Operation United Americas (UNITAS) in 2002; and with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2006.

Sergeant Major Green holds a B.S. in Cybersecurity and a M.S. in Cybersecurity Policy from the University of Maryland University College.



# —CHANGES in the CORPS—

Throughout its 240 years of rich history and tradition, the Marine Corps adapted and overcame many challenges to become the force in readiness that it is today. The last year was no exception, as the Corps took on many changes to adapt to the needs of an ever-evolving nation and world.

## Marine Raiders are back

In a brief formal ceremony at its headquarters in Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command momentarily deactivated its eight subordinate units, reactivating them immediately with new names and new battle colors bearing the Raiders' name, June 20.

## Large Scale Exercise 15

In 2015, the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command held Large Scale Exercise 15, an assessed MAGTF exercise at the Marine Expeditionary Brigade level composed of all four elements of the MAGTF with live maneuver elements. This year's LSE was the first to incorporate the Johnson Valley shared-use area. The MAGTF LSE is designed to enable live, virtual and constructive training for an MEB, with the MEB Command Element being the primary training audience. The LSE demonstrates the MAGTF's core capabilities within a joint and combined operating environment.

## All combat jobs open to women in the military

The Defense Department announced Dec. 3, 2015, that it will lift all gender-based restrictions on military service as of the new year. This historic change will clear the way for women to serve alongside men in combat arms units. Up until now, many combat related military occupational specialties were allotted exclusively to male service members.

## Additional hair style options

Marine Corps Uniform Board 215 determined female Marines are authorized to have braided or twisted hairstyle options that are professional and neat in appearance. These hairstyles may be easier for some to maintain in an expeditionary environment. The new rules were announced in Marine administrative message 622, and took effect Dec. 14.

### CROSSWORD

- Across**
- 1 One more time
  - 5 Hair goops
  - 9 It's usually wrapped
  - 13 Injurious to health
  - 15 Words of enlightenment
  - 16 War of 1812 battle site
  - 17 Deliver spam
  - 18 Judge's seat
  - 19 Stew ingredient
  - 20 "The Way of All Flesh" novelist
  - 23 N.F.L. stats
  - 24 Brazil resort
  - 25 Pushes
  - 28 "Good Will Hunting" co-star
  - 32 Behave badly
  - 35 Certain intersection
  - 36 Foofaraw
  - 37 Grate expectations?
  - 38 Hodges of the Dodgers
  - 39 Hair style
  - 41 CA ball club, briefly
  - 42 Go after, in a way
  - 43 Flips
  - 44 Apple's CEO
  - 48 Persian Gulf emirate
  - 49 Frequently, in poetry
  - 50 Member of an order
  - 53 He won an Oscar for his role in "The Paper Chase"
  - 57 Out of harm's way
  - 60 Furniture wood
  - 61 Pool
  - 62 Crude group?
  - 63 Rigatoni relative
  - 64 \_\_\_ dot
  - 65 Editor's mark
  - 66 Beekeeper of movies
  - 67 Gardener's spring purchase

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- Down**
- 1 Bikini blast
  - 2 Rover
  - 3 Midterms, e.g.
  - 4 2012 Nintendo debut
  - 5 Small ape
  - 6 Old Testament twin
  - 7 Fast time?
  - 8 Shut off
  - 9 Cosmonaut Shonin
  - 10 Tee off
  - 11 Evergreen
  - 12 Picker-upper
  - 14 Pastors, rabbis et al.
  - 21 Unwanted buildup
  - 22 Flub
  - 26 Olympic swimmer Janet
  - 27 Bulrush, e.g.
  - 28 Seductive West
  - 29 Like some walls
  - 30 Snakelike fish
  - 31 One of the friends on "Friends"
  - 32 Fountain treat
  - 33 Clarifying phrase
  - 34 SeaWorld whale
  - 38 Chap
  - 39 Starts, as a laptop
  - 40 Query
  - 42 Toy dog
  - 43 Vegan bean
  - 45 Take exception
  - 46 The Way
  - 47 Gingersnap, e.g.
  - 50 Author Zola
  - 51 Hanukkah pancake
  - 52 Massage
  - 54 Singer Young
  - 55 Deeply despise
  - 56 Hazzard County lawman
  - 57 Call for help
  - 58 Quick-witted
  - 59 Charge

### SUDOKU

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Last week's answers

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

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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

## THE BEST OF

# 2015

### SGT. HEATHER KEASLER

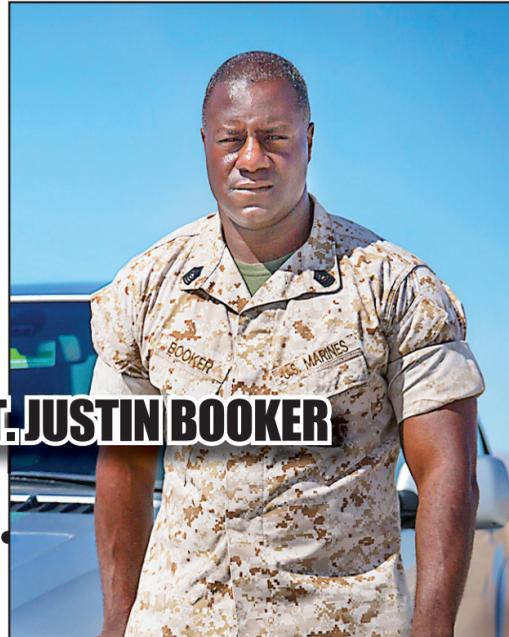
“My advice is don't get upset with the small obstacles life may throw at you. If you're healthy and alive, you'll always have something to be thankful for.”



The What I've Learned section of the Observation Post puts the spotlight on the unique characters who make up the Combat Center. It's a place where friends, family and fellow service members can learn from each individual's experience through their local newspaper. What I've Learned is a feature article where different Marines and sailors tell their story and views on life. The subject relays their experiences and our writers simply transcribe it. The people displayed are faces of the community; as they represent a snapshot of the Combat Center as a whole.

“I don't take as many risks as I did when I was 18, but sometimes in life, you have to take risks. You have to find the point where success and risk-taking meet.”

### MASTER SGT. JUSTIN BOOKER



### 1ST SGT. FRANK O. ROBINSON

“One thing I would want my Marines to know about me is that I care for each and every last one of them. I want to see them successful at all costs. I don't want to see any of them fail and even if I'm disciplining them, I still want them to know that I care about them.”



### COL. JOHN E. KASPERSKI

“Over the years, I've worked for great people, but more importantly I've worked with great Marines. I've been very lucky to have great non-commissioned officers who served around me. They kept me out of trouble for 29 years.”

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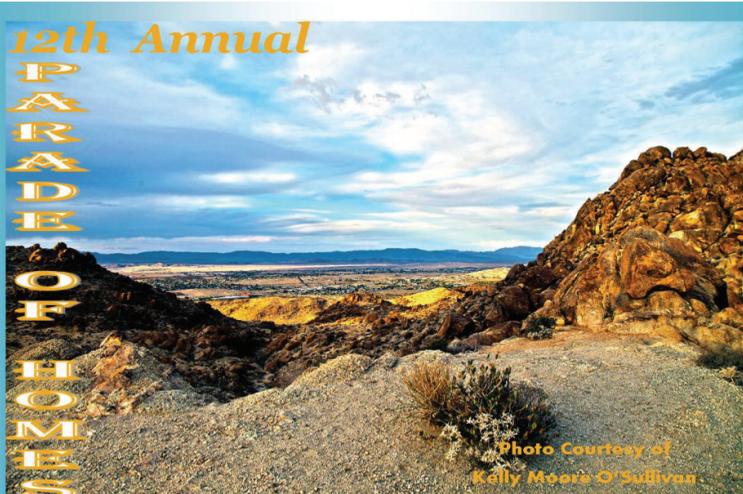
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# Training Highlights

## 7th Regiment maintains combat readiness



PHOTO BY CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

Lance Cpl. Luke Conrad, assaultman, Company I, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, advances toward an objective from an Assault Amphibious Vehicle during an assault on a Military Operation on Urbanized Terrain town on Range 210 during the Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation Exercise aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 19. Each company in 3/7 ran a dry-fire and live-fire assault evolution through the MOUT town.

## 'Lava Dogs' bring the heat



PHOTO BY SGT. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

Marines with B battery, 1st Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, provide support fire as part of Large Scale Exercise 15 in the vicinity of the Black Top Training Area, Aug. 15. The artillery fire supported a ground element during their assault on two objectives during the live-fire exercise.

## Ice-Breaker Drill increases mission readiness



PHOTO BY SGT. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

Staff Sgt. John Freeseha, instructor, Animal Packers Course, begins singing the Marine's Hymn after completing a plunge into freezing water during an Ice-Breaker Drill as part of Winter Mountain Leaders Course 1-15 at Levitt Lake, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif., Jan. 30. It was the first time in approximately three years since the drill was conducted at MCMWTC.

## 'Wolfpack' conducts Desert Scimitar-15



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

Light armored vehicles with 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion set up security during Exercise Desert Scimitar aboard the Combat Center, April 13. Throughout the exercise, 3rd LAR provided security, reconnaissance and screening operations for larger forces.

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The Combat Center's mission is to conduct relevant live-fire combined arms training, urban operations, and Joint/Coalition level integration training that promotes operational forces readiness. As the largest Marine Corps base in the world, the Combat Center does this by utilizing its more than 1000 square miles of training area to prepare units and accommodate all force sizes, up to Marine Expeditionary Brigade, for anything they might encounter in a deployed environment.

## Adding Lightning to Steel Knight



PHOTO BY SGT. ERIC KEENAN

An F-35B Lightning II aircraft stands ready for flight operations during Exercise Steel Knight at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California, Dec. 10. The F-35B is a single seat, single engine stealth multi-role fighter bringing the Marine Corps into a whole new generation of aircraft. Exercise Steel Knight allowed for Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121 and Marine Operational and Test Evaluation Squadron 22 to train on integrating the F-35B and find its place in the Marine Air Ground Task Force, while giving the ground forces of 1st Marine Division the ability to become familiar with it.

## 'Rhinos' support Steel Knight 2016



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

An F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, performs a conventional take-off at the Strategic Expeditionary Landing Field during Exercise Steel Knight 2016 aboard the Combat Center, Dec. 11. This year's iteration of Exercise Steel Knight works to advance 1st Marine Division's warfighting capabilities, to include interoperability between the ground and air forces and integration of the F-35B.

## Tanks assault through ITX 2-15



PHOTO BY CPL. WILLIAM HESTER

Assault amphibious vehicles are used to mobilize infantry units during the Integrated Training Exercise 2-15 Tank Mechanized Assault Course Feb. 2 at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms.

## 4th Marines Jump Through ITX 2-15



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

Lance Cpl. Bradley W. Walsh communicates with the rest of his convoy over the radio to maintain standard operating procedures Feb. 12 at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California, during Integrated Training Exercise 2-15.



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## TILE

# Giving back to the community

Combat Center Marines worked tirelessly to support local events and organizations throughout the Morongo Basin. The relationships fostered through these events provide the installation the ability to give back to the community which supports the mission of its service members. Throughout 2015, the Combat Center coordinated various visits and community relations events, on and off base, including the Pioneer Days parade, Morongo Canyon Preserve clean up, Banque Nationale de Paris Paribas Open and numerous K-9 demonstrations for Joshua Tree Elementary School.

## Combat Center takes part in Pioneer Days



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

The Combat Center Color Guard carries the colors during a ceremony following the Pioneer Days Parade at the Twentynine Palms Junior High School's Tom Nicoll Memorial Stadium in Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 17.

## Combat Center hosts annual LINKS CAX for spouses



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Sgt. Darren Westmoreland, military working dog handler, K-9 Unit, Provost Marshal's Office, demonstrates the capabilities of Baby, MWD, K-9 Unit, PMO, during the Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills Combined Arms Exercise for Spouses at Del Valle Field, Oct. 14. The K-9 Unit demonstrated the capabilities of several of their dogs during the event.

## Combat Center joins Salute



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

Sabryna Gromley, 11, student at Twentynine Palms Elementary, daughter of Staff Sgt. Michael Pugliese, aviation operations specialist, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, holds Louise, desert tortoise, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Division, during the City of Twentynine Palms' Salute to Those Who Serve celebration at the Twentynine Palms Junior High School's Tom Nicoll Memorial Stadium, Oct. 16.

## Combat Center Marines maintain Big Morongo Canyon Preserve



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Pfc. James Jones, student, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, removes a log from a trail at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, Morongo Valley, Calif., on National Public Lands Day, Sept. 26.

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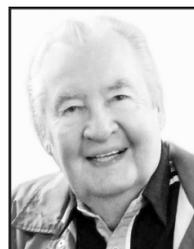
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### TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM



by Lou Gerhardt  
**Lalo Alvarez, vice-president of A.C.T. Tours, is an active supporter of the Morongo Basin Humane Society. I asked what drew him to that noble organization.**

Don't ask me why, but I had zero interest in owning a pet until I turned 49 years old. It was then that my ticker acted up and I was rushed to the hospital, where I underwent double bypass surgery. Afterward, perhaps for comfort, I felt an urge to get a dog.

At the time, I wasn't aware there were no-kill shelters like the Humane Society's. Instead, I found a small dog at a kill shelter, or shall I say, "He found me." That is a cliché, but Peques, as I named him, was the only caged mutt who didn't bark as I strode past his cage. Instead, his eyes studied me and seemed to sense my need. Little did I know until after I signed his release papers that he had been scheduled to be put to sleep the next day.

After a slow start, I grew to enjoy his presence. As I recuperated from my heart surgery, the dog never left my side. Then it was he who needed me: Peques, my new best friend, barely a year old, had a mild stroke and for two months had to be hand-fed and given water through a syringe. While I held his head, he looked straight into my eyes and accepted the situation. Truth be told, we both rescued each other.

That was five years ago and, despite being stricken at relatively young ages, the two of us are fine now. Peques has taught me that loving a pet can heal and change a person. I am a better man because of him.

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## I Won't Leave, Promise

A short story by Katlyne Wells  
Yucca Valley High School

She set her jaw in determination, staring up at her parents defiantly. She had stood by too long. She had been the perfect daughter in every sense of the phrase: she did well in school, behaved perfectly, and always obeyed them.

However, today was different.

She refused to submit on this matter. This was important to her, and should have been to them also.

"Sweetheart, come on, now. We are leaving," her father said calmly, but anyone could hear the anger laced through his voice. His wife stood beside him, casting glances to something over the teenage girl's shoulder.

"No, I'm not leaving her on Christmas!"

The gloomy hospital room went silent, excluding the low beeping and whirring off medical equipment. All eyes turned to

view the small form on the hospital bed, her frame seeming to be made smaller by the massive bed. The child had her eyes closed, her hairless head tilted slightly to the right as she slumbered in peace. She was so thin, nearly skin and bones.

"No one should be alone on Christmas, especially when they're in the hospital," the teen spat, glaring at her parents. "If you want to leave, fine, but I'm not going with you."

Her father glowered down at her, but said nothing else as he swept past his wife and out of the room, his wife reluctantly following in his stead.

The older of the two girls nodded to herself and turned back to the younger child, her little sister ... well, not exactly.

"Hey, Poppy," she whispered, sitting in the chair set up beside the bed. "Anyway, as I was saying before they interrupted, all the kids back at the center are really hoping you'll get better soon. They've even started making paper angels to decorate your room here, you know, bring

some Christmas cheer to this place of gloom and doom." She frowned, taking in Poppy's form once again. "You need to get better...I know the Chemo is tiring you out, but you need to fight. You still have so much to do...you have a life to live..." A single tear escaped from her eye, soon followed by others as they glistened in the dim lights.

"Hi, Kristy..." a weak, raspy voice greeted, bringing Kristy's attention back to the little girl in the hospital bed. "Why are you crying...?"

Kristy forced a smile onto her lips. "Oh, it's nothing. How are you feeling?"

Poppy frowned. "My tummy feels like it's flipping all around."

Kristy smiled sadly. "It's just from the chemo, sweetie. It should go away soon.... Do you know what day it is?"

A smile appeared on Poppy's face, breaking her heart even more. "It's Christmas Eve! Which means Santa's coming tonight!"

"What did you ask for this year?"

Kristy asked, beginning to grin. That was the thing about Poppy; she just had this brightness that could make anyone smile, no matter the circumstances.

Poppy stuck her tongue out. "I can't tell you! He won't bring it if I tell you."

Kristy rolled her eyes. "That's when you tell someone what you wish for when you blow out the candles on your birthday cake."

"Oh." Poppy pouted, but her smile soon returned. "I asked Santa to make me better!"

And the tears burned her eyes once again as she forced herself to smile.

"That's a great present."

"Kristy, will you stay with me tonight?"

Kristy nodded silently, gently grasping Poppy's hand. "I won't leave."

"Promise?" Poppy's eyes were already beginning to droop once again.

"Promise." Kristy bit her lip. "Merry Christmas, Poppy."

"Merry Christmas, Kristy."



Watercolor by Hannah Cross, of Yucca Valley



Watercolor by Angela Olivares, of Joshua Tree

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# Sports & Leisure



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

The Combat Center Color Guard takes a moment to observe the fireworks presentation during the Twentynine Palms Independence Day celebration at Luckie Park, July 4.

Marines aboard the Combat Center are always looking for new and exciting ways to enjoy their off duty hours and improve their physical fitness. The Single Marine Program, Marine Corps Community Services, Semper Fit, and various organizations give back to Marines by helping them find entertainment and opportunities to showcase their unique talents here on base. Among many entertainers to visit the Combat Center this year were Ultimate Fighting Championship Hall of Fame inductee, Randy Couture, and Grammy award winner, Lupe Fiasco. Marines from military installations across the globe traveled to the Combat Center for their shot at earning the title of the High Intensity Tactical Training Ultimate Tactical Athlete during the first iteration of the Semper Fit sponsored, HITT Championship in 2015.

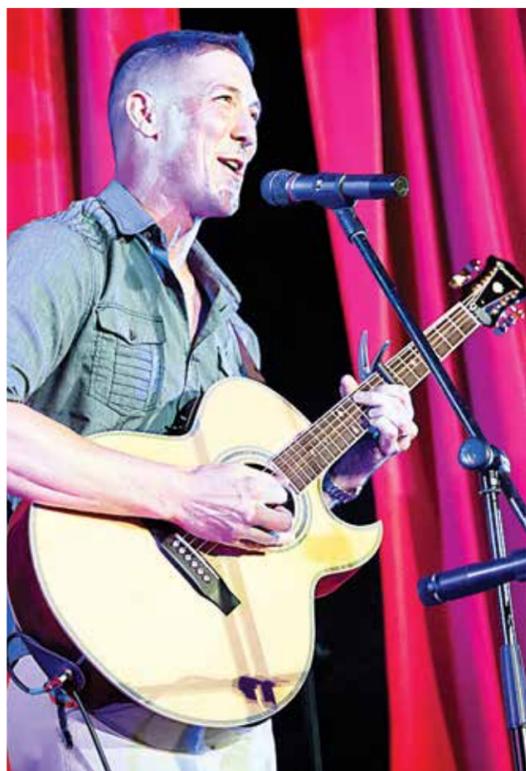


PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Gunnery Sgt. Jonathon D. Ginn, field artillery operations staff non-commissioned officer, Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group, performs during the Single Marine Program's annual 'Marines got talent' show at the Sunset Cinema aboard the Combat Center, Aug. 21.



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

Cpl. Austin McGregor, administrative specialist, Headquarters Battalion, demonstrates swimming with a rifle to other Marines during a High Intensity Tactical Training Session at the Combat Center Training Tank, July 23, 2015. The HITT course challenged Marines with rigorous exercise in the pool to enhance operational fitness and optimize combat readiness.



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

Combat Center patrons cheer for rock band, Buckcherry, during the 'We Salute You Fest' music celebration at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, May 8. The event featured live performances from rock bands Buckcherry and Adelitas Way, on May 8, and country music singers Rodney Atkins and Caroline Kole on May 9.



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Sgt. Marvel Thompson, distribution management specialist, G-4 Logistics, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, races to the military press station during the Battle Skills Challenge of the High Intensity Tactical Training Ultimate Athlete Championship at Del Valle Field, aboard the Combat Center, Sept. 15.



**Combat Center Events**

**The Combat Center Library** is hosting Science Night, Jan. 14 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. Discover the wonderful world of science with Makerspace projects, such as Snap Circuits, telescopes for stargazing and more! For more information, contact (760) 830-6875.

**Marine Corps Community Services** is taking registration for the 2016 Winter Dodgeball League starting Feb. 10. The league is open to active duty military, family members and NAF/DOD employees. To register, download the sign-up sheet at [mccs29palms.com](http://mccs29palms.com). For more information, contact (760) 830-6857.

**Frontline Restaurant & Mameluke's Pub** is hosting weekly Taco Tuesdays from 4:30 to 8 p.m. For more information, contact 760.830.8429.

**The Single Marine Program** is hosting a trip to the Palm Springs Air Museum, Saturday, Jan. 8 at 7 a.m. For more information visit [mccs29palms.com](http://mccs29palms.com), or contact (760) 830-4767.

**The Single Marine Program** is hosting a gaming tournament, Jan. 12 at Spike's Place at 6 p.m. For more information visit [mccs29palms.com](http://mccs29palms.com), or contact (760) 830-4767.

**Sunset Cinema**

**Friday, January 8**

5:00 PM – The Good Dinosaur (3-D), PG  
7:00 PM – In the Heart of the Sea (3-D), PG-13  
9:30 PM – Creed, PG-13

**Saturday, January 9**

12:00 PM – The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2, PG-13  
3:00 PM – Brooklyn, PG-13  
5:30 PM – The Night Before, R  
8:00 PM – Spotlight, R  
11:00 PM – Krampus, PG-13

**Sunday, January 10**

12:00 PM – The Good Dinosaur, PG  
3:30 PM – SNEAK PREVIEW – Ride Along 2, PG-13  
6:30 PM – SNEAK PREVIEW – 13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi

**Monday, January 11**

6:30 PM – Creed, PG-13

**Tuesday, January 12**

6:30 PM – The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2, PG-13

**Wednesday, January 13**

5:30 PM – Brooklyn, PG-13  
8:00 PM – Krampus, PG-13

**Thursday, January 14**

5:00 PM – In the Heart of the Sea (3-D), PG-13  
7:30 PM – The Night Before, R

**Friday, January 15**

5:30 PM – Star Wars: Episode I: The Phantom Menace (Free Admission), PG  
8:00 PM – Star Wars: Episode II: Attack of the Clones (Free Admission), PG  
10:30 PM – Star Wars: Episode III: Revenge of the Sith (Free Admission), PG-13



# The Wait is Over

'Star Wars' comes roaring and soaring back in 'The Force Awakens'

NEIL POND

*"Star Wars: The Force Awakens" Starring Daisy Ridley, John Boyega and Oscar Issac Directed by J.J. Abrams Rated PG*

Deep into the most anticipated movie of the year, two central characters—one old, one new—are on a desperate mission and in a very tight spot.

"People are counting on us," veteran smuggler Han Solo (Harrison Ford) growls. "The galaxy is counting on us."

That pretty much sums up the lofty expectations placed on the movie, as well. The first new Star Wars film in nearly a decade, the seventh in the franchise, and the first since Disney bought the rights from founding father-director-creator

George Lucas, it comes cloaked in secrecy and with a mothership of baggage. Diehard fans have been waiting for it for years. Speculation has been building for months. What will J.J. Abrams, the director of two Star Trek movies, bring to it—or do to it? It's expected to be the biggest box-office moneymaker of the year, if not the decade, and maybe of all time.

So people—and perhaps the whole the galaxy—are indeed counting on this new Star Wars, and I don't think they'll be disappointed. It's got everything any fan could want: powerful nostalgia, exciting new characters, rousing action, stirring emotion, spectacular scenery, eye-popping effects, and a plot that threads things that happened decades ago with things unfolding now—and points to things yet to come.

You probably already know that several iconic actors return. Harrison Ford's Han Solo is still the coolest space cowboy of all time. Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) has become a general. And Jedi legend

Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill)...well, everybody spends most of the movie looking for Luke, and so will you.

You'll delight in seeing some very familiar other things again—X-Wings and TIE Fighters, the Millennium Falcon, two particular droids, a tall, hirsute biped and one very special light saber, in particular. And you'll hear a couple of familiar phrases, too.

And there are some very impressive newcomers, as well. British actress is Daisy Ridley is terrific as Rey, a spunky junk scavenger on a desert planet who becomes a major player on a much larger stage—and provides young female Star Wars fans a rockin' role model the likes of which they've never had before. Newcomer John Boyega makes a fine leading man as Finn, a stormtrooper who defects when his conscience won't let him continue to fight for a cause he knows is wrong. Oscar Issac plays Poe Dameron, the cocky top-gun pilot of the Resistance.

Adam Driver is Kylo

Ren, a disciple of Darth Vader, whose formidable powers were shaped by a treacherous past. Domhnall Gleeson drips evil as the fascist intergalactic general Hux. Lupita Nyong'o is cool but completely unrecognizable as the alien proprietress of a way-out-there interplanetary saloon frequented by a spectrum of crazy cosmic characters.

And the new little bleeping, beeping, cooing, purring "snowman" of a robot, BB-8, is a real scene-stealer.

With composer John Williams' spectacular, swelling orchestral score once again providing the soundtrack, Star Wars has come roaring and soaring back, a fabulous, bountiful, richly rewarding payoff for anyone who's been waiting, patiently or otherwise. You'll cheer, you'll chuckle, you'll gasp, you'll be giddy and you'll maybe—likely—even shed a tear, or possibly two.

And come next December, when Disney's eighth installment, Rogue One, hits theaters, you'll be back in the ticket line again—won't you?

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Showtimes Effective 1/8/16 - 1/14/16

**The Revenant**  
(R)  
12:30 6:00 9:00

**The Hateful Eight**  
(R)  
12:30 6:00 9:30

**Star Wars: The Force Awakens**  
(PG13)  
2D 12:00 6:00  
3D 3:00 9:00

**Daddy's Home**  
(PG13)  
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

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## APT. & DUPLEXES 200

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## HELP WANTED 300

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### APPLIANCES -

# Firsts and Innovations

The Combat Center saw many firsts in 2015, the strides in innovation provided welcomed changes to the base and the Marine Corps. Events like the F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter supporting its first MAGTF exercise aboard the installation or the activation of the Communications Training Battalion paved the way for changes to training for the Combat Center. MCAGCC continues to blaze trails through changes in training, technology and tactics allowing the Combat Center to spearhead the modernization of the Corps.



PHOTO BY SGT. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

Lance Cpl. Cody Potts, student, Low Altitude Air Defense Gunner's Course 3-15, shoots the FIM-92 Stinger Missile during the class' culminating exercise aboard Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz., Aug. 22. Throughout the two-month course, all thirty students were taught the basics of the stinger missile.



PHOTO BY CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

2nd Lt. Jessica Munter, student, Basic Communications Officer Course, Class 1-15 accepts recognition for being on the Commanding General's Honor Roll during the class' graduation ceremony at the Combat Center Auditorium, April 7.

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PHOTO BY SGT. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

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.

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California State law requires that contractors, builders, and landscapers who perform work for \$500 or more, including materials and labor, must be licensed. License numbers should be so indicated in their advertising.

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**HELP WANTED 300**

Temporary, Part time Maintenance Worker I - Facilities Attendant  
The starting rate is \$12,7408 to 18.4525/hourly, non-benefitted position 20 hours per week  
Closing date: Thursday, January 21, 2016 at 5:00pm  
The successful candidate will perform a variety of functions to maintain the cleanliness and sanitation of public facilities and buildings; assist with the set up and tear down of facility activities as required and assist other departments as needed. This position requires moderate to heavy physical exertion and the ability to lift up to 100 pounds on a regular basis. Must have equivalent to a high school diploma, previous custodial/maintenance experience preferred. Possession of a California driver's license and the ability to maintain a satisfactory driving record. Complete application packages and related materials are available at Town Hall and online at our website at [www.yucca-valley.org](http://www.yucca-valley.org). Applications can be dropped off at Town Hall or mailed in by the closing date. Applications sent by fax or e-mail will not be accepted.

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