



LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

Pfc. Nathan Murdock, rifleman, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, fires his M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle at a target during the Designated Marksman Course's culminating event at Range 113, Jan. 28.

First IAR designated marksman course held aboard Combat Center

STORY BY
 CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

Marines with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment and 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marine Regiment concluded their Designated Marksman Course aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 28.

More than 10 "Cutting Edge" and "Darkside" Marines in two-man teams, known as shooter-spotter teams, participated in the three-week course utilizing the M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle with the culminating event occurring at Range 113.

Unlike snipers, designated marksmen use the inherent accuracy of the M27 IAR, to positively identify and destroy targets at distances up to 550
 See **Marksman pg. A6**



CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

Corporal Robert Ellis, rifleman, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marine Regiment, spots targets for his shooter during the Designated Marksman Course's culminating event at Range 113, Jan. 28. This is the first time a designated marksman course is being held aboard the Combat Center utilizing the Infantry Automatic Rifle.

1st MARDIV Commanding General and Sergeant Major visit ITX 2-16



CPL. TREVER STATZ

U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Daniel O'Donohue, the commanding general of 1st Marine Division, shakes hands with Sgt. Maj. Chuong Nguyen, 5th Marine Regiment Sergeant Major, during Integrated Training Exercise 2-16 aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 28. Maj. Gen. O'Donohue visited the 1st MARDIV units participating in ITX 2-16.



CPL. TREVER STATZ

U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Daniel O'Donohue, commanding general of 1st Marine Division, talks to Col. Jeffrey Tuggle, Assistant Chief of Staff G-3 of 1st MARDIV, before a mechanized assault course during Integrated Training Exercise 2-16 aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 28.



CPL. TREVER STATZ

U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Daniel O'Donohue, commanding general of 1st Marine Division, rides in a Light Armored Vehicle during Integrated Training Exercise 2-16 aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 28.

Combat Center Tax Center opens for business



CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

Cpl. Erik Brown, tax preparer, Combat Center Tax Center, helps prepare taxes for a Marine, Jan. 29, 2016. The Tax Center provides free tax return preparation for service members, dependents and retirees.

STORY BY THE COMBAT CENTER TAX CENTER

The Combat Center Tax Center opened for business, Jan. 25, and began assisting Combat Center personnel with their 2015 tax returns.

The Tax Center, located in building 1110R2 on Brown Street, provides free tax return preparation assistance to servicemembers, dependents and retirees. The Marines providing assistance are trained and certified through the Internal Revenue Service and California State Franchise Tax Board. All returns are done free of charge. The Tax Center takes both appointments and walk-in customers.

"The Marines at the Tax Center know how to handle issues with military tax returns," said Capt. Christopher Jew, officer in charge, Combat Center Tax Center. "Our mission is to save Marines as much money as possible. Why get your return done by a commercial tax preparer

See **Tax pg. A6**

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 Cpl. Paul. S. Martinez.



A Marine undergoing the 2nd Marine Division Combat Skills Center's Pre-Scout Sniper Course prepares to move during a stalking exercise at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Jan. 22.



Reprinted from the Observation Post
February 7, 1975
Story by Staff Sgt. Dex Benson

Recapture of Hue City

The ancient and imperial city of Hue, South Vietnam, because the center of one of the most fiercely contested areas of the North Vietnamese 1968 Tet (New Year) Offensive.

The North Vietnamese committed at least eight battalions, perhaps as many as eleven, to the battle. Command of this division-size attack was given to the 6th NVA Regiment. Against them, three understrength U.S. Marine battalions and thirteen ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) battalions were eventually used.

At the time of the enemy offensive there were no significant United States installations and no garrison in Hue. The only U.S. Military present in the city were the members of the MACV (Military Assistance Command Vietnam) group.

The 1st ARVN Division had its headquarters in a corner of the Citadel (part of the old imperial palace) and there was a Vietnamese paratroop company also located within the cities confines. Aside from these two units, there were no other military units within the city.

The 3rd ARVN Regiment

with three battalions was based five miles northwest of the city. Another battalion was located southwest of the city.

Communist troops, infiltrated into the city, commenced a rocket and mortar barrage in the early hours of January 31, while simultaneously taking over the provincial headquarters, public utilities, hospital: in fact, almost all buildings of consequence except the MACV and ARVN compounds.

When word of the attack reached the Marine headquarters at Phu Bai, Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment (A-1-1) left by truck with orders to reinforce the MACV area.

Immediately following them was the 1-1 command group and Company G, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (G-2-5) assisted by a tank platoon.

The understrength battalion fought its way to the MACV compound, whereupon they were ordered to cross the Perfume River and assist the 1st ARVN headquarters. After a bloody fight to cross the river they managed to do so, but at nightfall were to with back to the

MACV compound.

Companies F and H, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (F-2-5, H-2-5) 'beefed-up' this unit on the night of February 1-2.

Aware of the immense firepower that the Marines could bring to bear, and with a desire to destroy or damage as little of the beautiful city as possible, Marines were first used in a defensive role only. However, ARVN units hard pressed north of the city asked the Marines to clear that part of the river. The Marines, attacking westward from the MACV compound and moving parallel to the river, commenced their counterattack.

By February 4, the attack was under control of the 1st Marines, and had been intensified by the arrival of the command group 2-5 and B-1-1.

Bloody fighting ensued as the 'grunts' supported by rocket launchers, recoilless rifles and tanks fought it out house-to-house with the NVA in the drive toward the Citadel.

By February 6 the Marines had retaken the provincial headquar-

ters and hospital. Organized resistance south of the river ended of February 9.

The Communists had suffered 1,053 killed and an estimated two battalions had been destroyed.

On February 12, 1-5 joined 3rd ARVN Regiment and moved into the city from the north by helicopter and landing craft.

By February 22 the Marines seized their final objective, the final objective, the remaining NVA elements inside the palace and by February 24 fighting inside the palace ended.

Mopping up operations continued from February 25 through March 2 when the city was finally declared secure.

This month, only seven years after the anniversary of the commencement of the battle, the recapture of Hue City and eh subsequent annihilation of enemy forces during the Tet Offensive, continues to be one of the most outstanding examples of a of a successful American-South Vietnamese combat operation, and is still grimly remembered by the men who fought there.

CROSSWORD

- Across**
- 1 Numbskull
 - 4 Binds
 - 10 Makes one
 - 14 Camp sight
 - 15 Counsel
 - 16 Soothing agent
 - 17 Damage
 - 18 Formulaic writing
 - 20 History units
 - 22 Asian occasion
 - 23 Fix
 - 24 "Divergent" series star ___ James
 - 26 Sent to the canvas
 - 28 Quadrennial soccer championship
 - 32 Slip away
 - 33 Lubricate
 - 34 Soak
 - 37 Pulled apart
 - 38 Rushed toward
 - 39 Feeling
 - 40 Wind up
 - 41 When doubled, a German city
 - 42 Craze
 - 43 UFO
 - 45 Fold
 - 47 All's opposite
 - 48 Synagogues
 - 49 Mind factor
 - 51 Long hike
 - 54 Competition first sponsored by GE
 - 58 Poet's preposition
 - 59 Snack in a stack
 - 60 Oman's land
 - 61 Deception
 - 62 Fork-tailed flier
 - 63 Intrusive
 - 64 Wish

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62						63							64	

- Down**
- 1 Climax
 - 2 Zoom
 - 3 ___-on-Avon
 - 4 File folder feature
 - 5 "Same here"
 - 6 Pop singer Sands
 - 7 Sediment
 - 8 Consume
 - 9 Price word
 - 10 Beat, and how!
 - 11 Buoy
 - 12 Was sweet (on)
 - 13 Palm reader, e.g.
 - 19 "Fork it over!"
 - 21 Sunless state
 - 25 Ram's mate
 - 26 "Constant Craving" singer
 - 27 ___ above (better)
 - 28 Gala
 - 29 Steel ingredient
 - 30 Band's helper
 - 31 Shade of white
 - 34 Complimentary close
 - 35 Award for a play
 - 36 Floor it
 - 38 Some stingers
 - 39 Speak boastfully
 - 41 World-weary
 - 42 ___ jacket
 - 43 Attacked
 - 44 Strand at the chalet
 - 45 Task
 - 46 Sovereign
 - 48 Highlander
 - 49 Web auctioneer
 - 50 Asian desert
 - 52 Iroquoian Indian
 - 53 Wail
 - 55 Mountain pass
 - 56 Go off
 - 57 Hang back

SUDOKU

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Last week's answers

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

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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

Todd McKEOWN

Huntington Beach, CA. Master Sgt., Commanding General's administrative chief

McKeown has served in the Marine Corps for 18 years at duty stations around the world. He attributes his success as a leader to the mentors whom have helped him along the way and he strives to keep positively influencing the Marines under his charge.

>I grew up in Huntington Beach, California, and I have been in the Marine Corps 18 years. I joined the Marine Corps because my dad would ask me all the time what I wanted to do and my answer was always "I want to be a Navy SEAL."

> I am slightly color blind and I found out that the Marine Corps has [challenging] training similar to SEAL training but without having to go the Special Forces route, which turned out to be the best decision for me.

>After I enlisted, I [discovered] that my grandfather was a Marine. He was a marksmanship coach back in the day, which I think is pretty cool.

>I was an administrative clerk initially at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego for the Drill Instructor and Recruiter Schools.

>I later got orders to Okinawa, Japan for a one-year unaccompanied tour. While in Japan, they consolidated the administrative center and I helped set up the first one, which opened up the opportunity to do internal inspections for the [Installation Personnel Administrative Center].

>After Japan, I got orders to [Marine Corps Air Station] Miramar to work at the G1 [Administration and Manpower] office. Later, I got orders to Kuwait during the retrograde for everyone coming back who was part of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

>I became a Recruiter in Montana for three years and afterward an instructor at my [Military Occupational Specialty] school in Camp Lejeune, where I taught Warrant Officers, Adjutants and career-level Marines.

>I have been in Twentynine Palms for three years. Mentors that I have had, have influenced me at every duty station I've been to, and I want to pass that knowledge on.

>When I was a sergeant I had a 'gunny', whose mentorship left a lasting impression on me.

>I learned from him to take care of my Marines and mentor them in any way I can.

> I don't want to call them my children, but at an IPAC where I had more than 30 Marines I looked at them like my kids because I took care of them that way.

>I have five of my own children at home so it makes it easy for me to mentor and teach them.

> I tell each one of my young Marines not to base their Marine Corps career on this place or their first duty station.

>Whether it is here in Twentynine Palms or wherever, your first four years is a learning experience. Once you pick up rank and reach non-commissioned officer status, it gets a lot better.

>I go to church every week and I help lead a men's group at the Twentynine Palms Baptist Church. My children keep me really busy but I take the family on walks and bike rides when I can.

>My mom and dad have been very supportive of me as well as my wife's family. Most importantly, my wife and kids have been supportive of the military lifestyle.

>My wife has her teaching credentials and we home-school our children. Whenever we move, it's not as hard on them and they enjoy the military life.

>My father taught me how to swim when I was in high school. I wanted to be a SEAL so before I enlisted there was a youth program called the Sea Cadet program. They held a two-week training that went with the SEALs, which required you to do a 500 meter swim in less than 30 minutes.



>My dad had a lot of influence on me. He did a lot of martial arts when I was younger and he would take me along to roll around on the mat. In high school, Tito Ortiz was my coach before he became a fighter in Ultimate Fighting Championship.

>When the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program came around my dad was a big enthusiast and he would always ask me about it.

>I was in the second class at the very beginning of the program and received a tan belt. After that I worked my way up to be a green belt instructor. At that time my dad would ask me when I was going to be an instructor, or when I was going to get my black belt.

>He was always on me about my martial arts, swimming and all around physical fitness. He liked to work out and he always pushed that on

me. That has helped me out a lot in the Marine Corps. He has never pushed me to stay in or get out, but to keep doing what I like and what I enjoy.

>I always remind my wife that as long as I enjoy what I'm doing, I'm going to stick around. As soon as the job becomes boring and I don't like it anymore that's when it is time to go.

>I just re-enlisted which will take me to 22-years and I'm still enjoying it. It's not about the promotions, it's about enjoying what you do and enjoying coming into work every day, also being there for the Marines under you.

> I always will try to be the mentor that 'gunny' was for me. When I look back at the Marines that I have influenced and the things I would not have been able to do anywhere else, that's what keeps me going.

INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

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Find it at <http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>.

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Marksman from pg. A1



LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ
 Corporal Jared Ingerson, rifleman, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marine Regiment, fires his M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle at a target during the Designated Marksman Course's culminating event at Range 113, Jan. 28.



CPL. JULIO MCGRAW
 Pfc. Landon Heger, rifleman, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, spots targets for Pfc. Conner Price, rifleman, 3/7, during the Designated Marksman Course's culminating event at Range 113, Jan. 28. More than 10 'Cutting Edge' and 'Darkside' Marines in shooter-spotter teams participated in the three-week course utilizing the M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle.

meters. However, their primary duty is to support their teams' ability to conduct tactical movement as automatic riflemen.

"What we are doing is giving these Marines the marksmanship skills to take back to their units and share with their squads, platoons and companies," said Cpl. Jacob Weller, combat marksmanship trainer, Marksmanship Training Unit. "Once they start doing their work-up for deployment, they can start utilizing the skills they learned here, which gives a squad, platoon or company the ability to employ them at their own means."

This is the first time a DM course is being held aboard the Combat Center utilizing this rifle.

"The optics they are shooting with,

are the standard [squad automatic-weapon day optic]," Weller said. "The reason we did it this way is because when these units deploy, they might not have certain capabilities but they will have their IAR's with SDO's."

This three-week course was designed by Weller and MTU combat marksmanship trainers; 1st Lt. Lauren Luther, Cpl. Joshua Smith, Cpl. Anthony Lubbers, and Lance Cpl. Eric Nickel. The instructors engaged the Marines with classroom instruction teaching them about basic field sketches, ballistics and range estimations, as well as firing on known-distance ranges and unknown-distance ranges.

"The course that security forces teach uses the M110 [Semi-Automatic Sniper



CPL. JULIO MCGRAW
 Corporal Robert Ellis, rifleman, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marine Regiment, loads an M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle magazine with 5.56 mm rounds during the Designated Marksman Course's culminating event at Range 113, Jan. 28.

System] and we created this course with elements from their curriculum," Weller said. "The difference is we rebuilt it to incorporate the IAR with the SDO as the primary weapon. The biggest problem that arose was there was no DM qualification standard for shooting with the IAR. This mission was built around the use of a M110 SASS, and having to change the standards to make it challenging yet attainable for the Marines has been difficult."

During the culminating event, the shooter-spotter pairs took a written test. They then proceed to the firing line where they are given 40 minutes to distinguish 10 targets and calculate the range of the targets between 250 to 550 meters. During this time, the pair also calculates the ele-

ments of nature, such as time-of-day and wind speed, that would affect the round at those distances. Once the 40 minutes are over and the team's calculations are complete, the shooters engage each target. If the shooter misses, he is allotted three seconds to adjust and re-engage the target.

"This course was challenging but it definitely makes a Marine who knows these skills a valuable asset to their unit," said Cpl. Robert Ellis, rifleman, 3/4. "Not only because we can distinguish targets and point members of our unit in the right direction, but we now have the ability to teach everyone in our squad or platoon how to be just as effective as us on the battlefield, which has the potential of saving lives."

Tax from pg. A1

when the Tax Center will get you the same refund for free?"

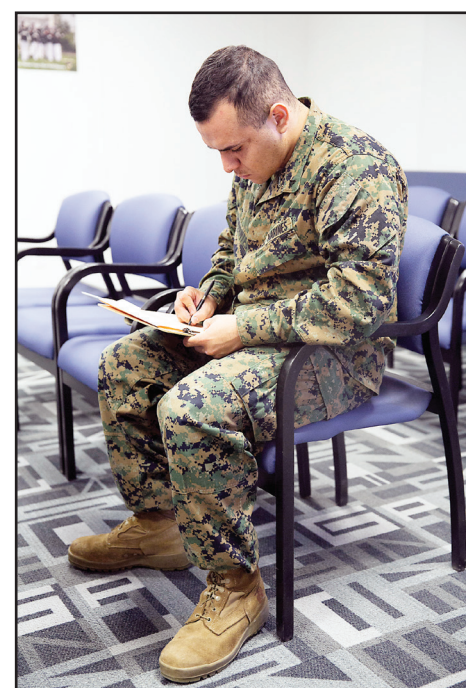
The Tax Center is open Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. The center will operate at these hours through the filing deadline, April 18, and into mid-May to help those that need to file late.

The staff is knowledgeable on military-specific taxes for both federal and state taxes and they know what to look out for when it comes to military tax returns.

"It can be stressful doing your own taxes," said Sgt. William Jackson, staff non-commissioned officer in charge, Combat Center Tax Center. "We're here to ease that stress and save them money because we do it for free."

The cost-free returns and convenient location are some of the advantages in preparing taxes on base. The staff urges Marines, sailors and family members to file their taxes sooner rather than later to avoid delays in returns.

To be prepared for a tax interview clients should bring, at a minimum, their wage statements, military identification and social security cards. For more information on the Tax Center, call 760-830-4TAX.



CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO
 Lance Cpl. Luis E. Cervantes, rifleman, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, prepares forms in the lobby of the Combat Center Tax Center, Jan. 29, 2016. The Tax Center opened their doors on Jan. 25 and will remain open until May.

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Combat Center Veterinary Clinic valuable resource for pet owners



Army Capt. Candace Wimbish, officer in charge, Veterinary Treatment Facility, examines Baily a 10-year-old Australian cattle dog while Army Sgt. Kevin Nichols, veterinary technician, assists at the VTF, Jan 26. The VTF works closely with Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms Preventive Medicine Department, consulting on any concerns of human-to-animal illnesses.

BY THE VETERINARY TREATMENT FACILITY

The Combat Center Veterinary Treatment Facility, located in building 1028 on Calcite Street, is a little-known resource available to military families aboard the installation. The VTF underwent an extensive renovation this past fall and is now able to provide a wide range of veterinary health care services.

"Most people know we provide care to the military working dogs [24 hours, 7 days a week], and that is the largest portion of our mission," said U.S. Army Capt. Candace Wimbish, officer in charge, VTF. "However, the [Department of Defense] recognizes the human-animal bond is very important. We are honored to be able to foster that relationship by caring for four-legged military family members."

The hospital has laboratory capabilities, radiograph and ultrasound services, a stocked veterinary pharmacy, as well as surgical and dental facilities. Staffed by Army

soldiers and civilians, reduced-cost services provided include; routine wellness appointments, sick call examinations, health certificates for Permanent Change of Station moves, vaccinations, medications, and certain surgical procedures.

"We are a fully equipped facility," said Army Sgt. Kevin Nichols, base veterinarian, VTF. "The major difference between us and a civilian practice is that we cannot provide boarding, grooming, or overnight hospitalization."

Another important role of the VTF is educating the public on diseases that may be transmitted from animals to humans and minimizing any risk. They work closely with Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms Preventive Medicine Department, consulting on any concerns of human-to-animal illnesses.

"The majority of these illnesses can be prevented by responsible pet ownership and routine wellness examinations," Nichols said.

The staff recommends pets be examined annually at a minimum and semi-annually in their senior years to catch any potential problems early.

Additionally, any pet residing aboard the Combat Center is required to be microchipped and registered with the VTF. Both can be accomplished on a walk-in basis.

"Tricare doesn't cover veterinary care," Wimbish said. "But we try very hard to keep costs low for families without sacrificing quality medicine for the pet."

Wellness service at Twentynine Palms VTF may be limited due to the size of the staff, but they endeavor to provide timely care to sick pets in need.

Services are available to retirees, active duty service members and their authorized dependents. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Thursdays by appointment only from 12:30 to 4 p.m.

For more information, visit their Facebook page: 29PalmsVet, or call (760) 830-6896.

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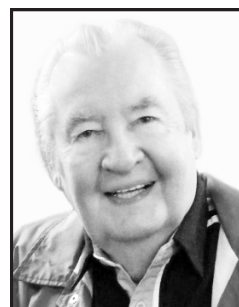
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TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



Nelson Mandela reminded us that forgiveness is one of the most important words in the lexicon of a tough minded optimist. As a counselor, I have spent considerable time helping men and women develop an attitude of mind and a graciousness of heart that enables them to throw off the unholy burden of an ugly, unforgiving spirit. The happiest men and women I know have forgiven much.

Author Gregg Easterbrook describes emerging research data indicating that in most cases, people will be better off if they forgive others for the wrongs experienced during life – anything from small transgressions to horrific tragedies.

A survey conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan indicated that older people are more likely to forgive than younger ones; moreover, that the older people who forgive are rewarded by improved health.

A study at the University of Wisconsin also showed that older people are more likely to forgive, suggesting that forgiveness is a form of wisdom that is learned in the process of living. Of special interest was the fact that the benefits of forgiveness to the forgiver seem to increase with age.

A study of elderly women, published in the journal "Psychotherapy," found that those who scored well on a standard test of forgiveness traits had higher self-esteem and fewer episodes of anxiety and depression compared to those who scored poorly.

Yes, dear friends, tough minded optimists believe strongly in an inner peace that is experienced by people like Nelson Mandela who possessed a forgiving spirit.

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WeekINPhotos Exercise Iron Fist 2016: Combat Rubber Raid Craft Training



Soldiers of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's Western Army Infantry Regiment fight the waves as they conduct combat rubber raiding craft training during Exercise Iron Fist on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 28. Iron Fist is an annual, bilateral training exercise affords the U.S. Marines and JGSDF soldiers the opportunity to conduct realistic training while working side-by-side.

Teams of soldiers from the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's (JGSDF) Western Army Infantry Regiment conduct combat rubber raiding craft training in the waves of California during Exercise Iron Fist 2016 on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 28. This annual, bilateral exercise offers the opportunity for the U.S. Marines and JGSDF soldiers to work hand-in-hand as they train and prepare for an amphibious assault being conducting at the shores of Camp Pendleton in late February. As security treaty allies, it is important for U.S. Marines and JGSDF soldiers to have working relationships to continue honing our amphibious operations core competencies.



A team of soldiers from the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's Western Army Infantry Regiment conduct combat rubber raiding craft training during Exercise Iron Fist 2016 on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 28. Iron Fist is an annual, bilateral amphibious training exercise designed to improve U.S. Marine Corps and JGSDF's ability to plan, communicate and conduct combined amphibious operations.

A group of soldiers of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's Western Army Infantry Regiment break through a wave while conducting combat rubber raiding craft training during Exercise Iron Fist 2016 on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 28. Iron Fist is an annual, bilateral amphibious training event between U.S. Marines and soldiers of the JGSDF designed to improve our ability to operate and communicate between the two nations.

[Photos by Lance Cpl. Timothy Valero]

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POKER TOURNAMENT

BRINGS RANKS TOGETHER



Marines and civilians of the Combat Center begin their first hand of the Hashmarks Staff Non-Commissioned Officer Club Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament, Saturday. More than 50 people participated in the tournament for a prize of a base exchange gift card and other prizes.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CPL. THOMAS MUDD

The Combat Center Marine Corps Community Services held a Texas Hold'em Tournament at the Hashmarks Staff Non-Commissioned Officers' Club, Saturday.

MCCS held the tournament with the assistance of the Staff NCO Club Advisory Board to help promote the club and bring the Combat Center community closer together.

"There are people on base who don't realize that all the different clubs are open to everyone," said Candice Coward, catering events coordinator, Food and Hospitality, MCCS. "We

wanted to promote the club while letting everybody enjoy themselves."

The tournament was open to anyone 18-years-old or older. Money made through entry fees and additional purchases went into the winnings as a Combat Center Base Exchange gift card. More than 50 people participated in the tournament.

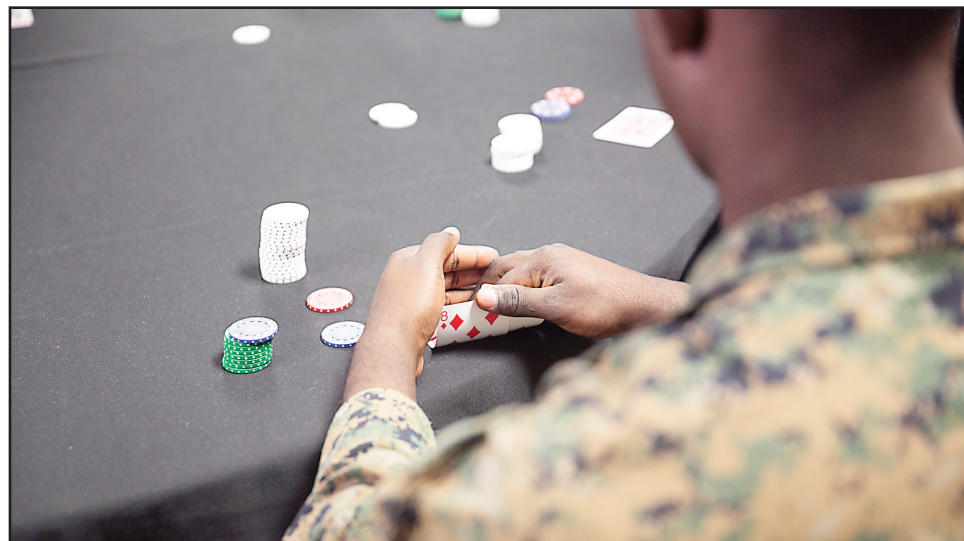
"You don't know the rank of the people you are playing with, which makes tonight about enjoying the game," said Cpl. Benjamin Ferrell, generator mechanic, Combat Logistics Battalion 7.

The people playing and spectating enjoyed food and drinks from the restaurant while also spectating an Ultimate Fighting Championship Fight. As

the night went on the participants had an opportunity to win raffles hosted by MCCS and individuals who didn't win in the tournament were given prizes for their participation.

"We want people to relax and enjoy themselves while being able to interact with each other," Coward said. "This tournament is a great way to bring the different people of the Combat Center together."

The tournament lasted approximately six hours and Gunnery Sgt. Justin Hensley, student, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, won the tournament and a gift card to the base exchange.



Pvt. Abilashh John, student, Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School, examines his hand during the Hashmarks Staff Non-Commissioned Officer Club Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament, Saturday.



Sgt. Maj. Brain Priester, sergeant major, 1st Tank Battalion, deals a hand of cards during the Hashmarks Staff Non-Commissioned Officer Club Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament, Saturday.



John Flores, client services representative, Supplycore, deals a hand of cards during the Hashmarks Staff Non-Commissioned Officer Club Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament, Saturday. The winner received a base exchange gift card comprised of the money made through entry fees and the purchase of poker chips.

Liberty Call



Combat Center Events

Get in on the Super Bowl 50 hype at any of the clubs on base, Feb. 7. Don't miss out on the food and drink specials or prizes and giveaways at all locations throughout the night. For more information, call 760-830-8429.

Head down to the Combat Center Library for a Valentine's Day celebration from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., Feb. 10. Take part in festive stories, and then create a special something for your special someone. For more information, call 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. For more information, contact 760-830-6857.

Marine Corps Community Services is hosting a Father Daughter Dance. This event is open to all fathers and their daughters aboard the Combat Center. Guests will enjoy light refreshments and a complimentary photo. Limited tickets are available, for more information call 760-830-5086.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, February 5

5:00 p.m. – Star Wars: The Force Awakens, PG-13
8:00 p.m. – Daddy's Home, PG-13
10:00 p.m. – The Big Shot, R

Saturday, February 6

12:00 p.m. – Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip, PG
2:30 p.m. – Star Wars: The Force Awakens, PG-13
5:30 p.m. – Point Break, PG-13
8:00 p.m. – Concussion, PG-13
10:30 p.m. – The Forest, PG-13

Sunday, February 7

12:00 p.m. – Concussion, PG-13
7:30 p.m. – Star Wars: The Force Awakens, PG-13

Monday, February 8

6:30 p.m. – The Revenant, R

Tuesday, February 9

7:00 p.m. – The Forest, PG-13

Wednesday, February 10

5:00 p.m. – Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip, PG

Thursday, February 11

5:00 p.m. – Star Wars: The Force Awakens, PG-13
8:00 p.m. – Daddy's Home, PG-13

Friday, February 12

5:00 p.m. – Point Break, PG-13
7:30 p.m. – Concussion, PG-13
10:00 p.m. – The Forest, PG-13



Been There, Done That

'Ride Along 2' gets laughs but covers recycled comedic ground

NEIL POND

'Ride Along 2'
Starring Kevin Hart and Ice Cube
Directed by Tom Story
Rated PG-13

The first time rapper-turned-actor Ice Cube and comedian-turned-actor Kevin Hart teamed up for a cop-comedy caper, *Ride Along* in 2012, critics mostly turned up their noses. But audiences turned over their dollars,

making the moderately budgeted movie a substantial box-office hit.

So of course—the mismatched duo is back for more comedic crime shenanigans in *Ride Along 2*.

This time around, hardboiled Atlanta vice detective James Patton (Cube) heads to Miami (Cube) to investigate an interstate drug pipeline. He wants to bring along dweeby rookie officer Ben Harper (Hart), who'll soon marry his sister (Tika Sumpter), just to prove once and for all that Ben doesn't have the right stuff to be a cop.

Ken Jeong (from the TV series *Dr. Ken*) plays a computer hacker who becomes a shrill, shriek-y, and squeaky third wheel on this careening comedy tricycle. Olivia Munn's Miami police detective has some swaggering self-defense mojo that can bring any tough guy to his knees—but the movie doesn't miss an opportunity to show her sweaty-'n'-sexy in a sports bra, and have Hart's character make a wowza

crack about it.

Veteran TV and movie actor Benjamin Bratt walks the line between smooth and sinister by sprinkling some Scarface sauce onto his role as a shady businessman.

Director Tom Story, whose resume also includes *Fantastic Four*, *Barbershop*, *Taxi* and *Think Like a Man*, was also in the driver's seat for the original *Ride Along*. Maybe that's why it feels like we've ridden by everything before, in the previous *Ride Along* and in almost every other buddy-cop comedy.

There's a frantic foot chase, a wild car chase, a bootylicious nightclub party and a lavish bash at a millionaire's mansion, where Ben screams, stumbles and scampers as he's chased by an alligator. (It's about as funny as you think it is—or isn't.) There's gunfire, explosions and a climax at a shipping-container yard. At least the movie sometimes seems to wink at its own clichés. "Classic!" Ben says. "Something always goes down in a container yard!"

In one scene, Ben evades a car of bad guys by imagining it's a game of *Grand Theft Auto*. I'd like to think director Story wanted to make a "meta" statement about how many action scenes in today's blockbusters are little more than multi-million-dollar build-outs of videogames anyway, but I really think it was just to get a cheap chuckle by turning Cube's character into a pixelated, gun-popping passenger.

The yapping, hyperkinetic Hart's a funny guy, and Cube, the "grumpy," grounded straightman, somehow still gets his share of the laughs. But most of the banter-y jokes are lame, the writing unimaginative and uninspired, the plot thinner than a thong bikini and the performances so limp and lazy they seem to evaporate in the Florida heat.

And too much of *Ride Along 2* simply isn't funny enough—or anything enough—to justify the trip. This jaunt to Miami feels like a quick cash-dash coasting on recycled comedy fumes.

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Part-time, 180 school days per year
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Applications may be downloaded from www.morongo.k12.ca.us or obtained by calling 760-367-9191 ext. 4225, and must be returned to Human Resources, Morongo Unified School District, PO Box 1209, 29 Palms, CA 92277 on or before **February 9, 2016.**

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- Must meet eligibility requirements for vocational education state certification.
- High school diploma or equivalent is required; Bachelor's degree is not required.
- **Must be willing to enter a teacher credentialing program upon hire.**

Applications may be downloaded from www.morongo.k12.ca.us or obtained by calling 760-367-9191 ext. 4225, and must be returned to Human Resources, Morongo Unified School District, PO Box 1209, 29 Palms, CA 92277 on or before **February 9, 2016.**

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Combat engineers teach infantrymen breaching tactics



Marines shield themselves from a detonated explosive charge during an urban leaders course, Jan. 29. During the course, Marines learned four different types of charges used to make a safe entrance into an objective. This type of training allows Marines to practice for possible scenarios when they are deployed to combat zones anywhere on the globe. An instructor with 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division, taught this portion of the course to infantrymen of 1st MarDiv.

Marines shield themselves from a detonated explosive charge during an urban leaders course, Jan. 29. During the course, Marines learned four different types of charges used to make a safe entrance into an objective. This type of training allows Marines to practice for possible scenarios when they are deployed to combat zones anywhere on the globe. An instructor with 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division, taught this portion of the course to infantrymen of 1st MarDiv.

STORY BY SGT. BRADY WOOD

As the rising sun warmed the air, Marines placed demolition charges on entryways of an urban combat training environment. “Get back, get back,” said Cpl. Brett Sorteberg, an infantryman with 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Bn., 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force.

Five, four, three, two, one...BOOM! A charge blows open a door, the pressure of the explosion is felt by all Marines several feet away. The pressure of the explosion gave Marines an adrenaline boost as they rushed in to clear the building.

Marines with 1st Marine Division practiced demolition and breach tactics, techniques and procedures taught by 1st Combat Engineer Battalion during an urban leaders course at Marine Corps Base

Camp Pendleton, Jan. 29.

“The purpose of this training is to give the Marines another skill they can use in the field,” said Cpl. Tyler Myers, a combat engineer with 1st CEB, 1st MarDiv, I MEF and instructor of the course. “They need to have this skill just in case they don’t have any engineers with them in a deployed environment.”

Myers, a native of Chesterfield, Michigan, and the other instructors of the course, make sure the Marines can safely and properly build and place charges through practical application and repetition prior to using them.

“There’s always a chance that something could go wrong,” said Myers. “That’s why we want to make sure they can do this. It gives us the opportunity to evaluate them while reducing risk at the same time.”

The urban leaders course breaching tactics gave students the chance to learn a new skill of another military occupational specialty, which is important because it enables the Marines as force multipliers – allowing them to assist others that have this skill.

“I was very grateful to learn a skill that combat engineers use,” said Lance Cpl. Bryan Aldendifer, an infantryman with 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st MarDiv, I MEF. “Due to the amount of practice and how many charges we used, I definitely feel confident that I can do this with or without the assistance of an engineer.”

Aldendifer, a native of Boynton, Nebraska, described the pressure felt from the explosion as someone pressing down on your chest.

Other students of the course had a dif-

ferent reaction to charges exploding.

“Once the blast went off, the only thing that went through my mind was ‘let’s get in there and clear this building,’” said Aldendifer.

By being shown how to build charges, place them for maximum effectiveness, and the proper procedures for room clearing, the Marines were taught a valuable skill they did not previously have.

“It’s important for Marines to learn the skills of others,” said Sorteberg, a native of Minnetonka, Minnesota. “Being cross trained to use the skills of an MOS that you might work with on a deployment helps because then you can offer assistance or perform the job yourself.

With the new skills they now have at their disposal, the infantrymen of 1st Marine Division are more prepared for breaching safely and effectively.

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