



PHOTOS BY CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

Bella Sue Mahaffey, daughter of Staff Sgt. Paul Mahaffey, supply chief, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, takes a picture with the Easter Bunny during the 7th Marine Regiment Spring Eggstravaganza held at the Desert Winds Golf Course, March 11.

7th Reg., families take part in Spring Eggstravaganza

STORY BY
 CPL. THOMAS MUDD

The Family Readiness Officers of 7th Marine Regiment hosted a Spring Eggstravaganza at the Desert Winds Golf Course, March 11.

The event was the first time battalion FRO's from within the regiment have come together to host a collaborative spring fling and Easter egg hunt.

"[We] hold events for our units all the time," said Diane Durden, FRO, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. "This is the first time we have had the units of 7th Marine

See **Spring** pg. A6



PHOTOS BY CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Families of 7th Marine Regiment help their children find eggs during the 7th Marine Regiment Spring Eggstravaganza held at the Desert Winds Golf Course, March 11.

CTB celebrates anniversary

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
 LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

The Marines of Communication Training Battalion, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, celebrated the successful completion of the battalion's inaugural year with a banquet dinner and three-mile motivational run March 10-11.

The battalion activated March 12, 2015 with the intent of bringing the responsibility of training commissioned and enlisted communication Marines under one command. Previously, the training was



LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

Lt. Col. Speros C. Koumparakis, commanding officer, Communication Training Battalion, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, participates in the battalion's three-mile motivational run in honor of the battalion's anniversary aboard the Combat Center, March 11.

conducted in separate locations with officers being trained at the Communication School, located aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico.

"As far as birthday's go, this is significant because it's the first anniversary for our battalion," said Gunnery Sgt. Jonathan Weisickle, instructor, CTB. "It's a celebration of the monumental energy and focus we've put into making it a success."

The battalion's mission is to train and evaluate Marines in individual events according to training and readiness manual standards for the operation and maintenance of Marine Corps communication systems in order to provide Marine commanders the ability to command and control across the full range of military operations.

"In the last year, we have gone from holding one field exercise per course to nine field exercises every single course," said Lt. Col. Speros Koumparakis, battalion commander, CTB. "I feel that is a major accomplishment in making Marines better communicators and preparing them for what they will encounter in the field and fleet."

In 2015, CTB graduated the first and second Basic Communication Officer Course classes, began the first iteration of the tenant Warrant Officer Course and convened the first Advanced Communications Officer Course Mobile Training Team.

Through summer 2015, CTB continued to develop operational capacity. CTB provided cybersecurity support to Large Scale Exercise 2015; attended and led working groups during I MEF, II MEF and III MEF Communication Chief's conferences; and graduated the second BCOC course.

CTB continued on this pace through the end of 2015, expanding its operational capability, sending

See **CTB** pg. A6

Magnificent Seventh welcomes Palm Desert to Combat Center



Lieutenant Col. Jared Spurlock, executive officer, 7th Marine Regiment introduces Van Tanner, member, Palm Desert City Council, to Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, during the Battle Color Ceremony, part of the Palm Desert City Council, Palm Desert Chamber of Commerce and the 1st Marine Division Association, Desert Cities Mitchell Paige Medal of Honor Chapter base tour hosted by 7th Marine Regiment March 9.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

'Magnificent Seventh' hosted council, chamber and chapter members of Palm Desert aboard the Combat Center for a day of ceremony and training, March 9.

The City of Palm Desert officially adopted 7th Marine Regiment on Dec. 11, 2014, through the Adopt-a-Unit program. To show their appreciation, the regiment invited members of the Palm Desert City Council; Chamber of Commerce; and the 1st Marine Division Association,

See **Welcomes** 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 Sgt. Kirstin Merrimarahajara.



Norwegian soldiers, U.S. Marines, Dutch and U.K. Royal Commandos conduct helicopter insertion during Exercise Cold Response 16, March 3.



Reprinted from the Observation Post
March 18, 1977

Explosive Ordnance: Tries to keep you alive

With over 930 square miles of terrain, MCB, 29 Palms is nearly the size of Rhode Island. Divide that area by the number of Marines working at the Explosive Ordnance Disposal section (EOD) here and that's a lot of ground to cover.

The 10 Marines at EOD are responsible for sweeping the entire area for devices that failed to explode on impact during the many live fire exercises held at the Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Training Center.

"It is a continuous job since the wind is constantly exposing the dud ordnance," said Gunnery Sergeant Mitchell A. Templeton, non-commissioned officer-in-charge of EOD. "Unexploded ordnance is found almost every time a sweep is made, however, there are not enough Marines here to sweep the ranges as often as they should be swept."

This then brings us to an even greater danger, that of trespassers.

Trespassing on government property is against the law and although 'No Trespassing' signs are located throughout the base, the intrusions continue.

"We rarely see any people out there, but we know they're there because we find tire tracks," explained Captain Donald P. Garcia, officer-in-charge of EOD.

Driving off any established road is dangerous but if it is done in an impact area the results will be deadly.

Ordnance comes in a wide variety of sizes, shapes and colors but it is foolish to believe that any ordnance, no matter how unusual it may look, would make a good trophy or souvenir. Even the tiniest piece of ordnance can be deadly. Take for example, the blast-

ing cap; about the size of a fire cracker and yet it can very easily kill you instantly.

Trespassers finding any ordnance should never touch the device and especially should not even consider taking it home. The location of the ordnance should be contacted immediately.

EOD maintains a 24-hour emergency response system but the section may also be reached through the Base Safety Office and the Provost Marshal's Office.

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal section at Marine Corps Base, Twentynine Palms could use a little cooperation from people by not trespassing on the ranges. Recent incidents concerning trespassers on the ranges have shown that, unless you know what you're doing like EOD here, handling ordnance can have only one result: DEATH!

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

GRAYSON WILLIAM JOHN LAKE
Born February 6, 2016
Born to Stephen and Kaileigh Lake

MAX JAMES HALLGREN
Born February 8, 2016
Born to Colton and Danielle Hallgren

ERICK GABRIEL NAVA
Born February 11, 2016
Born to Daniel and Kelsey Nava

OLIVER JAMES MACCOY
Born February 13, 2016
Born to John and Crystal MacCoy

ALYNAH ALESE SAMILTON
Born February 16, 2016
Born to Jason and Rosana Samilton

PHOENIX ALAINA GRAVES
Born February 20, 2016
Born to Jose and Karen Graves

ALENA FAY COFFINGER
Born February 24, 2016
Born to Ashley and Zachary Coffinger

NATHANAEL CAVAN LUCAS
Born March 7, 2016
Born to Gregory and Leah Lucas

AUNDRÈA NIVÈA MARIE COLE
Born March 8, 2016
Born to Sean Cole and Kesnia Hinson

ELODIE MINA BELIN
Born March 8, 2016
Born to Justin and Kristen Belin

CROSSWORD

- Across**
- 1 Candidate Cruz
 - 4 Sudden
 - 10 Draft
 - 14 Conflict
 - 15 Upset stomach
 - 16 Hawaii's ___ Coast
 - 17 ___ League school
 - 18 St. Patrick's Day veggies?
 - 20 PC expert
 - 22 Patriot pts.
 - 23 Mice catchers
 - 24 Simpson girl
 - 26 Campaign staffer
 - 28 More St. Patrick's Day veggies?
 - 32 "Fine" things
 - 36 ___ Apso
 - 37 Number before 53-Down
 - 38 Bring in
 - 39 Aachen article
 - 40 One of the Addams family
 - 43 Stout relative
 - 44 Freshly
 - 46 Tee off
 - 47 North of Irangate
 - 49 Knob
 - 50 More St. Patrick's Day veggies?
 - 52 Editor's override
 - 54 "Wishing won't make ___"
 - 55 Bet
 - 57 Command to an attack dog
 - 59 Pond gunk
 - 62 St. Patrick's Day veggie?
 - 66 LummoX
 - 67 ___ about
 - 68 Fly a plane
 - 69 Huge amount
 - 70 Beethoven's birthplace
 - 71 Fast food chain
 - 72 Purpose

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- Down**
- 1 Tease
 - 2 Roof overhang
 - 3 Laundered with chemicals
 - 4 "Life of Pi" director Lee
 - 5 Bill for drinks
 - 6 Wished undone
 - 7 Takes advantage of
 - 8 Signature piece?
 - 9 Eastern way
 - 10 Outfit for the slopes
 - 11 Scarf material
 - 12 Places to overnight
 - 13 Heating fuel
 - 19 Affirmative action
 - 21 Goes quickly
 - 25 Hike
 - 26 Founder of the Shakers
 - 27 Words of enlightenment
 - 28 Collect slowly
 - 29 Safari sight
 - 30 Surrounded, in olden times
 - 31 Supermarket section
 - 33 Distribute differently
 - 34 Connie's portrayer, in "The Godfather"
 - 35 Hurry
 - 41 Push for
 - 42 Royals manager Ned
 - 45 Cowboy movie

- 48 Girl
- 51 Elegant feature
- 53 Number after 37-Across
- 55 River of Tuscany
- 56 Advertising sign
- 57 English
- 58 Apple tablet
- 60 Abreast of
- 61 Make whole
- 62 Sailor
- 63 Handle clumsily
- 64 Planning time
- 65 ___ publica

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Last week's answers

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8	9	5	6	2	7	3	1	4
3	6	1	4	5	9	8	2	7
7	4	3	5	1	8	9	6	2
6	1	9	2	7	3	4	8	5
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 - K Smoke Shop, 5865A Adobe Rd.
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 - Puff's Tobacco Mart, 57063 29 Palms Hwy.
In Palm Springs:
 - Village Pub, 266 S. Palm Canyon Dr.
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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

David Carr

Fair Lawn, N.J. Ammo tech, Center Magazine Area

CARR



>I grew up in a middle class community. It was a nice neighborhood; the kind where all the children play outside. It felt like I was in the middle of everything. If I wanted to go to New York City, I could take a train ride and be there. If I wanted to play paintball or ride dirt bikes in the country, I could just take a different bus.

>Right now, I'm actually an [ammunition technician] and I work at the [Center

Magazine Area.] It's essentially where units go when they conduct training and need ammunition or munitions. Units that don't use all their allotted ammo turn it in to CMA. My job is basically quality assurance, I make sure it is still good to use and get a count so we can return it to our inventory.

>I joined the Marine Corps straight out of high school. I knew I wanted to join the military in my senior year but my parents did not approve at first. They wanted

Carr spends his free time playing pick-up basketball games and practicing Jiu-jitsu. He is currently working on his associate's degree in criminal justice at Copper Mountain College.

me to go to college however I knew what was right for me. It was set in stone the day I talked to my recruiter.

>When I spoke to the Marines, they were straight forward; I liked that.

>I have two siblings, an older sister and younger brother. My sister lives in D.C. and works as a consultant for [the Federal Emergency Management Agency.] She graduated from the University of Maryland with a full scholarship and is the academic of the family while being an inspiration to me.

>My little brother has always looked up to me. I believe he wants to become a Marine as well.

>I love playing basketball. Whenever I get the opportunity I play pick-up games at the gym. I just like the running and sprinting as well as the competition of the sport. It also requires a team to move with fluidity. You have to be in synch with each other to score points on the other team.

>I have a couple friends who I can always play with but you can always find people who want to play here. Everyone is down for a little friendly competition every now and then.

>Before I joined the military, I got really interested in Jiu-jitsu and started taking classes. My friends and I will spar from time to time and we always pick up new techniques from one another. I'm not too knowledgeable but I enjoy the challenge of having to be creative to come up with a solution to beat an opponent.

>Stamina is the hardest part. Grappling can go on for an extended period of time and you have to be able to stay in the fight even when you get tired.

>When you have a new move you want to try it can be difficult to execute. I get satisfaction out of using a technique I've just learned successfully.

>I started going to school at Copper Mountain College this January. I'm making use of financial aid and am working toward an associate's degree in criminal justice.

>I'd say the thing I value most about the Marine Corps is being able to talk to another Marine and just click with them. You can always find common ground. It's different than being home and meeting somebody you don't know because it will take longer to get to know them. Marines are all like brothers and sisters.

INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

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Combat Center Marines represent Corps on international stage

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

INDIAN WELLS, Calif. - A spotlight shined on the Combat Center Color Guard as they proudly held the National and Marine Corps colors. The sounds of cheering fans echoed throughout the Indian Wells Tennis Garden, where television cameras internationally broadcasted the presentation of the colors.

The 14th annual Banque Nationale de Paris, Paribas Open's Salute to Heroes featured Combat Center Marines and Color Guard at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in Indian Wells, Calif., March 11.

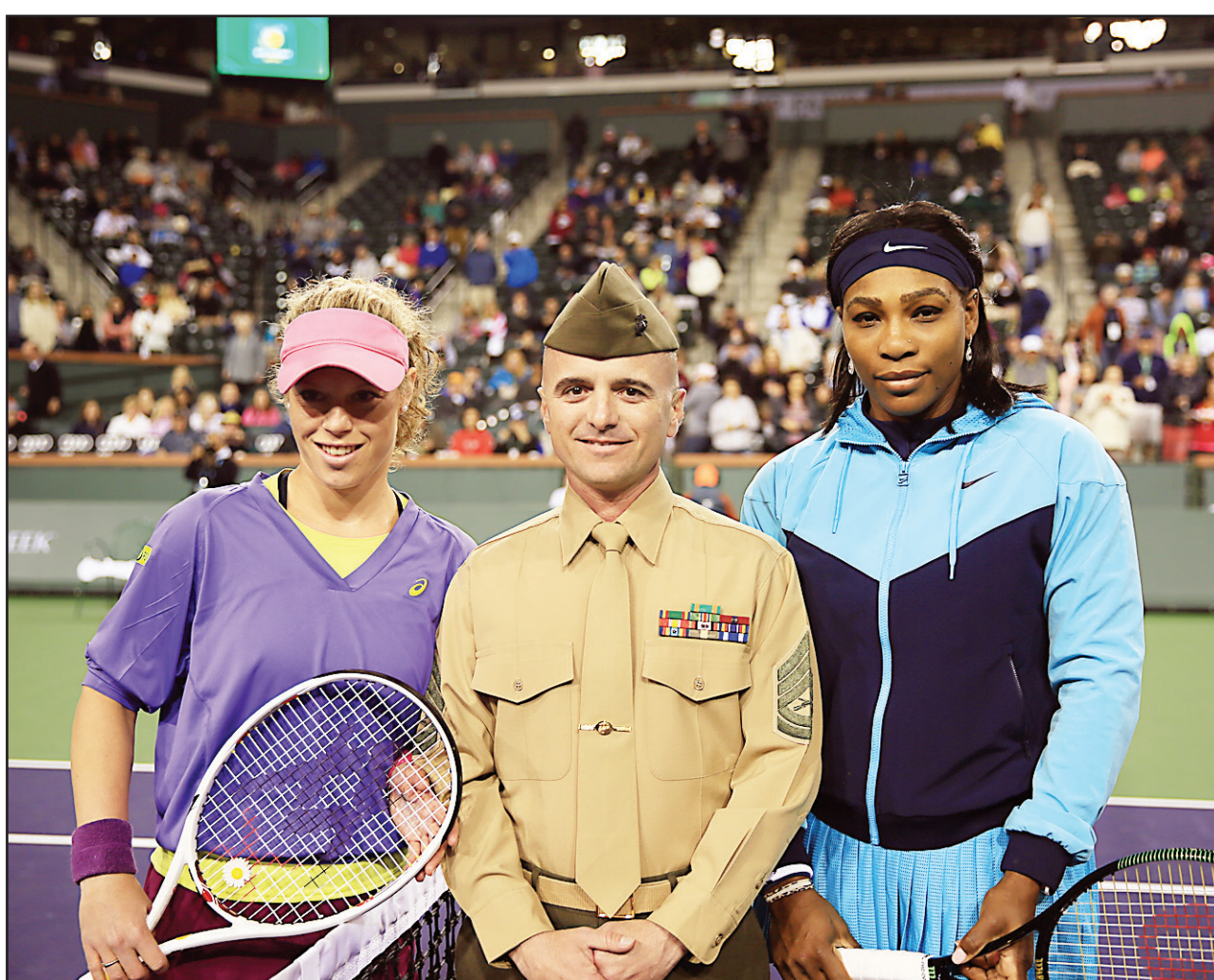
Gunnery Sgt. Antonio Soto, company gunnery sergeant, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, flipped the coin at the start of the final tennis match. The Combat Center Color Guard presented the colors and more than 50 Marines from MCCES, led by Soto, displayed an American flag that spanned the main tennis court.

"When I was a kid we would go out to sporting events and see the flag being displayed and actually being part of it really means a lot to me," said Pfc. Simon McGinny, student, MCCES. "Also being out in the community and doing something like this is really awesome."

The Salute to Heroes ceremony took place after professional tennis players Serena Williams' and Yulia Putintseva's match in which Williams was victorious. The match and ceremony was broadcasted on various sports channels.

Prior to the start of the match, Marines enjoyed a free meal from a food stand of their choice, where many attendees of the open stopped and thanked them for their service.

"It's always a blessing to get a group of Marines and showcase their motivation," Soto said. "I think that this group of Marines did the base and Marine Corps justice with the professionalism they displayed."



Gunnery Sgt. Antonio Soto, company gunnery sergeant, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, stands with Serena Williams and Yulia Putintseva, professional tennis players, prior to their match during the Banque Nationale de Paris Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in Indian Wells, Calif., March 11.



Marines with Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School unravel the National Colors during the 14th annual Banque Nationale de Paris Paribas Open's Salute to Heroes at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in Indian Wells, Calif., March 11.



Sergeant Heather Keasler, Color Sergeant, and Cpl. Crystal Guerrero, rifle bearer, Combat Center Color Guard, prepare to march onto the court during the 14th annual Banque Nationale de Paris Paribas Open's Salute to Heroes at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in Indian Wells, Calif., March 11.

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Combat Center Legal Services shows appreciation

PHOTOS BY CPL. JULIO MCGRAW



Captain Adam LoCascio, defense counsel, Legal Services Support Team, thanks investigators from the San Bernardino County Auto Theft Task Force, for the continued support they provide to LSST and Combat Center service members. SANCATT is an auto theft task force comprised of law enforcement officers from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, San Bernardino Police Department, California Highway Patrol, San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office, and the California State Department of Insurance.



Leaders from the Combat Center Legal Services Support Team present investigators from the San Bernardino County Auto Theft Task Force with a letter of appreciation thanking them for the continued support they provide for LSST and Combat Center service members.



Lieutenant Col. Hugh J. Redman, officer in charge, Legal Services Support Team, presents Investigator T. Boyles, senior investigator, San Bernardino County Auto Theft Task Force, a letter of appreciation thanking SANCATT for their continued efforts in helping Combat Center service members and LSST.



Lieutenant Col. Hugh J. Redman, officer in charge, Legal Services Support Team, thanks the San Bernardino County Auto Theft Task Force for their efforts while working with LSST. The task force was presented a letter of appreciation by LSST for the continued work they do supporting the legal team.



Lieutenant T. DeLong, investigator, San Bernardino County Auto Theft Task Force, looks at the letter of appreciation presented to SANCATT by the Combat Center Legal Services Support Team. The letter was presented to the task force for their work and continued support in helping Combat Center service members and aiding the Combat Center Legal Office.

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Spring from pg. A1

Regiment come out together for this event.”

During the event, all the families of ‘Magnificent Seventh’ had the opportunity to have their picture taken with a life sized Easter bunny, enjoy food and drinks and participate in egg hunts for different age groups.

During the egg hunts parents walked through designated areas of the golf course with their children and helped collect colorful candy-filled eggs.

“Events like these are great,” said Caitlin Adams, wife of Capt. Jeremiah Adams, commanding officer, Company I, 3/4.

“Meeting all the different families here makes you feel like a part of the community and it is nice to be able to take your kids out to have some fun.”

While there, the unit FROs took the opportunity to get to know the families from different units and they hope to host events like this in the future.

“These units are so big that it can be difficult to get to know every family,” Durden said. “Events like this one give the families an opportunity to get to know each other, which can be one of the greatest tools these families can have.”



PHOTOS BY CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

Lola Adams, daughter of Capt. Jeremiah Adams, commanding officer, Company I, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marine Regiment, plays with an Easter egg she found during the 7th Marine Regiment Spring Eggstravaganza held at the Desert Winds Golf Course, March 11.



PHOTOS BY CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

Gunner Sgt. Jacob Mahaffey, logistics chief, Headquarters Company, 7th Marine Regiment, helps his 1-year-old son, Lincoln, collect eggs while participating in an egg hunt during the 7th Marine Regiment Spring Eggstravaganza held at the Desert Winds Golf Course, March 11.

CTB from pg. A1

out a Cyber Planning Support team to the Australian Defense Force School of Signals and attending the Spectrum Warfare Support planning conference.

According to Weisickel, being aboard the Combat Center has provided the students with excellent opportunities for realistic training.

“The equipment is top of the line and we have the space [aboard the installation] to actually facilitate training in the field,” Weisickel said. “It gives Marines a first-hand experience of the equipment they will be working with when they go to the fleet.”

With the training opportunities offered at the Combat Center, the battalion’s instructors are better equipped to provide the instruction necessary for the communication community to meet the needs of an ever-evolving Marine Corps.

“Since we moved here, I’d attribute our success to the Marines of the CTB and all the work they put towards accomplishing our mission,” Koumparakis said. “Especially our instructors, as I consider them our main effort in our operations turning basic Marine rifleman into communication Marines.”



LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

A Marine with Communication Training Battalion, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, sings cadence during the battalion’s three-mile motivational run in honor of the battalion’s anniversary aboard the Combat Center, March 11.

Welcomes from pg. A1

Desert Cities Mitchell Paige Medal of Honor Chapter aboard the installation to give them a taste of the Corps. The city supports Marines in the regiment by putting together care packages during the unit’s deployments, and sponsoring events like family days throughout the year.

“[We] want to show our deep appreciation to the leaders of the City of Palm Desert, and recognize the valuable role they play as our adoptive city,” said Lt. Col. Jared Spurlock, executive officer, 7th Marine Regiment. “We wanted to show the city leaders, community members, and our veterans some of the training that our Marines and sailors go through as they prepare for deployment.”

The visiting members of the city and association started the tour of the Combat Center by having breakfast with Magnificent Seventh Marines at Littleton Mess Hall. Following their meal with the Marines, the group observed the Marine Corps Battle Color Detachment, comprised of The Silent Drill Platoon, Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps, and the Official Marine Corps Color Guard, and which performs at the Combat Center annually.

“Watching the Marines perform with their rifles and the precision of everyone was amazing,” said Laurent Groult, member, Palm Desert Chamber of Commerce. “I have seen similar things on T.V. but seeing it in real life is even more amazing.”

After the presentation, the group observed 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment Marines conducting a Mission Rehearsal Exercise at Range 220. At the range, Maj. Philip Flambert, Company Commander, Weapons Company, 2/7, explained the purpose of the exercise and his company’s task for the units’ upcoming deployment to the Central



‘Magnificent Seventh’ hosted Palm Desert City Council, Chamber of Commerce, and the 1st Marine Division Association, Desert Cities Mitchell Paige Medal of Honor Chapter aboard the Combat Center for a day of ceremony and training, March 9.

Command area of operations.

While there, Flambert and 1st Sgt. Demond Rhodes, company first sergeant, Weapons Company, 2/7, showed the group the equipment they use, the way they operate in a deployed environment and how to prepare military rations. Following Range 220, the group visited Range 100 where they interacted with another 2/7 company of Marines training in tasks they might encounter while deployed. The group was shown the weapons and equipment like a static M240B medium machinegun and a decommissioned M136 AT4 Anti-Tank Rocket trainer.

“I have a love for Marines because I am one,” said Vince Mast, member, 1st Marine Division Association, Desert Cities Mitchell Paige Medal of Honor Chapter. “These young warriors, they are a whole new class of warrior and it is a real joy for me to see the superb training, leadership and equipment they have. Just knowing that they are there doing what they do to protect us, our families and America, I am truly grateful.”

The 1st Marine Division Association is comprised of Marine Corps veterans who have developed a strong relationship with 7th Marine

Regiment through their coordination of support for Marines, sailors and their families when service members are deployed, and during other events throughout the year.

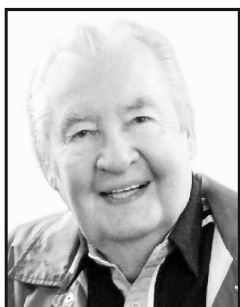
“Our Marine veterans are an integral part of the community, our Marine Corps heritage and legacy,” Spurlock said. “This visit we had with us a Marine Veteran with us who was in Company E, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines during the Korean War. He was able to connect and share stories with Marines currently, in his old outfit. In my opinion, that is an absolutely incredible bonding experience that you simply can’t find anywhere else.”

At the end of the tour, the group interacted with leaders of the Magnificent Seventh at the regiment’s headquarters.

“The community has supported our family days, prepared care packages for our forward deployed units, and provided holiday meals and other support to our Marines, sailors and families,” said Spurlock. “The patriotism, heartfelt resolve, and enduring support demonstrated by the City of Palm Desert has been absolutely amazing. The Marines and sailors of the regiment are forever grateful.”

TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



One of my favorite Roman Catholic saints is St. Patrick. I have him right up there with St. Thomas, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, and, of course, St. Francis of Assisi. His birthday is next Monday, March 17th.

St. Patrick was born in 389 in Wales. St. Patrick’s mother was a beautiful Welsh maiden and his father was a handsome Roman soldier. His family name was Sucat. The name Patrick is the English form of his Latin name, Patricius.

St. Patrick had a romantic early life, filled with adventure. He was captured by pirates from Ireland at the age of 16 and spent six years tending flocks for a feudal lord. While in Ireland he became a devout Christian. He escaped in 411 and fled to France. It was in a monastery in France that St. Patrick committed himself to the Roman Catholic Church for life and became a monk. After years of spiritual preparation, St. Patrick was ordained a priest at the age of 27.

In 432 a compelling vision led St. Patrick to return to Ireland as a tough minded optimistic missionary bishop. He worked zealously all over Ireland for the rest of his life. He founded more than 300 churches and personally baptized more than 120,000 people. He died in 461.

Please know, however, that there was also a fun side to this great man and he brought much joy and good cheer to the Irish people. It was said that people knew where Patrick had been by the trail of gladness that he left behind.

He was a hard working, hard playing, tough minded optimist. He was my kind of guy.

This column sponsored by:

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Jimmy Fitzpatrick, freestyle motocross rider, Metal Mulisha, autographs a child's hat at the Motocross Jam Fest aboard the Combat Center, Saturday.



Motocross Jam Fest blazes through Combat Center

A motocross rider makes a sharp turn at the Motocross Jam Fest aboard the Combat Center, Saturday. The event, hosted by Marine Corps Community Services, included concession stands, motorcycle stunt performances by professional motocross riders, and live rock music from Boston-based band, Lansdowne.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

The rider's engines growled at one another as they took their places on the starting line. With the wave of a flag, the racers took off, kicking flurries of mud and dust into the air and igniting the crowd who cheered for their favorite competitor.

The world of motocross blazed through the Combat Center during the Motocross Jam Fest, Saturday.

"This is the second year we've held this event," said Liz Spurbeck, special events manager, Marine Corps Community Services. "Last year was in response to a survey where patrons on base said they wanted to see an outdoor sporting event."

The event was free and open to all hands. It included concession stands, motorcycle stunt performances by professional motocross riders, and live rock music from Boston-based band,

Lansdowne. Additionally, the freestyle riders from the Metal Mulisha Moto Team performed a series of stunts on a 13-foot ramp and afterward, all of the riders went through a designated stunt course.

"It's very convenient to not have to spend money for gas and traveling and have something like this so close to home," said Lance Cpl. Bobby Peters, rifleman, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. "Motocross might not be everyone's favorite thing but being able to see the stunts and tricks is great for both children and adults."

In between stunts, the riders took time to sign autographs and answer questions for the crowd of spectators.

"We've always been huge supporters of our military," said Jimmy Fitzpatrick, freestyle rider, Metal Mulisha. "Any time we have the opportunity to come out and do a show for these guys; it's really more of a bonus for us."



Jimmy Fitzpatrick, freestyle motocross rider, Metal Mulisha, performs stunts at the Motocross Jam Fest aboard the Combat Center, Saturday.

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1st Tanks conducts decontamination exercise

PHOTOS BY CPL. JULIO MCGRAW



Lance Cpl. Michael Pleminski, tank maintainer, 1st Tank Battalion, decontaminates a M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank during 1st Tanks' operational decontamination training on Bearmat Hill, March 10. 1st Tanks held the exercise to sharpen its skills decontaminating tanks, tactical vehicles, and personnel who are exposed to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear contaminants.



Pfc. Henry Lameta, small arms repair technician, assists Lance Cpl. Florentino Buck, motor transportation operator, 1st Tank Battalion, in removing Mission Oriented Protective Posture gear during 1st Tanks' operational decontamination training on Bearmat Hill, March 10.



1st Tank Battalion Marines await to assist in decontaminating personnel during 1st Tanks' operational decontamination training on Bearmat Hill, March 10.



Lance Cpl. Michael Pleminski, tank maintainer, 1st Tank Battalion, decontaminates a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle during 1st Tanks' operational decontamination training on Bearmat Hill, March 10.

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Adventures in the desert



LAUREN KURKIMILIS

Malacothrix Glabrata, Desert Dandelion found at Wonderland of Rocks, Joshua Tree National Park, Wednesday.



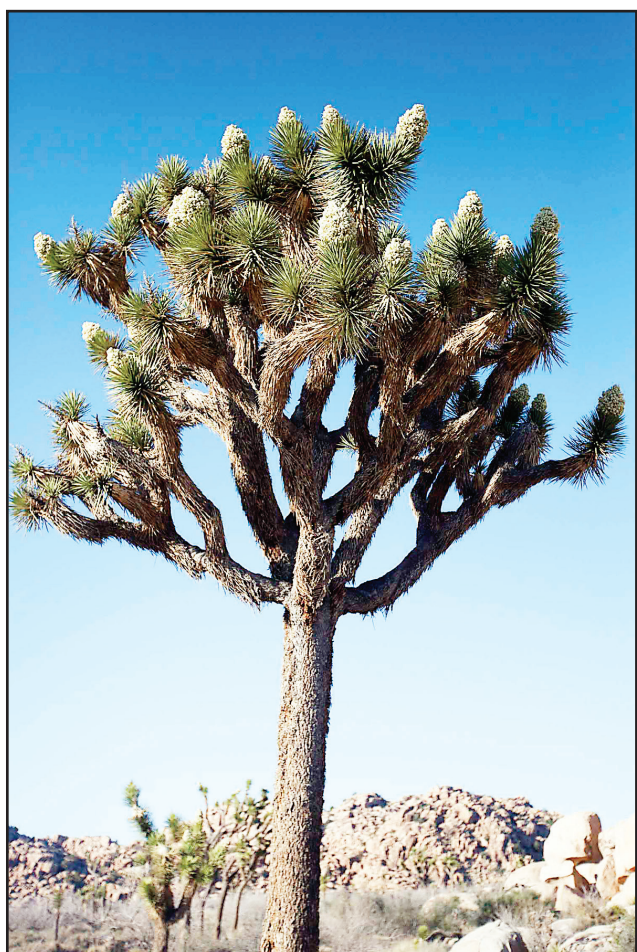
LAUREN KURKIMILIS

Opuntia Basilaris, Beavertail Cactus found at Joshua Tree National Park West Entrance, Wednesday.



CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

A Joshua Tree blooms at Joshua Tree National Park, Split Rock area, Wednesday.



LAUREN KURKIMILIS

Yucca Brevifolia Engelm, Joshua Tree found at Wonderland of Rocks, Joshua Tree National Park, Wednesday.

BY PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

Spring begins March 20 and in the Southern Mojave Desert is starting to bloom.

Not far from the Combat Center lies the world-renowned Joshua Tree National Park, which is beginning to show signs of vibrant and bountiful life.

Named for the twisted, spined tress that call the park home, it is a diverse biological landscape teeming with a fascinating variety of plants and animals. This unique variety of life makes their homes in a land sculpted by strong winds and occasional torrents of rain. With these periods of much needed occasional hydration, new life springs forth.

The Combat Center's Public Affairs Office ventured in to the national park to capture the wonders of a dawning spring.



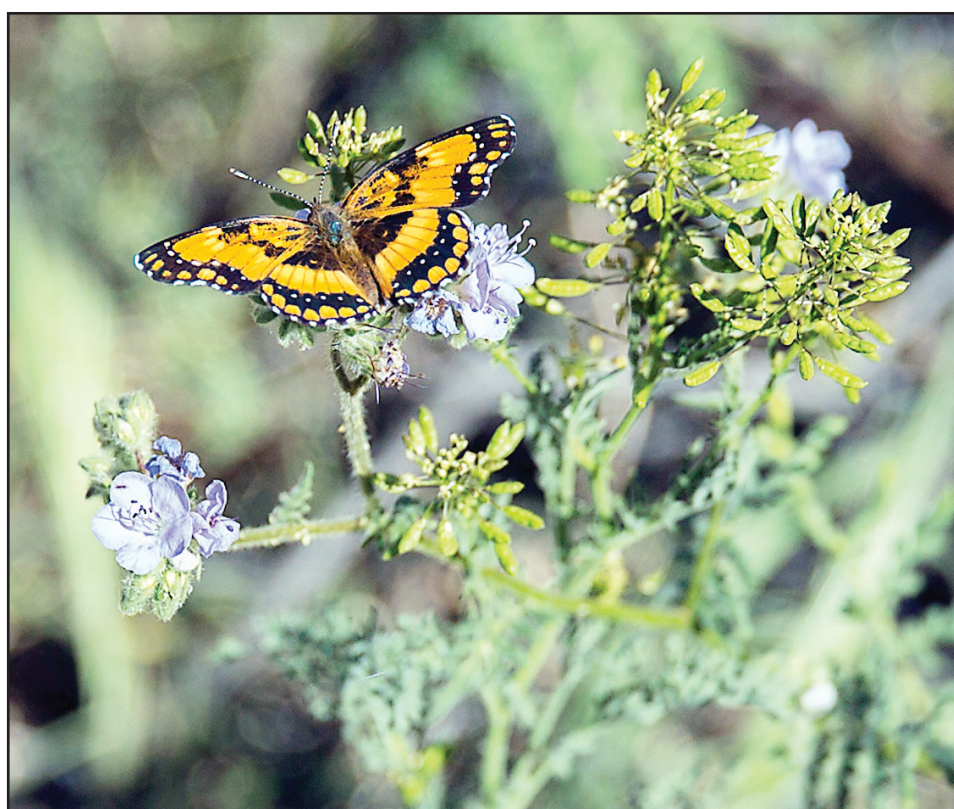
CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Blue Phacelia found at Joshua Tree National Park, Indian Cove, Wednesday.



LAUREN KURKIMILIS

Malacosoma Californicum, Western Tent Caterpillar found at Wonderland of Rocks, Joshua Tree National Park, Wednesday.



LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

Blue Phacelia found at Joshua Tree National Park, Indian Cove, Wednesday.



CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

Desert Mallow found at Joshua Tree National Park's Split Rock area, Wednesday.



LAUREN KURKIMILIS

Freckled Milkvetch Rattleweed, Loco Weed found at Wonderland of Rocks, Joshua Tree National Park, Wednesday

Liberty Call



Combat Center Events

A free nutrition seminar will be offered by Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms, March 22. The seminar will be held from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Naval Hospital in classroom 4. Seating is limited, to RSVP call 760-830-2173.

An Education and Career Fair is scheduled for March 23 at the West Gym from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event is open to all hands and business dress or uniform of the day is suggested. For more information call 760-830-7225

Hashmarks Staff Non-commissioned Officer Club hosts steak night open to all hands Mondays from 4:30p.m. to 8 p.m. and SNCOs only on Fridays. For more information call 760-830-5035.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, March 18

5:00 p.m. – Zoolander 2, PG-13
7:30 p.m. – How To Be Single, R
10:00 p.m. – The Witch, R

Saturday, March 19

12:00 p.m. - Kung Fu Panda 3 (3-D), PG
2:30 p.m. – The Finest Hours, PG-13
5:00 p.m. – The Choice, PG-13
7:30 p.m. – Race, PG-13
10:30 p.m. – Deadpool, R

Sunday, March 20

12:00 p.m. – Deadpool, R
2:30 p.m. – Zoolander 2, PG-13
5:00 p.m. - Risen, PG-13
7:30 p.m. – The Witch, R

Monday, March 21

7:00 p.m. – Deadpool, R

Tuesday, March 22

7:00 p.m. – How To Be Single, R

Wednesday, March 23

6:30 p.m. – Race, PG-13

Thursday, March 24

5:00 p.m. – Kung Fu Panda 3, PG
7:00 p.m. – The Finest Hours, PG-13

Friday, March 25

8:00 p.m. – Risen, PG-13
10:30 p.m. – The Witch, R



Fly Like an Eagle

'Eddie the Eagle' soars with inspiring tale of unlikely Olympic star

NEIL POND

'Eddie the Eagle'
Starring Taron Edgerton & Hugh Grant
Directed by Dexter Fletcher
Rated PG-13

Every since he was a tot, Great Britain's Michael "Eddie" Edwards dreamed of becoming an Olympic athlete. But the odds were always stacked against him.

Weight lifter, pole vaulter, discus thrower, hurdle jumper—he didn't care. But no amount of backyard "training" made any difference. With congenitally wobbly knees bolstered by leg braces and thick eyeglasses to correct his terrible vision, young Eddie was no one's idea of the Olympic ideal.

Though it takes a few—or more—liberties, Eddie the Eagle is based on the rousing real-life story of Edwards, who proved all the naysayers wrong to become an Olympic competitor, representing Great Britain in the 1988 Winter Olympics as a ski jumper. The movie traces his improbable journey, against the wishes of his working-class father, who urges him to settle into a proper trade, and England's stuffy Olympic committee, which thwarts his every attempt to qualify for their team.

"Frankly," one official dismissively tells teenage Eddie (Taron Edgerton), "you will never be Olympic material—goodbye."

Eddie counters that curt farewell with his usual optimism, tenacity and pluck. Nothing is going to deter him. He sets off on his own to a Winter Olympics training facility, where he meets former

ski champ Bronson Peary (Hugh Jackman), who reluctantly, eventually agrees to take Eddie under his wing.

As the stocky, bumbling, socially awkward Eddie, Edgerton is miles—or kilometers—away from his best-known former role as a stylish, slick super-spy in Kingsman. Jackman provides American-cowboy grit (all the way down to his boots) as a washed-up one-time "whiz kid" of the slopes and former Olympic star himself, who finds his own path to redemption through Eddie's relentless ambition.

You probably haven't heard of British actor-director Dexter Fletcher, whose films haven't made much of a splash here in America. But he gives Eddie the Eagle a look, texture and sound perfect for its time and place, from Prince Charles and Lady Diana salt and pepper shakers on a kitchen table to the music, which combines pop and rock tunes of the era with instrumental synthesizer swooshes and swirls that would have been right at home driving the grooves of most any 1980s flick.

The movie shares its uplifting underdog spirit with Rocky, Rudy, Seabiscuit, Hoosiers and any number of other film sagas about individuals or teams that come from behind, power through roadblocks or are told they can't, shouldn't or won't ever.

When Eddie finally makes it to the Olympics, the crowd and the media love the naïve, effusively enthusiastic oddity who barely qualified for his team and who causes the announcers to declare, "The eagle has landed!" when he makes his climactic breathtaking, daredevil descent intact—and alive.

"The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part," we're told, a quote from one of the games' founders. And no one embodied that spirit like Eddie, whose inspiring, soaring tale of determination and personal triumph in the heartwarming Eddie the Eagle is a joy to behold as it takes flight.

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**April
13**

Mountain Bike Event

Duration: 7 miles
Start: 8 am | 4th Street
Adjacent to Bldg. 1480
by the Rappel tower

**April
14**

Road Bike Criterium

Duration: 8.8 miles
(1.1 mile loop)
Start: 8 am
15th & Dunham Street

**April
15**

5K Fun Run

Start: 6:30 am
Desert Winds Golf Course
Register early and get your
FREE t-shirt while supplies last.



**Register & view maps
at green29.org**

For more information,
contact 830.6857

**Entry Fee:
One recycled item**
Walk ups for all events
are welcome!

Trophies will be presented
at Earth Day Extravaganza.

**April
15**

**Earth Day
Extravaganza**

- Carnival Rides
- Food
- Music
- Info Booths
- Camel Rides

4:30 – 8:30pm
Trophy presentation: 6pm

**Lincoln Military Housing
Athletic Field**
(Behind ASYMCA)



**April
30**

**Park to Park Ride
50 miles**

Knott Sky Park through
Joshua Tree National Park

300 Riders | Pre-registered will receive a t-shirt
For more information, call 760.367.7562
or visit 29palms.org

Cost: \$25
\$10 Active Duty, Retirees & Family Members

**For more information, contact
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