



Brig. Gen. Ryan Heritage, deputy director of operations, U.S. Cyber Command, talks with Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School students aboard the Combat Center, Tuesday.

MCPC readies Marines for future operations

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CPL. THOMAS MUDD

The Marine Air Ground Task Force Communication Planners Course (MCPC) began Jan. 9 aboard the Combat Center and will serve as the advanced planners' course for the Marine Corps.

Open to senior enlisted personnel as well as officers, the course provides training in such subjects as project management, contracting, MAGTF information management for air and ground command and control systems, and in-depth analysis of cyberspace operations. The instructors will bring in approximately 30 lecturers to teach throughout 63 training days.

"While attending MCPC, students develop the necessary critical thinking skills to plan Advanced MAGTF Communications Architectures spanning the full range of military operations in a contested, denied, degraded command and control environment with planning considerations spanning the full spectrum of cyberspace operations," said Capt. William Hochrine, MCPC director, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School. "Students will

See **MCPC A7**



Brig. Gen. Ryan Heritage, deputy director of operations, U.S. Cyber Command, discusses the Marine Air Ground Task Force Communication Planners Course aboard the Combat Center, Tuesday.

CG's Tour Program showcases Combat Center

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

The Combat Center's Government and External Affairs G-5 hosted members of the Drug Enforcement Administration Citizens' Academy Alumni Association of Los Angeles, during a tour of the Combat Center Jan. 26. The event was conducted under the Commanding

ing them and letting them experience a small part of it, makes a huge difference and is a great eye opener."

The tour began at Range 800, where guests learned basic knowledge of countering improvised explosive devices. Melvin Harris, counter IED instructor, Marine



CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Members of the Drug Enforcement Administration Citizens' Academy Alumni Association visit the Battle Simulation Center aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 26.

General's Tour Program, which is designed to offer insight for community members to learn more about the Combat Center and how Marines and sailors train aboard the installation.

Adam Clancy, operations officer and tour manager, G-5, escorted the DEACAA members during three events that helped showcase Marine Corps combat operations.

"As an infantry Marine, it's been rewarding helping the tour groups understand the fight, the stress and a little bit of reality of what the Marines may face," Clancy said. "Describing the training to someone, vice show-

Corps Engineer School, took the lead in instructing the DEACAA members on different tools Marines and sailors use to avoid IED's, such as the Holley Stick, a tool used exclusively by Marine Corps explosive ordnance disposal technicians, that provides them with the capability to investigate and manipulate a suspect IED from a stand-off distance.

Next they toured the Combat Convoy Simulator, where they were able to learn how Marines train for simulated convoy operations. They also learned how to operate

See **Tour A7**



CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Members of the Drug Enforcement Administration Citizens' Academy Alumni Association learn how to sweep for improvised explosive devices at Range 800 aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 26.

Inside the Observation Post

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Sgt. Piepenhagen awarded Navy and Marine Corps Medal

See page B1

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. Alexander Mitchell.



A U.S. Marine with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response-Africa is welcomed home by his family as he returns to Camp Lejeune, N.C., Jan. 17. During the nine-month deployment, Marines and sailors served as the logistics combat element supporting operations and training exercises across Europe and Africa. U.S. Marines and sailors assigned to SPMAGTF-CR-AF Command support operations, contingencies and security cooperation in the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility.



Reprinted from the Observation Post
February 2, 1973

World's largest Marine Base marks 16 years

Sixteen years ago yesterday, the world's largest Marine Corps Training Center became the world's largest Marine Corps Base. On Feb. 1, 1957, Marine Corps Base, Twentynine Palms was born.

Spawned from the obscure beginnings this once trackless expanse of desert was first used by U.S. Army as a glider training base earlier in 1904. Its name then was Condor Field.

Gliders soon faded from the scene; however the Army relinquished control of the land to the Army Air Corps. Working in conjunction with the Twentynine Palms Air Academy, the Air Corps used the base to train fighter pilots until 1944.

Artillery rounds first sailed across this half million acres of

sand and rock in 1945, when the Navy assumed control of the base in August of that year. It was used principally for rocket training and as a gunnery and bombing range, while the air strip became an auxiliary landing strip.

With the end of World War II, the land temporarily lost military significance, and lay dormant for seven years. The property was placed under the control of San Bernardino County during this time.

The "space age" suddenly found the Marine Corps without a reservation large enough to handle the sophisticated new rockets and artillery pieces. So a search was launched to find an area big enough to accommodate such weapons as 155mm guns,

eight-inch howitzers, Honest John rockets, and other missiles.

Thus Twentynine Palms was rediscovered, this time by the United States Marines. Lt. Col. Frederick H. Scantling, on Dec. 15, 1952, moved his Headquarters Detachment from Camp Pendleton to Twentynine Palms, and the Marine Corps Training Center was established.

The first barracks were completed here in October of 1953. Soon, other buildings were completed and men and equipment were ordered in.

So, in 1957, as Twentynine Palms was outgrowing its use as a training center, the Marine Corps decided to designate it as a full-fledged base.

On Feb. 1, 1957, Brig. Gen. T.G. McFarland received the

colors and the command from Maj. Gen. G.F. Good, Jr., then the Commanding General at Camp Pendleton, and the Marine Corps Training Center became Marine Corps Base, Twentynine Palms.

Since that time new units have been formed, old ones deployed and others have returned from deployment. This is where Ninth Communications Battalion and Fifth Field Artillery Group got their start. This is where the Communications and Electronics School Battalion carved a new foothold.

The Second Light Antiaircraft Missile Battalion was activated here in August of 1960. The initial cadre of officers and enlisted men received formal school training at the U.S. Army

Air Defense School at Fort Bliss, Texas. Upon completion of training early in 1961, the battalion returned to Twentynine Palms. This unit later saw action in Vietnam, becoming operational there in September of 1965.

Redeye School and .50 Caliber Machine Gun School moved to Twentynine Palms in April of 1968, and set up classrooms and range here.

Marine Corps Base Twentynine Palms is a vital link in the Marine Corps training establishment, and as such, is one of the key facilities of the Marine Corps. Marines serving here can be proud of being part of this establishment. Its continued success will remain dependent on the job done by these Marines.

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
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62	63					64					65			
66						67					68			
69						70					71			

- Across**
- Biblical shepherd
 - "Forget it!"
 - Pitcher, of a sort
 - 100 kurus
 - Egg
 - Brunch serving
 - Overabundance
 - Hop, skip or jump
 - Carried on
 - First and last letters of Greek alphabet (3 wds.)
 - Banana oil, e.g.
 - A pint, maybe
 - "Acid"
 - Robotic (2 wds.)
 - Alliance acronym
 - "Help!"
 - Dine at home
 - Fox relative
 - Old mob actions
 - Color of honey
 - Drone, e.g.
 - "___ quam videri" (North Carolina's motto)
 - Practice of telemarketers
 - Grand ___ ("Evangeline" setting)
 - "___ bad!"
 - Mature

- Household apparatus lessening hardness of water
 - Extra
 - "Cast Away" setting
 - Andes capital
 - "M*A*S*H" setting
 - Mint
 - Above
 - "Don't get any funny ___!"
 - Andy's radio partner
 - Cravings
- Down**
- Pond buildup
 - Dreadful mail items
 - Blow
 - Carpenter's machine
 - ___ Scotia
 - Microwave, e.g.
 - Veil of Indian women
 - Undissolved materials carried by blood
 - "God's Little ___"
 - Downer
 - Stones of great size
 - "Tarzan" extra
 - "20,000 Leagues" harpooner ___ Land
 - Branch
 - Checkers, e.g.

- Irving Berlin's "Blue ___"
- Crowded
- ___ Wednesday
- Bill and ___
- Dusk, to Donne
- Shoestring
- Civil rights org.
- Knight's "suit"
- Plates, china, etc.
- Kind of column (2 wds)
- Parenthesis, essentially
- "Fantasy Island" prop
- Appetite
- Flower of a plant
- Absorbed, as a cost
- Hard protective case or sheath
- Gangster's gun
- Filibuster
- Bind
- Sprite flavor
- Snares
- Length x width, for a rectangle
- After-dinner selection
- Assortment
- Sloughs
- Schuss, e.g.
- Detachable container

SUDOKU

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Last week's answers

1	R	A	N	I	S		S	E	L	L		C	A	P	E
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24	R	E	E	F	E	R		C	E	I	L	S			
		28	R	E	D		A	R	E	O	L	A	T	E	
33	A	C	M	E		L	A	M	A		F	I	C	H	E
39	S	L	A	N	D	E	R		S	A	T	C	H	E	L
43	P	U	N	C	H		O	P	E	N		K	E	N	S
47	S	E	A	H	O	R	S	E		I	C	E			
		51	F	L	E	E	T		M	A	R	T	H	A	
56	S	H	A	R	E	S		T	A	R		R	O	N	
61	T	A	X	I		I	N	T	O	L	E	R	A	N	T
66	A	L	O	E		S	O	O	T		S	A	V	O	R
69	G	E	N	S		T	R	E	E		S	T	E	R	E

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

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BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stephen Shane Rodriguez
Born on December 29, 2016
Born to Michael and Marci Rodriguez

Axel Octavious Hernandez
Born on January 1, 2017
Born to Ernesto and Ana Hernandez

Jackson Paul Young
Born on January 1, 2017
Born to Ryan and Rachel Young

Jackson Abel West
Born on January 7, 2017
Born to Casey and Abigail West

Cosette Christabel Rose Childress
Born on January 8, 2017
Born to Christopher and Ashley Childress

Nikolai Christopher Gillespie
Born on January 11, 2017
Born to Lisbeth and Nickolas Gillespie

Logan Orion Caine
Born on January 18, 2017
Born to Alexander and Aubrey Caine

Alivia Mae Koch
Born on January 20, 2017
Born to Eric and Elysa Koch

Logan Mitchel Rivera
Born on January 20, 2017
Born to Julian and Samantha Rivera

OBSERVATION POST

- Commanding General** - Brig. Gen. William F. Mullen III **Press Chief** - Cpl. Levi Schultz
Installation Sgt. Maj. - Sgt. Maj. Michael Hengdes **Correspondents** - Cpl. Thomas Mudd
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OFF-LIMITS ESTABLISHMENTS

- MCIWest off-limits establishments guidance prohibits service members from patronizing the following locations. This order applies to all military personnel.
- Off Limit Establishments as of Oct 25, 2016**
- Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Road, Twentynine Palms
 - STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Road, Twentynine Palms
 - Puff's Tobacco, 57063 29 Palms Highway, Yucca Valley
 - Yucca Tobacco Mart, 57602 29 Palms Highway, Yucca Valley
 - NYPD Pizza, 260-262 North Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs
 - Sam's Smoke Shop, 16520 West Main Street, Barstow
 - Teazer's Bar & Grill Nightclub, 14269 Seventh Street, Victorville
 - Angelo's Kars, 222 & 226 S. Coast Highway, Oceanside
 - Denny's Parking Lot, 692 E Street, Chula Vista
 - Burger King & McDonald's, 28th Street (parking lots), San Diego
 - Club Mustang, 2200 University Avenue, San Diego
 - Club San Diego, 3955 4th Avenue, San Diego
 - Get It On Shoppe, San Diego
 - Main Street Motel, 3494 Main Street, San Diego
 - Trolley Stations, Palomar Street & San Ysidro, San Diego
 - Vulcan Baths, 805 W. Cedar Street, San Diego
 - Dream Crystal, 1536 Highland Avenue, National City
 - Sports Auto Sales, 1111 National City Boulevard, National City

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

McCoy SLOAN

Detroit, Mi. Corporal, Tax Center

SLOAN ENTERED THE MARINE CORPS AS AN INFANTRY ASSAULTMAN AND HAS SINCE DEPLOYED TWICE TO IRAQ. THE DAY HE WAS LEAVING FOR HIS FIRST DEPLOYMENT, HE WAS ABLE TO SEE THE ULTRASOUND. HE KEPT THAT PHOTO WITH HIM FOR BOTH OF HIS DEPLOYMENTS.

> **Growing up in Detroit** was not as bad as most people think. I had to deal with a lot of odd jobs such as landscaping and helping my dad work on cars to help my family meet ends. I played football and baseball in my free time.

> **My dad was really hard on me growing up**, just because of how he was raised. He wanted to make sure I understood what it took to provide for and maintain a household.

> **My favorite memory with my dad** was fishing. Once a month, we'd go fishing with my grandfather's old fishing poles that he handmade.

> **My first thought of joining the Marine Corps** came to me because there was no way my family and I could pay for a college education. At the time, I thought the infantry environment in the Marine Corps would be the most intense.

> **I don't regret anything.** I love my job, and I love all the people who I've gone through some hard times with.

> **If I could go back and give advice** to the nervous kid on those yellow footprints, I'd tell myself to "Never be lazy; always try harder."

> **My first deployment was to Iraq.** I was with one of three platoons in Golf Company, [2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment,] in 2014. We were the first ones there to rebuild anything in Iraq after the war.

> **On the first deployment there was a feeling** of helplessness, and that was the last time I ever want to feel that. The main thing we really took away from that deployment was the pride in knowing we were legitimately to help the Iraqis.



> **While in Iraq, I was only able** to speak to my wife twice and I missed my son, Landon's, birth. I knew he was there, and I knew I was going to be a father, but it didn't really hit me until my wife came running to me with him in her arms.

> **It was a really amazing feeling being able** to hold my son for the first time. I realized then that I wanted to be the best father I possibly could be. By the time I deployed again, I had only spent four months with him due to the workups. Everyone else in my family had spent more time with my son than me, by the time he was over a year old.

> **For my second deployment** to Iraq, we went to the embassy and that was a lot better. We stood guard over the embassy and I was able to Face Time my wife and son a lot.

> **Right now I'm with the Tax Center** on the [Fleet Assistance Program.] I help Marines with their taxes. I'm really thankful for this duty because I can spend more time with my family and on myself.

> **After the Marine Corps, I'm** going to become a police officer and work on a criminal justice degree. I thought about what I'm good at and what it takes to provide for a family. I feel like transitioning from being

an infantryman to becoming a police officer is a smooth transition.

> **I live every day as if my son is always watching** me. I ask myself if I am setting a good example. Am I worthy of being his dad and my wife's husband?

> **I want to do everything I can to** be the man that I have chosen to be in life. Everyone chooses where they are at every point throughout their life. Right now, I'm a dad and a husband and because of that I have certain responsibilities. Everything I try to do is to be a good example for my son. Nothing is more important than that.

Interviewed and photographed by Lance Cpl. Dave Flores

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ededkeesling@aol.com for more info



Gallery 62 is the cooperative gallery of the Morongo Basin Cultural Arts Council, sponsor of the Hwy 62 Open Studio Art Tours

'Lava Dogs' turn up heat during ITX 2-17

Photos by Cpl. Aaron Patterson



Lance Cpl. Elias Bermudez, a rifleman assigned to Scout Snipers Platoon, Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, fires the M40A5 sniper rifle at Range 106 during Integrated Training Exercise 2-17, aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 13.



Marines with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, conduct a patrol during Integrated Training Exercise 2-17, aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 20.



A Marine assigned to Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, loads two magazines with 5.56mm rounds at Range 108 during Integrated Training Exercise 2-17, aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 13.



Cpl. Ramon Valenci, a dog handler with 1st Law Enforcement Battalion, assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, orders his military working dog, Red, to search for improvised explosive devices during Integrated Training Exercise 2-17, aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 19.



Marines with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, conduct urban breaching operations during Integrated Training Exercise 2-17, aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 20.



Marines assigned to Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, fire a M252A2 81mm mortar system at Range 106 during Integrated Training Exercise 2-17, aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 13.

Marines assigned to Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, conduct squad attack drills at Range 108 during Integrated Training Exercise 2-17, aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 13.



Cpl. Ramon Valenci, a dog handler with 1st Law Enforcement Battalion, assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, gives attention to his military working dog, Red, during Integrated Training Exercise 2-17, aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 19.

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Tour From A1



CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Sgt. Brandon White, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technician, Combat Center EOD, demonstrates using remote controlled bomb disposal robots to members of the Drug Enforcement Administration Citizens' Academy Alumni Association aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 26.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

This is not an emergency

Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua potable.
Tradúzcalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

Pursuant to a California regulation adopted July 1, 2014, the level of a substance called hexavalent chromium should not exceed 10 parts per billion (ppb) in drinking water provided by a public water system. This number is known as the maximum contaminant level or MCL. Senate Bill 385, which became law effective September 4, 2015, allows public water systems, with sources that produce water with a hexavalent chromium concentration above the MCL, time to come into compliance. So long as a public water system complies with the new law (Health & Safety Code, section 116431), it will not be deemed in violation of the MCL. In addition to other requirements, the new law requires the water system to come into compliance at the earliest feasible date prior to January 1, 2020.

The Combat Center continues to monitor for hexavalent chromium, and as of the date of this notice, the levels of hexavalent chromium in 3 of our 11 wells exceed the 10 ppb MCL. These 3 wells have been taken off-line and are secured indefinitely. This hexavalent chromium exceedance is due to naturally occurring minerals in the soil and not a result of any contamination.

Although this is not an emergency, as our customer, you have a right to know what happened, what we are doing to correct this situation, and what you should do. We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. We will continue to monitor for the level of hexavalent chromium and provide you with regular notices, at least twice a year.

What happened? What is being done?

The Combat Center is taking steps to provide water at or below the MCL for hexavalent chromium. However, to achieve that will take time and money. We submitted our proposed compliance plan to the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) Division of Drinking Water in February 2016 and received plan approval in March 2016. The approved plan requires us to achieve compliance no later than January 1, 2020, which we believe is the earliest feasible date considering the complexity of the plan and the amount of funding required.

The approved compliance plan contains the following actions that the Combat Center is taking, including a milestone schedule.

1. Funding for the project - Congressional funding has been requested and is tentatively scheduled to be received in FY18.
2. Timeline and Milestones - The Combat Center has completed a technology study and selected the proposed treatment process. The Combat Center anticipates compliance with the regulation by January 1, 2020. An Environmental Assessment for the construction and operation of the Drinking Water Treatment Facility is being conducted and is expected to be complete in June 2017.
3. The Combat Center has secured the 3 wells that exceed the MCL. These wells will remain secured until the Drinking Water Treatment Facility is completed and fully operational. The remaining water wells are providing water below the California MCL of 10 ppb.

What should I do?

This is not an emergency. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. The water being provided now is below the state threshold for hexavalent chromium. Some people who drink water containing hexavalent chromium in excess of the MCL over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer. If you have other health issues or concerns regarding your consumption of this water, you may wish to consult your doctor. If you wish to avoid drinking the water provided by our system, you may wish to use alternative water for drinking and cooking.

This notice was developed jointly with State Water Resources Control Board staff and approved for public release. Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in the barracks, schools, and businesses). If you have questions regarding this report or related issues please contact Mr. Chris Elliott, Water Resources Manager, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs (NREA) Division at 760-830-7883 or chris.elliott@usmc.mil.

Sincerely,

T. B. POCHOP
LtCol, USMC
Director, NREA

simulated .50 caliber machine guns, M-4 and M-16 rifles.

Finally, the DEACAA toured the Combat Center's EOD compound, where they had an opportunity to step into an EOD bomb suit, drive remote controlled bomb disposal robots, and ask the EOD technicians questions.

The Commanding General's Tour Program runs from October through April for adults 18 and older and those interested are required to make reservations 45 days in advance. The base provides the tours for free; the only cost to participants is lunch at one of the restaurants aboard the installation.

For full details on the tour program visit <http://www.29palms.marines.mil/Staff/G5-Government-and-External-Affairs/Tours/or> call (760) 830-3735.



CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Melvin Harris, counter improvised explosive device (IED) instructor, Marine Corps Engineer School, teaches members of the Drug Enforcement Administration Citizens' Academy Alumni Association the basics on countering IEDs at Range 800 aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 26.



CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Sgt. Alex Strait, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technician, Combat Center EOD, teaches a member of the Drug Enforcement Administration Citizens' Academy Alumni Association how to move in an EOD bomb suit aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 26.

MCPC From A1

also plan for Joint and Coalition Communications Systems and information sharing requirements."

Guest speakers to date include Army Lt. Col. Scott Applegate, deputy branch chief, Cyber Policy Branch, Strategic Plans and Policies, and Marine Brig. Gen. Ryan Heritage, deputy director of operations, U.S. Cyber Command.

"My lecture will give the students an overview of how cyber operations policy is conducted at the national and joint level," Applegate said. "This will cover how cyber operations are conducted and the coordination one would need to conduct these types of operations. This is a good course and [the instructors] are leading the students in the right direction and building a program that I believe will be world-class."

TOUGH MINDED

OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



This week we examine the words 'patience' and 'tenacity' and it's clear that 'patience' is not a passive word.

It is a dynamic word, "Let us run with patience," says the author of the letter to the Hebrews, not "let us sit with patience." Patience is often pictured with folded hands. Not so in the New Testament. The sentence of Paul, "In your patience ye shall win your souls," is translated by Dr. Moffatt thus: "In your perseverance ye shall win your souls."

My point, of course, is that patient people are also strong and committed people. They endure regardless of circumstances.

Therefore, dear friends, never mistake a patient attitude with weakness of any kind. To the contrary, the truly patient person is often the strongest person in the situation.

Among the wisest words I have read on this subject are these by Rainer Maria Rilke:

"Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart

And try to love the questions themselves

Do not now seek the answers that cannot be given you

Because you would not be able to live them.

And the point is to live everything.

Live the questions now.

Perhaps you will gradually,

Without noticing it,

Live along some distant day

Into the answer."

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CARLOS GUERRA

Sgt. Monica Hilpisch, Sgt. Terry Barker, Sgt. Miguel Felix and Sgt. Moses Machuca, all stablesmen with the Marine Corps' Mounted Color Guard, take the horses for some exercise and training at the stables on the Yermo Annex aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, Calif., Nov. 3.



LANCE CPL. JONATHAN SOSNER

A Marine scans the desert through binoculars during a Deployment for Training exercise at Fort Irwin, Calif., Jan. 18. The exercise ran from Jan. 13-23, with large-scale notional battles in a simulated combat zone. The Marines are with 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion.



LANCE CPL. ANTHONY LEITE

A drill instructor from Mike Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, tests a recruit's knowledge during the senior drill instructor inspection at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Jan. 27. This is the first of four inspections the recruits will have while aboard the depot. Annually, more than 17,000 males recruited from the Western Recruiting Region are trained at MCRD San Diego. Mike Company is scheduled to graduate March 31.



LANCE CPL. AUSTIN MEALY

U.S. Marines throw training grenades to practice proper tactics and techniques before the live-fire grenade and rocket range during Tactical Small Unit Leaders Course at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 27. The course gives small unit leaders the confidence, knowledge and ability to better lead their Marines in combat situations.



CPL. DONATO MAFFIN

U.S. Marines with Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 communicate to each other after loading quadcon shipping containers onto a seven-ton medium tactical vehicle replacement during exercise Kamoshika Wrath 17-1 at Haramura Maneuver Area, Hiroshima, Japan, Jan. 27. The Marines worked through inclement weather conditions and a short timeline to build a 96-foot by 96-foot vertical takeoff and landing pad. The exercise is a biannual, unit-level training exercise that is primarily focused on establishing a forward operating base and providing airfield operation services. MWSS-171 trains throughout the year completing exercises like Kamoshika Wrath to enhance their technical skills, field experience and military occupational specialty capability.



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A HERO RECOGNIZED



Sgt. Zachary L. Piepenhagen, stands at attention as Maj. Gen. David Coffman, deputy commanding general, I Marine Expeditionary Force, awards him the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 26.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PFC. GABINO PEREZ

It was a breezy Friday afternoon, Oct. 30, 2015, as the USS Boxer was underway, moving through choppy waters off the coast of Southern California. Marine Sgt. Zachary L. Piepenhagen stood on the smoke deck to take a brief break from work and enjoy a cigarette with his peers when he noticed someone climbing over the guard rail of the ship.

Piepenhagen, without hesitation, sprinted across the weather deck of the ship, jumping over the separation rope, and grabbed the sailor who was attempting to jump to his death. They grappled for a few seconds, the sailor resisting him in an attempt to escape, as both lives were in imminent danger of falling off the ship. Piepenhagen was able to pull the sailor off the ledge and back onto the ship, with the help of two other Marines, holding him against the ship's bulkhead until help arrived.

"I don't know what it was, I just happened to look over and I see this sailor on the other side of the railing," Piepenhagen, who was at the time a topography specialist with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, explained. "It took me a second to really register what was going on, I don't know how long that second actually lasted, but I jumped over the rope and ran over there and grabbed him."

Piepenhagen, who recently ended active duty service, was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, Jan. 26, 2017, for saving the life of a fellow service member. The Navy and Marine Corps Medal is the highest non-combat decoration awarded for heroism by the U.S. Department of the Navy for demonstration of heroic actions that clearly establish an act involving life-threatening risk to the recipient.

"It was wild after that, there were man overboard drills called so that everybody would get accountability and see what was going on," Piepenhagen said. "I tried to go back to my shop to focus on work and tried to get out of the mentality of what just happened."

After taking part in the rescue of the sailor, Piepenhagen took a step back and looked at suicide in the military community.

"When it comes to suicide, it's the permanent solution to a temporary problem," Piepenhagen said.

According to the award citation, Piepenhagen's courageous and prompt actions in the face of great personal risk reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps



Sgt. Zachary L. Piepenhagen, shakes hands with Maj. Gen. David Coffman, deputy commanding general, I Marine Expeditionary Force, after being awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 26.

and United States Naval Service. "You never know what's going to happen, you just act, you don't think about it," Piepenhagen said.

"It's not about me worrying about myself or anything like that, it's about somebody needing help," he said, "I would hope that I'd jump back in there but I wouldn't know until that day came."

Marines are known for their bravery in the face of danger and their unwavering commitment to duty. Piepenhagen displayed his dedication to the Marine Corps' core values: honor, courage and commitment.



Sgt. Zachary L. Piepenhagen, talks to Sgt. Maj. Bradley Kasal, sergeant major, I Marine Expeditionary Force, after being awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 26.

Combat Center leadership tour Old Schoolhouse Museum

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KELLY O'SULLIVAN

Brig. Gen. William F. Mullen III, Combat Center Commanding General, and his wife, Vicki, toured the Old Schoolhouse Museum in Twentynine Palms, Tuesday, along with Sgt. Maj. Michael J. Hedges, Combat Center Sergeant Major; Cpl. Ben Mills, driver; Jim Ricker, Assistant Chief of Staff for Government and External Affairs; and Kristina Becker, Combat Center External Affairs Director.

The group was greeted by Twentynine Palms Historical Society President Les Snodgrass, Treasurer Nolan Lockwood and volunteers Pat Rimmington and Melanie Robbins.

The museum, 6760 National Park Drive, is

housed in the community's original 1927 schoolhouse, built by homesteaders at Utah Trail and Two Mile Road to serve kindergartners through eighth-graders from across the Morongo Basin.

Morongo Unified School District closed the school in 1954 after a new school site was built, using the three-room building for storage until 1992, when it was sold to the historical society and moved to its present location.

Hours are 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

For more information on the museum, its collections and historical society programs, visit www.29palmshistorical.com.



Right, Brig. Gen. William F. Mullen III, Combat Center Commanding General, right, talks with Twentynine Palms Historical Society President Les Snodgrass, about local history during a tour of the Old Schoolhouse Museum in Twentynine Palms, Calif., Tuesday. The general and his wife, Vicki, toured the facility with Sgt. Maj. Michael J. Hedges, Combat Center Sergeant Major; Cpl. Ben Mills, driver; Jim Ricker, Combat Center Assistant Chief of Staff for Government and External Affairs; and Kristina Becker, Combat Center External Affairs Director.



Brig. Gen. William F. Mullen III, Combat Center Commanding General, left; Sgt. Maj. Michael J. Hedges, Combat Center Sergeant Major; Cpl. Ben Mills, driver; and Vicki Mullen listen to Twentynine Palms Historical Society volunteer Pat Rimmington during a tour of the Old Schoolhouse Museum in Twentynine Palms, Calif., Tuesday.



Brig. Gen. William F. Mullen III, Combat Center Commanding General, right, talks with his driver, Cpl. Ben Mills, about items used by early desert homesteaders during a tour of the Old Schoolhouse Museum in Twentynine Palms, Calif., Tuesday.

Sunset Cinema

- Friday - February 03, 2017**
 5:30 PM - Rogue One: A Star Wars Story PG-13
 8:30 PM - Passengers PG-13
 11:00 PM - Why Him? R
- Saturday - February 04, 2017**
 11:00 AM - Sing PG
 2:00 PM - Passengers (3-D) PG-13
 5:00 PM - Fences PG-13
 8:00 PM - Rogue One: A Star Wars Story PG-13
 11:00 PM - Assassin's Creed PG-13
- Sunday - February 05, 2017**
 1:00 PM - SNEAK PREVIEW - The LEGO Batman Movie (3-D) PG
 3:30 PM - Hidden Figures PG
 6:30 PM - Underworld: Blood Wars (3-D) R
- Monday - February 06, 2017**
 6:30 PM - Live By Night R
- Tuesday - February 07, 2017**
 6:30 PM - Rogue One: A Star Wars Story PG-13
- Wednesday - February 08, 2017**
 5:00 PM - Sing PG
 7:20 PM - Passengers PG-13
- Thursday - February 09, 2017**
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11th annual KOH takes place in Johnson Valley

CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

The Combat Center's mission is to conduct relevant live-fire combined arms training while simultaneously ensuring the best possible quality of life for those who reside aboard the installation. In order to meet those objectives, the Combat Center strives to build mutually-beneficial relationships with the surrounding communities that guarantee harmonious living for all.

King of the Hammers is scheduled to bring racers through a portion of the Johnson Valley Shared Use Area in Johnson Valley, Calif., Feb. 3-11.

Taking place annually since 2007, King of the Hammers is considered to be one of the toughest dirt-and-rock races in the world. The holiday combines desert racing and rock crawling into one of the largest recreational wheeling weekends in Southern California. The week will commence with Hammertown opening to the public on Feb. 3 and will continue through Feb. 11, with the final King of The Hammers race taking place on Feb. 10.

In addition to the shared use area, the Combat Center will support the race with an informational booth, interactive sessions with Marines from Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs and an appearance from the Combat Center Color Guard during the opening ceremony of the final race. A press conference will also be held on Feb. 9 at 10 a.m. to remind the public about the Johnson Valley App update, the shared use area closing during the month of August, and a public meeting that will take place April 1 and give the public an opportunity to gain more information on the temporary closure of the shared use area.

For more information about the Combat Center's use of Johnson Valley, visit www.29palms.marines.mil/Staff/G5CommunityPlansPAO/JohnsonValley.



LANCE CPL. KASEY PEACOCK

The Combat Center's base color guard stands at attention moments before racers take their marks during the final face of the 2014 King of the Hammers event in Johnson Valley, Calif., Feb. 7. During the final race, Loren Healy, the 2010 winner of the event, left his competition in the dust reclaiming a victory in the 2014 event.



JOSH ALLEN HI-DESERT STAR

Joe Pierce is heavy on the throttle to get his rock bouncer up the course in 40.05 during the 2016 King of the Hammers race.



JOSH ALLEN HI-DESERT STAR

Event staff work on getting a crawler turned over that ended up on its top side after trying to climb a boulder section during the 2016 King of the Hammers race.

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