

# Kicking off Spring with the 4th Annual Earth Day Extravaganza

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE  
CPL. RACHEL K. PORTER

The 4th Annual Earth Day Extravaganza, hosted by Lincoln Military Housing and Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs, took place at Lincoln Military Housing Athletic Field aboard the Combat Center on April 13.

The purpose of the extravaganza is to bring the installation's families together to teach them about recycling and conservation, and how they can help support that mission.

"Today is meant primarily as out-reach for families to spread sustainability practices," said Maj. David

See **Earth Day A6**



Darwin Smith, 3, daughter of Staff Sgt. Brian Smith, communication security manager, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, waits in line to get her face painted at the 4th Annual Earth Day Extravaganza aboard the Combat Center, April 13.



Hailey and Taylor Tran, children of Shannon Tran and Maj. David L. Tran, director, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs, pet the desert tortoises during the 4th Annual Earth Day Extravaganza aboard the Combat Center, April 13.



Marines with the Military Working Dog section of the Provost Marshal's Office, participate in a K-9 demonstration during the 4th Annual Earth Day Extravaganza aboard the Combat Center, April 13.



Children dance to music at the Child Abuse Awareness and Military Child Appreciation Carnival aboard the Combat Center, April 12. The event was held to provide available resources to community members and hold a small fair for children.

## 7th Marines hosts resource fair for child abuse awareness

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
LANCE CPL. PRESTON MORRIS

7th Marine Regiment hosted the Child Abuse Awareness and Military Child Appreciation Carnival aboard the Combat Center on April 12. The event was held to provide resources for members of the community and provide fun for children of the parents attending the event.

"The primary goal is to make sure all children's programs are available to families while simultaneously ensuring the children are having fun at the carnival," said Brenda Bridges, embedded behavioral health prevention specialist, 7th Marine Regiment. "We're here to provide for the members of the community and ensure success for all families and service members aboard the Combat Center."

During the event, there were 50 programs with booths set up at the fair and approximately 150 families attended. There was a bounce house, popcorn, cotton candy, and carnival games for the children and a special guest appearance was made by the superhero Batman to teach

See **7th Marines A6**



Lt. Cmdr. Greg Uvila, regimental chaplain, 7th Marine Regiment, and Batman welcome a child up to the stage at the Child Abuse Awareness and Military Child Appreciation Carnival aboard the Combat Center, April 12.

### Inside the Observation Post

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### Corps fosters lifelong brotherhood

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 Petty Officer 2nd Class Seth Cou.



A member of the 1st Battalion, 12th Marines Field Artillery, from Marine Corps Base Hawaii, folds the American Flag during a ceremony for U.S. Marine Corps Pvt. John Merrill Tillman at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu, Hawaii, April 6. Tillman was lost during WWII and recently identified by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), whose mission is to provide the fullest possible accounting for our missing personnel to their families and the nation.





Reprinted from the Observation Post  
April 19, 1960

# U.S. almost fought Pacific War in 1889

The Pacific War — you think immediately of the great struggle touched off by the bombing of Pearl Harbor. But 73 years ago the United States came close to fighting another Pacific war — and she might have, too, if Nature hadn’t stepped in.

It all began over a bunch of bananas, but this was only a pretext to create an “incident.” The trouble-maker? — Imperial Germany, who had her eye on all of the 12 Samoan Islands which were then under joint

American-British-German protection.

Conveniently, a German plantation owner on the island of Upolu accused the natives of stealing his bananas and hauled their chief into court, threatening him with imprisonment unless he produced the guilty parties and coughed up \$12,000.

He backed down temporarily when the American and British consuls objected, but not before a German cruiser

had dropped anchor to protect that country’s interest.

Events were building up to a real scrap. In August 1887 there were five German warships in Apia Harbor and martial law was imposed. That did it. The natives revolted.

Washington, which recognized the German power play for what it was, rushed four ships to Samoa. One of them, the gunboat Adams, commanded by a Capt. Leary, got there just as the Germans were

shelling the beach. Leary was warned by the Germans to keep out of the fracas, but instead the intrepid skipper sailed his boat between the Germans and the shore. The Germans didn’t fire.

But bad feelings persisted between Germany and this country. On March 15, 1889, we were at the brink of war; three American, one British and three German warships were off Apia, spoiling for a fight.

And nature had a chip on her shoulder too. A hurricane roared in and lashed Apia day and night driving ships in the harbor onto its rocks and reefs. In this SOS situation, political grievances counted for little. Only two ships survived the storm, a German cruiser and the British Calliope. The toll in lives was 91 Germans, 53 Americans. It would have been much higher if the Samoan natives hadn’t formed a human rescue chain in the water.

## CROSSWORD

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- Across**  
1. Rime.  
5. Best of.  
10. What’s about to follow.  
14. Female day name for Thursday.  
15. Whimpered.  
16. Quick, sharp cry.  
17. Light use of the violin bow.  
19. Compressed mass.  
20. Eat a bit of.  
21. Slacken hold upon.  
22. Toward the mouth.  
23. Form of Charlotte.  
25. Autocrat.  
27. R&B singer \_ Larrieux.  
29. Silly.  
32. Bite suddenly.  
35. Dormant.  
39. Small, low island.  
40. Arrest.  
41. Windblown.  
42. Hasten.  
43. Aladdin’s sidekick.  
44. Publishes for sale.  
45. Thinly forested, open country.  
46. Male given name.  
48. Indian prince.  
50. Rare metallic element.
54. Exquisitely beautiful.  
58. Intends.  
60. Margin.  
62. Estimated worth.  
63. Mongolian desert.  
64. Second Sunday before Lent.  
66. Female sheep.  
67. Acronym for Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act of 1999.  
68. Harem rooms.  
69. Experienced sailor.  
70. Pertaining to a node.  
71. Slit.  
**Down**  
1. Furnishes with a handle.  
2. Form of belief involving sorcery.  
3. Degrade.  
4. Run-down place.  
5. Acronym for Everyday Practical Electronics.  
6. Decoy.  
7. Long narrative.  
8. Rigid.  
9. Advances slowly.  
10. Magnate.  
11. Anguish.  
12. Every.  
13. Expedited.
18. Greek statue with a square stone pillar and a carved head.  
24. Cheers.  
26. Show mercy.  
28. Buries.  
30. Focus intently on.  
31. Watched closely.  
32. Tree knot.  
33. Neighborhood movie theater.  
34. Site of two temples of Ramses II.  
36. 19th letter of the Greek alphabet.  
37. Pitcher with a wide spout.  
38. Of the nose.  
41. Meet with.  
45. Vassal ranking below baron.  
47. Demand.  
49. Jupiter.  
51. Dramatist Henrik \_.  
52. Hives.  
53. Involving more than one issue.  
55. Pass over.  
56. Rockabilly artist Bob \_.  
57. Spume.  
58. Matures.  
59. 29th state of the Union.  
61. Herbaceous plant native to high Andes.  
65. Girl or woman.

## SUDOKU

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Medium

Last week’s answers

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# In the blink of an eye: soldier’s quick response saves a life

STORY AND PHOTO  
BY LANCE CPL.  
MARGARET GALE

On March 16, Candace Wimbish was in the right place at the right time. It was an ordinary Friday and Wimbish was driving down U.S. Highway 62 to attend a farewell event for a fellow soldier in Yucca Valley, Calif. Then, in the blink of an eye, a tow truck made a sharp left turn in front of her vehicle.

“My initial reaction was that I almost hit the truck,” said Capt. Candace Wimbish, Chief, Mojave Branch Veterinary Services, U.S. Army Public Health Command, Fort Hood, Texas. “But then I quickly realized the truck had actually plowed into the motorcyclist riding right in front of me.”

Without a second thought, Wimbish jumped out of her car and rushed to the scene of the accident.

“I was in disbelief,” Wimbish said. “I got out of my truck and the man was in a very severe situation. I was able to see the bike, but I had to look around until I found a large black pile of rubble moaning 10-15 feet away from the bike. He was losing a lot of blood very quickly and had very severe wounds to his left leg and arm.”

Although Wimbish’s quick reaction sprouted from the veterinary training she received in the Army, the seed that led her there was planted long ago.

“I grew up in a small town in Central Texas, College Station, with my parents and two younger twin sisters,” Wimbish said. “We had a farm with a lot of animals such as horses, cattle, dogs, cats, geese and catfish.”

Wimbish grew up in a

manner that many children don’t get to experience. Her life consisted of school during the day and playing outside or tending to the animals during the evening. There were many things that Wimbish enjoyed about living on a farm, but spending time with the animals and being in the sunshine and dirt are what Wimbish loved most about it. Even from a young age, she would tell her parents that she wanted to be a veterinarian.

“In the late 1980’s or early 1990’s, there was a huge crash in the farming economy in Texas,” Wimbish said. “So we were forced to sell the ranch and move to Northern Texas. From there I lived a classic suburban life.”

The move from her beloved farm wasn’t the only major change Wimbish experienced. During her uprooting, her parents finalized their divorce and shortly after that, her father passed away.

“My father passed away when I was 12,” Wimbish said. “He and I were very close so when he died it was tough, but I didn’t know life as anything different so I got through it.”

By the time Wimbish was 14 years old, with her pet cat as her only roommate, she rented an apartment and began life on her own due to irreconcilable issues at home. Although Wimbish was only a freshman in high school, she juggled a number of odd jobs such as an administrative assistant and a waitress at a bar to help pay her bills while maintaining the status of a full-time student. The average high school experience and social life was nonexistent for Wimbish. Because she spent most of her time working, attend-

ing homecoming dances or prom was out of the question. Even though she was young, most places didn’t question Wimbish’s age because she came to work and did what she had to.

At the time, graduating high school was Wimbish’s greatest accomplishment. As high school drew to a close, Wimbish wasn’t sure if she would graduate on time. So when she was able to walk across the stage in front of all her peers she was relieved that she made it.

“When I walked across the stage, I thought ‘holy cow, I actually did it!’” Wimbish said.

Following her graduation, Wimbish attended junior college and also found a nearby veterinary hospital that hired her to start as a receptionist. Over time, Wimbish began her on-the-job training as a veterinary technician in the veterinary emergency department.

“I thought that being a veterinarian was what I wanted to do, but I wasn’t sure if I could handle the heart break and trauma,” Wimbish said. “I like to just jump right into the deep end of things, so I started working in the veterinary emergency hospital to see the worst it could get. It turned out that I loved it.”

Wimbish initially started working for the veterinary hospital because they offered off-hours that coincided with her school schedule. She would work the overnight shift and go to school during the day. The intensity of the job is what kept Wimbish hooked.

“It wasn’t easy,” Wimbish said. “But I didn’t know life as anything else. I did what I had to do while keeping a positive outlook on all the things I was able

to experience, not the things I was missing out on.”

As time went on, new opportunities were presented to her. A fellow veterinarian introduced and mentored Wimbish in wildlife rehabilitation. With her new found interest, Wimbish discovered a wildlife for release rehabilitation program outside of Seattle, WA., that helped rehabilitate the wildlife and educate the community on how to coexist with the local species. Throughout the course of eight years, Wimbish balanced schooling and traveled to Seattle before completing her associate’s degree.

While living in Washington, Wimbish attended a fourth of July fireworks show at Naval Station Everett, WA., with her now husband. As they were waiting for the show to start, the wind picked up and she became cold. They relocated to a spot just on the other side of the building.

“When the fireworks started, the building started barking,” Wimbish said. “I looked over and saw the sign that said ‘caution, military working dogs kennel.’ It was very fortuitous that we moved to the other side of that building. That night, I started researching about military veterinarians.”

At that time, Wimbish felt she had finally found her path. At the end of July her rent house lease closed and she moved back to Texas to help tend to her sick grandmother and study at University of Texas Arlington to complete her four years of undergraduate education in biochemistry.

“To become a vet, you don’t need a specific undergrad, you just need to have all the prerequisites completed,” Wimbish said. “I’m



Capt. Candace Wimbish, chief, Mojave Branch Veterinary Services, U.S. Army Public Health Command, Fort Hood, Texas, serves as the installation veterinarian for the Combat Center. On March 16, Wimbish helped save a motorcyclist’s life involved in a car accident on Highway 62.

a bit of a science nerd so I chose biochemistry.”

To help her afford her college tuition, Wimbish reached out to her Native American tribe for a grant. In addition to the assistance she received from her tribe, she enlisted in the Texas State Guard which provided her with some tuition assistance.

“I chose the Army over the other branches because it’s the only one that offers the military occupation specialty of veterinarian,” Wimbish said. “My school was extremely understanding when I got pulled away from my studies to take care of my military obligations.”

While studying biochemistry, she deployed to southern Texas in response to Hurricanes Ike and Gustav. During her response to Hurricane Ike, she was in charge of running a shelter for the pets of the evacuees.

“During Hurricane Katrina, people refused to leave their homes without their pets,” Wimbish said. “So shortly after Katrina, legislation was passed to allow people to bring their pets to shelters. Three

years later when Ike hit Texas, there was no plan. Evacuees boarded busses and arrived at shelters with their pets, but no place to put them. During Ike, it was the most exhausting time of my life but also one of the most rewarding.”

In order for Wimbish to care for all the animals in need, she needed more man power than just herself. The response was collaborative with the local county. They were granted permission to use county fairground to place the animals. Next, man power was provided from minimum security prisoners who had been on their best behavior and were willing to step up in a time of need.

“It was amazing,” Wimbish said. “We had military uniforms working next to men and women in striped jump suits. It was neat to see everyone chip in during a crisis, regardless of their background.”

Shortly after the responses to the natural disasters, Wimbish enrolled in the Army’s Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC)

See **Blink** A8

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Lance Cpl. Juan Castillo, rifleman, India Company, and his family enjoy the food and refreshments provided during 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marine Regiment's family day at Del Valle Field aboard the Combat Center, Monday.



Cpl. Brandon Walker, machine gun section leader, India Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marine Regiment, competes in a ground fighting event with Lance Cpl. Wyatt Stone, scout sniper radio operator, Weapons Company, 3/4, during 3/4's family day at Del Valle Field aboard the Combat Center, Monday.



Marines with Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marine Regiment, participate in a truck-push competition during 3/4's family day at Del Valle Field aboard the Combat Center, Monday.

# 3/4 HOSTS FAMILY DAY

PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. MARGARET GALE



Leslie and Ryan Lopez, wife and son of Cpl. Xavier Lopez, rifleman, India Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marine Regiment, spectate the tug-of-war competition during 3/4's family day at Del Valle Field aboard the Combat Center, Monday. Family days are held to enhance camaraderie and unit cohesion throughout the battalion for Marines, sailors and their families.



Lance Cpl. Jess Varner, machine gun team leader, India Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marine Regiment, competes in a weightlifting competition during 3/4's family day aboard the Combat Center, Monday.



Service members and their spouses conduct a game of corn hole during 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marine Regiment's family day at Del Valle Field aboard the Combat Center, Monday.

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# Marines, sheriffs, LAPD compete for glory in Tug-of-War

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY CPL. DAVE FLORES

JOSHUA TREE, Calif. — Peace officers and military personnel from around Southern California gathered at the Desert Refuge for Peace Officers and Military Personnel in Joshua Tree, Calif., Saturday, to vie for bragging rights in the organization's inaugural Tug-of-War competition.

Marines from the Combat Center took on officers from the Los Angeles Police Department, as well as deputies from San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. More than 40 Marines and law enforcement personnel tested themselves and each other in a series of competitions ranging from push-ups to a 40-meter sprint and kettle bell relays before the tug-of-war. The Marines took home the trophy, beating San Bernardino County deputies in the tug-of-war finale.

The Desert Refuge, built on 10 acres by the vision of Father Mike McCullough, chaplain, Los Angeles Police Department, has been a place for service members and law enforcement to get away from the "daily drop of corrosion" associated with their jobs. McCullough has been working on improving the Desert Refuge since its creation in 1999.

In addition to the friendly competition, the event



A Marine from the Combat Center, competes in the push-up contest at the inaugural Tug-of-War Competition hosted by the Desert Refuge for Peace Officers and Military Personnel in Joshua Tree, Calif., Saturday.

featured a barbecue lunch, live music by the Bucket List Band, giveaways and inter-faith prayer.

"We started progress on the Desert Refuge with Father Mike almost 20 years ago," said Dan Watson, a member of the nonprofit organization's board of directors. "One of our challenges right now is our housing. When guests come out to the refuge, they usually end up staying with friends out in town or in hotels or motels in Joshua Tree. With fundraising events like these, we can get the resources to build our own on-site housing, which will help grow the Desert Refuge."

According to McCullough, the event was a success and he is looking forward to next year, when the teams return to defend the championship or attempt to dethrone their opponents.



Marines from the Combat Center, won the inaugural Tug-of-War Competition hosted by the Desert Refuge for Peace Officers and Military Personnel in Joshua Tree, Calif., Saturday. The event also included barbecue lunch, live music, giveaways and inter-faith prayer services.



Marines from the Combat Center and deputies from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department battle each other in a tug-of-war match at the inaugural Tug-of-War Competition hosted by the Desert Refuge for Peace Officers and Military Personnel in Joshua Tree, Calif., Saturday.



Deputies from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department compete in the 40-meter dash relay race at the inaugural Tug-of-War Competition hosted by the Desert Refuge for Peace Officers and Military Personnel in Joshua Tree, Calif., Saturday.

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# Earth Day From A1

L. Tran, director, NREA. “We’re located in a remote area, which makes it difficult to sustain air and water quality and conserve land resources. Our mission is to be better stewards of the resources we have.”

Over the past four years, this event has given parents a chance to wind down and relax while their children are able to have freedom to play with their friends. In addition, the extravaganza provides attendees with a large variety of free food and activities.

“The best part about today was that the kids have so much to do,” said Sam Hoversten, wife of Sgt. Maj. Jared Hoversten, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment’s sergeant major. “From the bounce houses

to the dog show, tacos, face painting and kettle-corn, I was kept busy too. I don’t have to watch them closely because I know they’re going to be safe here. I love that the base is always throwing events like this.”

According to Keith Mohn, research scientist and HMMS programmer, Battele, the annual Earth Day event has contributed to Combat Center patron’s preservation efforts.

“Since we started the extravaganza, there’s been a direct correlation to an increase in recycling and conservation aboard the base,” Mohn said. “We’re 1% away from reaching this year’s goal, and we believe this event will get us there.”



A Marine with the Military Working Dog section of the Provost Marshal’s Office, participates in a K-9 demonstration during the 4th Annual Earth Day Extravaganza aboard the Combat Center, April 13.



A child gets his face painted by a volunteer during the 4th Annual Earth Day Extravaganza aboard the Combat Center, April 13.



The 4th Annual Earth Day Extravaganza is held at Lincoln Military Housing Athletic Field aboard the Combat Center, April 13. The purpose of the extravaganza is to bring families together and educate them on how to be better stewards of the Earth’s resources.

# 7th Marines From A1


the kids about kindness.

“We’re all really happy about how well the event turned out,” said Lt. Cmdr. Greg Uvila, regimental chaplain, 7th Marines. “Our special guest Batman had a great message for the kids to be kind to each other and to spread kindness where they go. Furthermore the teamwork between the Marine volunteers at the event and everyone else really made the event come together.”



Children play a carnival game at the Child Abuse Awareness and Military Child Appreciation Carnival aboard the Combat Center, April 12.

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— 1100: Traditional Service  
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— 1300: Gospel Service

Blink From A3

while completing her undergraduate degree. Her enrollment allowed her to participate in the Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP). The membership program is a two year course that allows you to be mentored by a unit officer and requires the member to drill with their guard unit once a month. Upon completion, the member will receive their commission as a second lieutenant in the Army. Wimbish only participated in ROTC for a year until she was accepted for veterinary school. She was then awarded the Health Professions Scholarship, which helped fund half of her veterinary education. Her acceptance into this program allowed her appointed place of duty

to be veterinary school until she became an active duty service member. After completing her four years of veterinary school, Wimbish landed an internship at Fort Hood-Army base, Texas. Not many bases have cavalry horses or a stray animal facility and this knowledge factored into Wimbish’s decision to accept the internship at Fort Hood. Little did she know that her decision meant she would be getting very little sleep for the next year. Not only was Wimbish spending plenty of long hours tending to the care of the animals but she was also helping the stray animals get adopted by military families and families in town. “There were four interns

including myself,” Wimbish said. “It was a very long year but we learned so much and I have experiences I will carry with me forever.” Once her year at Fort Hood came to an end, Wimbish received orders in the summer of 2015 to work aboard the Combat Center and be the veterinarian on base. As a part of Wimbish’s job aboard the Combat Center, she manages the food and animal mission. She is responsible for providing 24/7 comprehensive routine and veterinary medical care for military working dogs stationed here as well as the dogs on rotational training. While serving as an active duty service member, Wimbish also takes one to two weekends every month to work at an animal hospital in Los Angeles, Calif., to maintain her clinical skills. “A military veterinarian’s job is not just seeing patients,” Wimbish said. “It’s a lot of managerial, admin, training, and food protection. We spend a lot of time inspecting commissary and food establishments on base. Since clinical medi-

cine is only a third of what I do, working at a civilian facility helps me to maintain my clinical proficiency.” In addition to her veterinary-related duties, Wimbish and her team support the food defense and safety mission for all food service locations on base. They are in charge of monitoring the cleanliness and operational capability of the facilities to ensure the food is safe for consumption to all service members and families. “The first couple of weeks I was here I wasn’t sure where I landed,” Wimbish said. “There was so much sand and it was terrible. I feel much differently today. The unit and team I have here is amazing. The food and animal mission makes it feel like it doesn’t matter what uniform you have on. It is one team, one mission, regardless of the military branch we support.” The one team mentality transferred over to Wimbish’s quick decision making on March 16. Since she had three co-workers riding with her, she put them to work when coming to the aid of the injured motorcy-

clist. Some of the training she conducts with her military working dog handlers includes how to make a tourniquet with what you have on you. “My first thought was ‘I don’t have my gear,’” Wimbish said. “So, I used my belt to slow the bleeding. I remember telling him, ‘buddy this is going to hurt a lot.’” Wimbish’s first tourniquet didn’t stop the arterial bleeding, but slowed it down enough for her to make a second tourniquet out of her fellow soldier’s belt. That second tourniquet was enough to stop the bleeding until the paramedics arrived. Emergency Medical Services was able to stabilize the biker and air lift him to Desert Regional Hospital in Palm Springs, Calif. “I don’t remember thinking through my actions, I just knew that’s what I had to do,” Wimbish said. “We train for muscle memory and a deployed environment. Many folks never deploy, but you still need those skills. Once the gentleman was taken care of, I was still stunned and went to the

farewell event to chow down on some pancakes.” Wimbish has orders for a permanent change of station to a civil affairs unit with U.S. Army Special Operations Command. She will serve as an on-call subject matter expert for questions on animal health and disease prevention. Wimbish will function as a deployable asset to train the operators and partner with host-nation subject matter experts. Wimbish thoroughly enjoys teaching and is looking forward to her new place of duty. “I often know the questions the will ask before they ask or I know when they don’t understand something,” Wimbish said. “It’s neat to see their eyes light up when the information clicks.” The Army has a lot to offer Wimbish. She has no immediate plan for after the military or how long she would like to be in. “I’m still having fun and there is a lot of good I can do,” Wimbish said. “I have no plan of getting out soon and I don’t plan on slowing down.”

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# A BOND UNBROKEN

STORY BY SGT. MEDINA AYALA-LO  
PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. PRESTON L. MORRIS

The Marine Corps promises few things to its members: discipline, shared hardships and for many, a fresh start. Among those promises is something else that many search for but not all find; a lifelong brotherhood.

This very bond is what Larry Stratton and Brig. Gen. Dimitri Henry, U.S. Marine Corps Director of Intelligence, found in each other. Despite the separation in distance and experience, both men were unknowingly joined from the moment they made their impressions on those yellow footprints.

For Stratton, a retired master sergeant and most recently the former deputy director of Marine and Family Programs, living life in service to others runs in his blood.

“My father made a career of the Air Force and my uncle did the same,” Stratton said. “I’m a military brat. I was born at the Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta, Ga. As I got older, my father wanted me to join the Air Force and he kept pushing me. I think he pushed a little too hard and one day I told him, ‘I’m going to go talk to a Marine recruiter.’ His response to me was ‘go ahead, I’ll see you in two weeks.’”

Despite his father’s initial aversion, Stratton enlisted in the Corps in 1973 and in the end, his father’s wish of having his eldest son serve in the armed forces came to fruition. Although Stratton was reared with the military customs that are unique to the Air Force, the Corps’ reputation preceded itself.

“I’d heard the Corps was really big on teamwork and that it really took care of its people,” Stratton said. “That’s what actually made me want to go with the Marine Corps. It wasn’t what he envisioned, but my father is very proud of me and my accomplishments.”

Although he may not have realized it at the time, Stratton’s upbringing prepared him for his new life in the esteemed organization.

“I have two younger siblings, a brother and sister,” Stratton said. “My brother and I were only a year apart but being a big brother to my little sister was a big deal to me. For being 12 years apart in age she and I are very much alike. Being a military brat, my brother, my sister and I learned to adapt to different situations. Growing up all over did me a great deal because I learned how to deal with different people, different surroundings and different cultures. I think it made me a better rounded person.”

Over the course of his career as an enlisted Marine, Stratton would be stationed at the now deactivated 1st Motor Transport Battalion aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in Okinawa, Japan, before he served the tour that would cross his path with Henry’s.

“While I was in Okinawa, I was deep zone selected for staff sergeant and I went to [Drill Instructor] school,” Stratton said. “I graduated fifth in my class and was assigned to 3rd Recruit Training Battalion aboard [Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif.] and that’s when I met then recruit Henry.”

## The Inception

During those three months in the summer of 1981, Henry and Stratton’s relationship didn’t develop past the young pupil and the firm guiding hand. Even still, Henry made an impression on then Drill Instructor Staff Sgt. Stratton.

“I talked to retired Marine Steve Hall, who was our senior drill instructor, about Henry,” Stratton said. “Henry was what they called the ‘house mouse.’ People might laugh at that but the bottom line was you had to be a recruit who was trusted and Henry set out that we could trust him from the get-go. He did everything he was told to and he did it quickly. I don’t ever remember having a problem with Henry. He was a good kid, he really was.”

Unbeknownst to both of them, this brief interaction marked the start of a lifelong brotherhood though it would be years before they saw each other again.

## A Brief Intermission

Following his tour at the recruit depot, Stratton continued on to Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., followed by an additional tour in



Larry Stratton, former Deputy Director of Marine Corps Community Services, poses with Brig. Gen. Dimitri Henry, U.S. Marine Corps Director of Intelligence, at Stratton’s retirement ceremony at the Frontline Restaurant aboard the Combat Center, March 29. Stratton, a retired Marine Corps master sergeant, was Henry’s drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif., in 1981.

Okinawa, an assignment at the Motor Transport School and his final duty station aboard the Combat Center.

“While I was at the Motor Transport School I received the National Defense Transportation Association Instructor of the Year award, across all branches of the service,” Stratton said. “I was also able to complete my college education and I received my undergraduate degree in psychology from Chapman College.”

Although he had amassed more than 16 years of military service, Stratton still felt there was a calling he had yet to answer. Shortly after he received his degree, Stratton sent out a form to inquire as to whether the Marine Corps could use his degree for anything. The answer was yes. He attended the Naval Drug and Alcohol Counselor School and upon completion Stratton received his orders to spend his last five years as a drug and alcohol counselor. In 1995, he retired as a master sergeant after 22 years of honorable and faithful service.

“Before I left I was selected for the GEICO Military Service Award, Marine recipient for substance abuse education and prevention,” Stratton said. “It was the second national award I received in my career so I thought it was pretty decent.”

Six months after his retirement, Stratton’s work still wasn’t done. The last five years he’d spent as a counselor contributed to an easy transition to his new role as a prevention education specialist at Marine Corps Community Services. Not long after he began, Stratton received a promotion to Personal Readiness and Community Support Branch head. Then in 2013, he became the Deputy Director of MCCS.

“Being here is definitely a calling because I felt like I could still help the Marines and their families by staying here,” Stratton said. “That’s what I wanted to do. I always said I was going to give back to the Corps for what it gave me and I like to believe that I’ve done that.”

## An Unexpected Reunion

Roughly 23 years after their first encounter, Stratton and Henry’s paths crossed again. Stratton, now a Marine Corps veteran and devoted government employee, spotted his former recruit in 2004 during a promotion ceremony for the base’s commanding general.

“There was very inclement weather so we had the promotion ceremony at the theater,” Stratton said. “After his promotion, I was getting ready to leave the theater and I look over at this Marine lieutenant colonel sitting there and I thought ‘this man looks too familiar for me to not go over.’ When I walked over I saw his name on his commies and I said ‘Col. Henry I think I know you.’ He looked at me, then he looked at my name badge



Brig. Gen. Dimitri Henry, U.S. Marine Corps Director of Intelligence, presents Larry Stratton, former Deputy Director of Marine Corps Community Services, a non-commissioned officer’s sword as a gift during Stratton’s retirement ceremony at the Frontline Restaurant aboard the Combat Center, March 29.

and he smiled real big and he goes ‘you should, you were my drill instructor.’”

It was then that Henry invited Stratton to be a guest at his change of command ceremony in Camp Pendleton.

“We started talking and I found out that then Col. Henry was getting ready to take over at 1st Radio Battalion,” Stratton said. “He invited me to be one of his guests at his ceremony and I thought I would go there and sit in the back of the crowd. He had me sit up front with his family, which I felt very honored to do. During the ceremony, he introduced me as one of his drill instructors. We’ve kept in touch ever since.”

In March 2018, with his friends, family and Henry by his side, Stratton retired from his position as the deputy director after devoting 44 years of collective service to military and government work. For Stratton, each moment he experienced holds a special place in his heart, but one of the most impactful moments was his time as an enlisted Marine on the drill field.

## Lasting Impressions

“I met Mr. Stratton around June of 1981,” Henry said. “My first impression of him was he embodied what the Marine Corps was looking for in a drill instructor. He was a father-figure but he was hard on us. They always pushed us but he made me understand what being a Marine is all about.”

By Henry’s recollection, whenever incidents that went against the values of the Marine Corps occurred Stratton took the time to teach them the right way.

“He would sit us down and talk to us as men about what a Marine really is and why we don’t do some of the things that we saw being done while we were there,” Henry said. “He taught us what

we’re supposed to be doing and how we’re supposed to take care of and help each other.”

Those moments left a lasting impact on Henry. From the start of his career, his main mission was to help Marines. As he advanced through the promotion system, he realized that the more rank he attained the better positioned he would be to influence positive change for his unit and his Marines. In 1988, Henry commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Corps and even now, Henry carries with him much of the lessons Stratton taught.

“I always speak highly of him and how he shaped my view of what being a Marine is about,” Henry said. “He told us it’s about serving and that never left me. That’s the drill instructor he was and that’s why I credit him even to this day for setting me on the right path.”

And now, two successful careers and more than two decades later, the teachings that he passed along to Henry are still every bit apart of Stratton as the day he joined.

“Over at DI School there is a sign that reads ‘through these halls is the future of the United States Marine Corps’ and I took that very seriously,” Stratton said. “You like to believe you make an impact on your recruits but I think until you see someone like Brig. Gen. Henry it doesn’t really hit you that you made a difference in somebody’s life.”

Whether a Marine’s career spans four years or 20, their time spent in the ‘gun club’ leaves a lasting impression. While most will remember the places they went and the hardships they shared, ultimately, it is the people who will have made it all worthwhile. This is the ultimate reward; the guarantee that from the moment you join you will always belong.



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## LOST & FOUND

## HAS ANYONE SEEN CARMEL ??

Went missing Friday @ 1am, (Yucca Mesa), Buena Vista & Avalon. Brown Lab mix, white spot on her chest. 65lbs, 7 yrs old. Very shy & scared. **URGENT** Needs Medication! Call 760-221-5910 with any info.

◆ **\$500 REWARD** ◆



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## HOMES 4 RENT

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## SERVICES

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JDD



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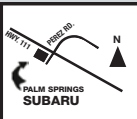
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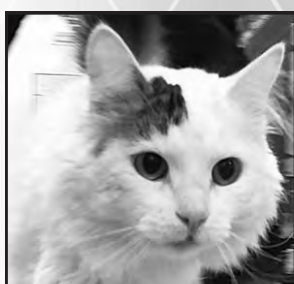
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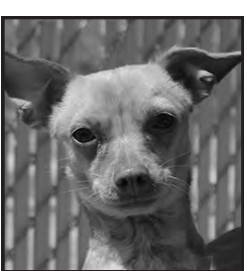
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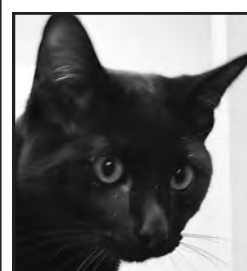
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# Earth Day

## April 22nd

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BIGGER THAN YOURSELF!

### No More BUGS!



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### YUCCA VALLEY SUNSET ROTARY 5TH ANNUAL SHRED-IT EVENT

DATE: 4/21/2018 TIME: 9AM - 1PM  
WHERE: HI-DESERT STAR PARKING LOT

As the tax season ends it is time to clean out all those outdated documents and benefit high school graduates by providing scholarships in honor of their achievements.

**COST \$5 A BANKER'S BOX.**

For information:  
Tami Montgomery 760-401-5229



### Celebrate Earth Day

at the Yucca Valley Community Center

**Saturday, April 21st**  
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
57116 Twentynine Palms Hwy  
Yucca Valley

**Free Admission & Parking**

*The Town of Yucca Valley Invites You To Enjoy Booths On:*

- Environmental Education
- Gardening
- Recycling
- Local Arts and Crafts

*The event also includes:*

- Live Music
- Face Painting
- Kid's Activities

For more information,  
Call the Hi-Desert Nature Museum  
760-369-7212  
or visit [www.hidesernaturemuseum.org](http://www.hidesernaturemuseum.org)

*Sponsored by the Town of Yucca Valley Hi-Desert Nature Museum and the Mojave Desert & Mountain Recycling Authority*

*Visit the Mojave Desert & Mountain Recycling Authority's Green Team table at the event;*  
*Attend our Recycling Workshop on May 12!*  
*For more MDMRA information, visit [www.urecycle.org](http://www.urecycle.org) or call 888-URECYCLE.*

### 3 WAYS TO REGISTER!

**#1**

IN PERSON ON EARTH DAY,  
SATURDAY, APRIL 21 10AM-2PM  
YUCCA VALLEY  
COMMUNITY CENTER  
57116 29 PALMS HWY.  
YUCCA VALLEY

**#2**

REGISTER ONLINE  
ANYTIME BEFORE 5PM  
FRIDAY, APRIL 27.  
LINK TO DOWNLOAD OR  
PRINT TOUR BOOK  
OR YOU CAN PICK UP TOUR  
BOOK ON TOUR DAY.

**#3**

IN PERSON ON TOUR DAYS  
SATURDAY 4/28 & SUNDAY 4/29  
8AM-NOON CACTUS MART  
49889 29 PALMS HWY. MORONGO VALLEY  
9AM-NOON JOSHUA TREE HEALTH FOODS  
61693 29 PALMS HWY. JOSHUA TREE

SATURDAY 4/28  
9AM-NOON MOJAVE MOON CAFE  
73511 29 PALMS HWY. 29 PALMS

SUNDAY 4/29  
9AM-NOON PIONEER CROSSING ANTIQUES  
55854 29 PALMS HWY. YUCCA VALLEY

ONLINE REGISTRATION:  
[HTTP://WWW.MBCONSERVATION.ORG/DESERT\\_WISE\\_LANDSCAPE\\_TOUR\\_CALENDAR](http://WWW.MBCONSERVATION.ORG/DESERT_WISE_LANDSCAPE_TOUR_CALENDAR)



### Desert-Wise Living

REQUESTED DONATIONS TO PARTICIPATE  
\$5 FOR MBCA MEMBERS  
(MEMBERSHIP + TOUR OPTIONS AVAILABLE)  
\$10 FOR NON-MEMBERS

**8th Annual Landscape Tour**  
Program Guide & Map

Sat., April 28, 2018 - East-end - 12 Sites - 9AM to 4PM  
Sun., April 29, 2018 - West-end - 12 Sites - 9AM to 4PM

### Green Commuting —

*It's good for you & your baby*



Riding on a MBTA bus  
with your baby is  
**10x safer & responsible** with  
green commuting.

For complete schedule information  
visit our website or give us a call.

**ride the MBTA**



MORONGO BASIN TRANSIT AUTHORITY

**760-366-2395** [www.mbtabus.com](http://www.mbtabus.com)

### Where can MBTA take you?

Yucca Valley  
Joshua Tree  
CMC  
29 Palms  
Marine Base  
Landers  
Palm Springs



## Earth Day Challenge

### A Week of Eco-Friendly Tweaks!

Take this week to green your routine by implementing a new eco-friendly lifestyle tweak from this list each day, and make Earth Day awareness an everyday habit!

1. Drink tap versus bottled water to cut down on waste and spending.
2. Begin using a reusable shopping bag instead of plastic bags.
3. Turn off lights when leaving a room, and turn off and unplug appliances when not in use.
4. Carry a reusable water bottle and bring a mug to the office or coffee shop.
5. Turn off the water when brushing your teeth or scrubbing dishes in the sink.
6. Call or go online to switch paper bills and statements to electronic documents.
7. Use cloth towels to clean up around the kitchen and other areas instead of using paper towels.