



# THE COMBAT CENTER

*Refining excellence since 1952*





**W**hen you passed through the gates of the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (Combat Center), you entered a training installation like no other. At more than 1,100 square miles (nearly the size of Rhode Island), the Combat Center is the Marine Corps' largest installation, a place where Marines and sailors, as well as soldiers, airmen and America's allies, have the space to conduct the realistic training that prepares them to successfully respond to any crisis anywhere in the world, at any time.

Training is the Combat Center's primary mission. At the forefront is the Integrated Training Exercise (ITX), a comprehensive, 29-day program that brings together air, ground, logistics and command elements in a series of combined-arms, live-fire maneuver warfare operations.

More than 50,000 active-duty and Reserve Marines and sailors, U.S. and allied forces, train here 350 days each year through participation in ITX, other exercises and formal schools.

Marines must train as they would fight, and the exercises conducted aboard the Combat Center cannot be replicated anywhere else in the world. This is the only installation in the Marine Corps with enough land and airspace to allow a Marine Expeditionary Brigade of three battalions and their support personnel, equipment and vehicles (roughly 15,000 Marines and sailors) to simultaneously fire and maneuver through its training ranges for the required 72 hours.

**COMBAT CENTER TIMELINE**

**NOVEMBER 1951**

Congress appropriated \$15.9 million for construction of a Marine Corps training center on 935 square miles of unoccupied land used during World War II for U.S. Army Air Corps and U.S. Navy training.



**FEBRUARY 1957**

The installation was redesignated Marine Corps Base Twentynine Palms, no longer under command of Camp Pendleton. Much of the infrastructure still on Mainside today was in place, from headquarters to the base theater.



**AUGUST 1952**

More than 50 trucks carrying 200 Marines and equipment from Camp Pendleton made their way through Twentynine Palms to the new Camp Detachment, Marine Corps Training Center.

**JULY 1965**

Cpl. Ida Endsley Burcham became the first female Marine assigned to Twentynine Palms. Until the end of 1967, women could only be assigned here if their husbands were stationed here or retired here.



## COMMITMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL STEWARDSHIP

Combat Center leadership is committed to being good stewards of natural and cultural resources. Energy, water, air and waste management programs conserve resources and save the installation millions of dollars annually, while others help preserve cultural sites and help protect species like the threatened desert tortoise. These stewardship activities also benefit the surrounding communities.



The Combat Center generates 90 percent of its own power annually. Installation energy programs save the Marine Corps more than \$10 million a year while enhancing energy availability for the region.

Combat Center artifacts are housed at the Archeology and Paleontology Curation Center, a 2,500-square-foot, climate-controlled facility built in 2007. The building also houses artifacts from the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, California; Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California; and Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona.



Recycling programs keep more than 8,000 tons of trash out of the Combat Center landfill and generate \$1.6 million in revenue annually, which offsets program costs and helps fund quality-of-life improvements like a children's splash park and play areas, buses for the Single Marine Program and more.



Since 2006, nearly 500 desert tortoises have been getting a head start at the Combat Center's Tortoise Research and Captive Rearing Site (TRACRS), located in a non-live-fire area. In September 2015, the first 35 tortoises reared at TRACRS were released in their mothers' home ranges. Fifty more were released in March 2017. Releases will continue until all 475 tortoises hatched at TRACRS are integrated into the wild.



Water conservation programs have reduced non-housing grass areas from 47 acres to 28, a savings of 265,232 gallons per day for irrigation demand. In 2015, the installation achieved a usage goal of 69.6 gallons of water per person per day, an amount much lower than other per-capita usage around the state.

### FALL 1967

The Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School conducted its first classes here for 400 Marines after completing its move from San Diego. It is the largest Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) school in the Marine Corps.



### AUGUST 1978

The installation became the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Training Center after an 8,000-foot expeditionary airfield capable of accommodating heavy cargo planes was completed.

### AUGUST 1988

The Combat Center held its first expanded combined-arms exercise, Gallant Eagle/Gallant Knight, bringing together 28,000 Marines, sailors, soldiers, airmen and coastguardsmen to train.



### AUGUST 1990

The 7th Marine Regiment deployed to the Middle East for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm after Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's army invaded Kuwait.



### APRIL 1991

"The Mother of All Victory Parades" drew 50,000 people to Twentynine Palms to welcome Marines back from Desert Storm.

# COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

The Combat Center prides itself on being a good neighbor to its surrounding communities. *For example:*

- More than **1,000 Marines, sailors and family members** support more than **100 community events** each year.
- Marines, sailors, civilian employees and family members donate thousands of volunteer hours each year participating in community cleanups; docenting at museums, art galleries and little theaters; serving as coaches and umpires for local parks and recreation sports programs; and more.
- The annual Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program collects and distributes more than **50,000 toys to nearly 25,000 children** in the region.
- Combat Center blood donors give nearly **1,000 pints of blood** annually, valued at **\$192,000** and more than **2,600 lives saved**.
- The installation provides guest speakers, color guards, firing details, marching units and vehicles, K-9 demonstrations, and moving and static displays for community events in both the Hi-Desert and Coachella Valley.



# ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

The Combat Center is the Morongo Basin's main economic driver, contributing an estimated \$1 billion annually to the local economy, both directly and indirectly.

**\$500** Million  
Total direct annual payroll.

**16,000**  
The number of jobs both on base and in local communities supported by payroll and spending.

**\$42** Million  
The annual combined pensions of military and government retirees living in the Basin.



**\$700,000**  
The amount in property taxes the installation pays to Twentynine Palms and San Bernardino County.

**\$15** Million  
The amount the installation pays annually to electric, natural gas and telephone service providers.

## SPRING 1992

Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs became its own directorate. Training's effect on desert plants and animals was evaluated, and education programs for those who live and work on the installation were implemented.



## MARCH 2003

Combat Center Marines participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom I. Since then, they have been involved in numerous operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.



## JANUARY 2011

Range 220, the largest urban warfare training range in the Department of Defense, was dedicated. With 1,500 buildings on 274 acres, it's the size of downtown San Diego.

## DECEMBER 2013

Congress approved a bill to expand Combat Center training lands by 220 square miles.



# THE COMBAT CENTER BY THE NUMBERS

# 707,840

The number of acres comprising the Combat Center, the largest installation landwise in the Marine Corps.

# 1,360

The number of miles of roads aboard the Combat Center (100 paved and 1,260 unpaved and unimproved).

# 2,100

The number of buildings and structures on Mainside. These include 13 family housing areas totaling 1,606 total units, a Naval Hospital and dental facility, two fire stations and a Military Police department.

# 8,000

The length in feet of the runway at Camp Wilson. This expeditionary staging area and airfield is large enough to accommodate large cargo planes.

The Combat Center also has two electricity cogeneration plants; **two solar fields** and more than **50 smaller solar systems**; potable water supply from underground aquifers via 11 wells and 10 water reservoirs totaling **15 million gallons** storage; a wastewater treatment plant; a landfill, and three recycling lots handling office/household, hazardous waste and range residue.

