

OBSERVATION POST

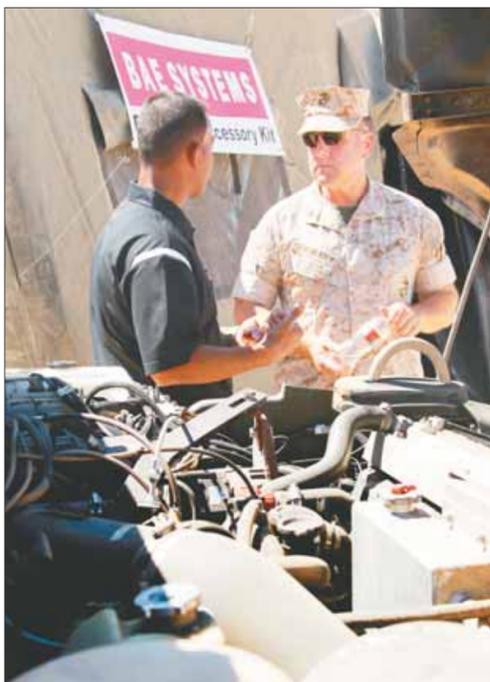
MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS

August 19, 2011

Since 1957

Vol. 54 Issue 33

ExFOB 2011 pushes green initiatives



DIANE DURDEN

Brig. Gen. John Broadmeadow, deputy commander, Marine Forces Pacific, listens to information about a high capacity alternator from one of several vendors during the Experimental Forward Operating Base 2011 at the Combat Center Aug. 16.

VIPs weigh in on new technologies for Marine Corps

DIANE DURDEN

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

Forward operating bases are dependent on fuel supply lines to run the generators that provide power.

If enemy forces interrupt those logistics lifelines, energy for vital communications equipment can be compromised, degrading combat readiness. Generators powered by auxiliary power units and concentrated solar technologies eliminate the need for liquid fuel sources.

Stakeholders from across the Marine Corps' requirements, acquisitions and technology development communities came to the Experimental Forward

"Taking what we know and getting it to what we can do and actually in the hands of the Marines in the field, that's what this represents."

—Sharon Burke
Assistant secretary of defense for Operational Energy Plans and Programs

Operating Base held at Camp Wilson this week to check out how their energy efficient experiments are holding up in the extreme desert environment.

"There's been an understanding for some time within the Defense Department we could be doing better for our soldiers, our Marines, sailors and our airmen," said Sharon Burke, the assistant secretary of defense for Operational Energy Plans and Programs. "The tactical edge technologies and the volume of fuel we are using, we could get better capabilities for

See EXFOB, A10



A Marine with Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, negotiates a gorge at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center's Leavitt Training Area Aug. 13 in Bridgeport, Calif. The Leavitt Training Area is where thousands of service members, both from U.S. services and allied militaries, have gained the skills to survive in the wild.

Wilderness ADVENTURES

Remote training area crucial for mountain warfare

Cpl. William J. Jackson

Combat Correspondent

It's dry. The air is thin. Training takes place anywhere from 6,700 feet to 11,000 feet above sea level. Its located 21 miles northwest of Bridgeport, Calif., at Pickel Meadow in the Eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains.

It's named the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, a 62-thousand acre training venue designed to train Marine Air Ground Task Force elements and individual units how to operate in high alti-

tudes, mountainous terrain and cold environments.

One particularly brutal location, resting at more than 7,000 feet above sea level, is where Marines and sailors go to become masters in the basics of rock climbing, knot tying and even gorge crossing.

The Leavitt Training Area, more commonly referred to as LTA, is used for an array of mountain technical skills

See LTA, A5



Pfc. Cody Evans, a rifleman with Co. B, 1/7, fights against the water's currents to reach the shore during a stream crossing exercise Aug. 12.



Petty Officer 3rd Class George Barrera, a hospital corpsman with Co. B, 1/7, finishes a gorge crossing exercise Aug. 13.

Combat Center bash preps families for school

LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The autumn season is just around the corner, and many Combat Center families are making the transition from summer to school.

The Combat Center held a Back To School Bash Aug. 11, at the installation's community center, to help educate the families on what to expect during the approaching months.

Parents found anything they needed to know from bus schedules and school lunch menus to medical requirements and start dates. Booths featured information not only about school, but also on Boy Scouts, Armed Services YMCA and other extracurricular activity options.

"This was a one stop shop for military families regarding anything they needed for the school year," said Carol Burton, the school liaison officer for the Combat Center. "Summer is a huge [permanent change of station] season and it's important to make the families feel welcome and informed about school."

"There's a lot of resources here to get a good perspective [of what the next year will look like]," said Lt. Jeremiah Culp, the operations officer with 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion. Culp's two children will be attending elementary school this year. "It's awesome they brought all this out."

Craft tables covered in stickers, glitter and glue kept children occupied, and a host of volunteers from Marine Unmanned

Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3 worked behind the scenes to set up the tables and keep arts and crafts section running smoothly.

"I wanted to help the unit and the Marine Corps family," said Cpl. Pedro Escalante, a motor transport mechanic with VMU-3. "I wanted to do something good."

Only 15 to 20 people were expected to attend, but hundreds showed up.

"It was great. A little chaotic at times, but good," Burton said. "My favorite part was talking to the families and getting feedback. More people showed up than expected. We'll just have to plan for a bigger event next year."

For back to school information, see A6 and A7.



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Boy Scout leaders engage the crowd during the Back to School Bash Aug. 11 at the Combat Center's Community Center. They met with parents of new students and talked about opportunities in the Boy Scouts.

flickr[™]

Hey Combat Center fans – Spread the word! The Combat Center has its own Flickr photo and video streams. Find them at <http://www.flickr.com/thecombatcenter>.

Healthcare referral in hand? Money in pocket

BRIAN P. SMITH

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

How would you like to go to your next specialty healthcare appointment knowing that you were saving more than 50 percent?

One small step can save you money. The good news? It is as simple as making sure you have a referral.

When your referral for specialty care is authorized and current, you can avoid paying an out of pocket deductible and 50 percent of the cost of the service.

When you're enrolled in TRICARE Prime, your care starts with your primary care manager. If you need care that they cannot provide, you will be referred to another provider for specialty care. The primary care manager submits the referral to TriWest Healthcare Alliance. TriWest authorizes the care and sends you a notification.

TRICARE Prime Referral Process

TriWest works with your primary care manager and specialty providers to get you the care you need through the TRICARE Prime referral process. TriWest supports all of your providers as they help you manage your healthcare.

If you don't have a referral, and you get services from a specialty care provider (not including emergency care), you could end up using the point of service option. This means you are responsible for 50 percent of the TRICARE-allowed amount for the care.

If you're an active duty service member, you'll always (except for emergencies) need a referral for civilian provider care. Without a referral, you could be responsible for the entire amount.

Referrals and authorizations do expire. If your primary care manager submitted a referral for you in the past, check to make sure your referral is still valid. You can see your current referrals and authorizations in your secure <http://www.TriWest.com> account.

Check in With Your PCM

Has it been a while since you've visited your primary care manager? Check your <http://www.TriWest.com> account to find their name, location and contact information.

Don't have a TriWest.com account yet? Sign up today on TriWest.com. You can view your referrals and sign up to get text or email alerts when an authorization is processed. You'll know that your care is authorized in hours instead of days. That means you can get your care soon.

What do you need to save time and money before your next visit to a specialty provider? Your referral. Get it faster at <http://www.TriWest.com>.

Kids Safety Tips

1. Approach the subject of safety in a non-threatening way. It's important not to make your child fearful. Encourage them to be cautious and able to recognize when something is wrong.

2. Encourage your child to trust their intuition.

3. Let your child know their body belongs to them. No one has the right to touch them inappropriately.

4. Inform your child of rules pertaining to strangers.

5. Let your child know that adults DO NOT ask children for help nor do they threaten them.

6. Share an easily-remembered secret CODE WORD.

7. Never label clothing, a backpack or other personal items with your child's name.

8. Give your child instructions on what to do if they get separated from you in a public place.

9. Make sure your child knows their full name, address and all your contact information, and how to dial 9-1-1, make collect calls and dial the operator on a pay phone.

10. Know where your child is at all times, and keep a list of their friends, addresses and phone numbers.

11. Update your child's records every 6-12 months, ensuring a current photo is readily accessible.

Hot Topics

COREY LAVEL AND STIX CONCERT

Corey Lavel and Stix are coming to the Sunset Cinema Today at 7 p.m. to perform live in concert. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and there will be a snack bar and beer concessions. For more information, call MCCS at 830-5053.

ULTIMATE WARRIOR COMPETITION

Prove yourself at the Ultimate Warrior Competition, Aug. 25 at 5 p.m. at the West Gym. This event is free and open to all authorized MCCS patrons, ages 18 and over. Events include push-ups, an agility ladder, cone shuttle, sit-ups, sprints, tire flip, box jumps, fireman carries, farmer walks and pull-ups. Call 830-6451 for more information, or visit <http://www.semprefit29.com>.

CAR AND BIKE SHOW

Register for the Commanding General's Car and Bike Show from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 22, at the corner of 5th and Brown. Entry fee is \$5 for active duty and retired service members. Entry fee per vehicle is \$20. Categories: Classic Car, before 1980; Modern Car, after 1980; Truck, any year; Sport and Street Bikes. There will be General's Choice, MCCS Choice and People's Choice prizes. Deadline to enter is Sept. 30. Visit <http://www.mccspecial events29.com> to enter online.

Marine Corps History

Aug. 17, 1942

Just prior to dawn, the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion under Lt. Col. Evans F. Carlson landed on Makin Island from the submarines NAUTILUS and ARGONAUT. The next day, the Marines left the island after destroying a seaplane base, two radio stations and a supply warehouse, and killing about 100 Japanese soldiers.

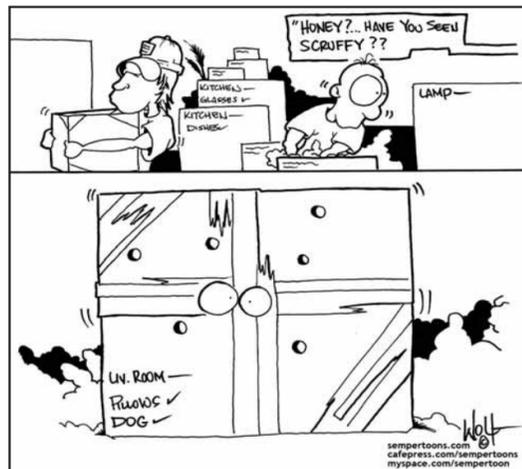


Eagle Eyes

Immediately report any suspicious activity which may be a sign of terrorism, including:

1. Surveillance
2. Suspicious questioning
3. Tests of security
4. Acquiring supplies
5. Suspicious persons
6. Trial runs
7. Deploying assets

830-3937



SEMPERTOONS: CREATED BY GUNNERY SGT. CHARLES WOLF, USMC/RET.

SUDOKU #2271

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		7				4	3	8

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2011 HOMETOWN CONTENT

Combat Center Spotlight

Name: Carol Burton

Billet: School Liaison Officer

What are your responsibilities?: "I am the single point of contact between the commands, Combat Center families and the schools."

What is your favorite aspect of your job?: "I love interacting with the families. I like to make them feel good about where they are. Making Twentynine Palms a happy place to be."

What project are you most proud of?: "The graduation videos from deployed parents. It allowed the kids a chance to feel like their parent was a part of their graduation event while also allowing the parents to feel like they had not missed out on such a significant milestone in their child's life."

How long have you been at the Combat Center?: "I have lived in the area for a year and have been the School Liaison for five months."

What is the craziest thing you have ever done?: During aircraft landing operations "I caught a [tail hook] trap on the USS John C. Stennis aircraft carrier, and then the aircraft was catapulted into the sky from the ship during take-off the next day."

What are your hobbies?: "I like reading happy books. I refuse to read anything on Oprah's recommended reading list. Cooking and baking, Shopping, anything I can put my little fingers on. And family time, especially doing things with my kids."

What is something about yourself that most people don't know?: "I'm a little OCD about my desk. I can usually tell when someone moves something and it's out of place. It bothers me."



PHOTO BY CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

THE GOAT FAMILY

[Puzzle solutions on A9]

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ACROSS

1. Fuse rating unit
4. Taj ___
9. Managed, somehow
14. Comic Charlotte
15. In unison
16. In heaven
17. Whopper
18. Gym offering
19. Poet's concern
20. "Kid Galahad" star
23. Morticia, to Fester
24. Stirrup site
25. 3,000-hit club member
28. Baja California city
32. "On the Street Where You Live" singer
34. Send to the Hill
36. "___ the Roof" (Drifters hit)
37. "Billy Bathgate" star
42. Flower in a Stein line

DOWN

43. Prefix with comic
44. "Relax, soldier!"
47. Takes away
52. Take the plunge
53. One-man play about Capote
55. Get the lead out?
56. "The Nanny" star
60. Toulouse toodle-oo
63. Kangaroo ___
64. "How was ___ know?"
65. "No más" boxer
66. Golfer with an "army"
67. Baton Rouge sch.
68. Remora's ride
69. Etonian's dad
70. Elgart or Brown

DOWN

1. ___ Francis of "What's My Line?"
2. Like some rebates
3. Annoys
4. "Manon" composer
5. "Pronto!" in memos
6. Billing unit, for some
7. Meara or Murray
8. Auto contract, maybe
9. Funt's "candid" gear
10. Toe the line
11. Beer belly
12. Eden evictee
13. "___ Rosenkavalier"
21. Zamboni's milieu
22. Young kiltie
25. Manilow song setting
26. Before long
27. Novelist Deighton
29. He "stung like a bee"
30. Places for trophy cases
31. Needed liniment
33. Not talking
35. Went like the blazes
37. ___ on (love to excess)
38. Like thrift shop wares
39. Vast expanse
40. In great shape
41. "The African Queen" author
42. Like some deals or data
45. "The Elements of Style" coauthor
46. Hurler's stat
48. Pendulum's path
49. 1973 title role for John Wayne
50. Dreaded fly
51. Pertaining to blood fluid
54. Open, as a bottle
56. North Carolina's Cape ___
57. "Dumb" girl of old comics
58. Litter's littlest
59. Toledo's waterfront
60. Messages from SWMs, e.g.
61. "That's obvious!" in teen talk
62. Sinn Féin's gp.

OBSERVATION POST

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1/4 Marines ready for mountain ops

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
CPL. WILLIAM JACKSON**

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING CENTER BRIDGEPORT, Calif. – “Climb!” The commands came from a Mountain Leaders Course instructor while a motley crew of servicemembers negotiated a 40-foot rock face during an MLC training event at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Aug. 10.

The MLC course breaks up the classes for knot tying, commands and techniques into four days, gradually teaching service members to successfully manage a climb on their own.

“They go from knowing absolutely nothing, and in four days they’re lead climbing,” said Sgt. Joshua Beal, an MLC instructor. “That’s pretty huge.”

Before students even begin their ascents, they have to begin with the basics.

“There’s a total of 14 out of 30 testable knots that we do blindfolded,” said 2nd Lt. Jordan Alley, a platoon commander with Company C, 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. “Everything we do out here has something to do with knots.”

“The biggest piece of information [MLC instructors] want students to take away from training is how to incorporate various rope installations in this type of environment and understand just how each rope installation works,” said Gunnery Sgt. Joseph Gilliland, the staff noncommissioned officer in charge of Mountain Warfare Formal Schools. “It’s fundamentals, and it’s mechanics.”

Most MLC students learned how to use carabiners, cams, nuts and climbing rope for the first time.

“It’s about trusting the equipment, mainly the rope,” said Beal. “The biggest advice I’d say is climb with your feet. You can’t pull-up your way to the top, you’ll get worn out,” said the Central City, Neb., native.

Typically the training is designated for service members to utilize while deployed in a combat zone, but for Alley, this training is very personal, too.

“I’m actually getting ready to run the Marine Corps Marathon in October,” he said. “All the hiking and running around in the high altitude helps.”

More importantly, Alley said he hopes to bring the knowledge back to 1/4 for their upcoming deployment



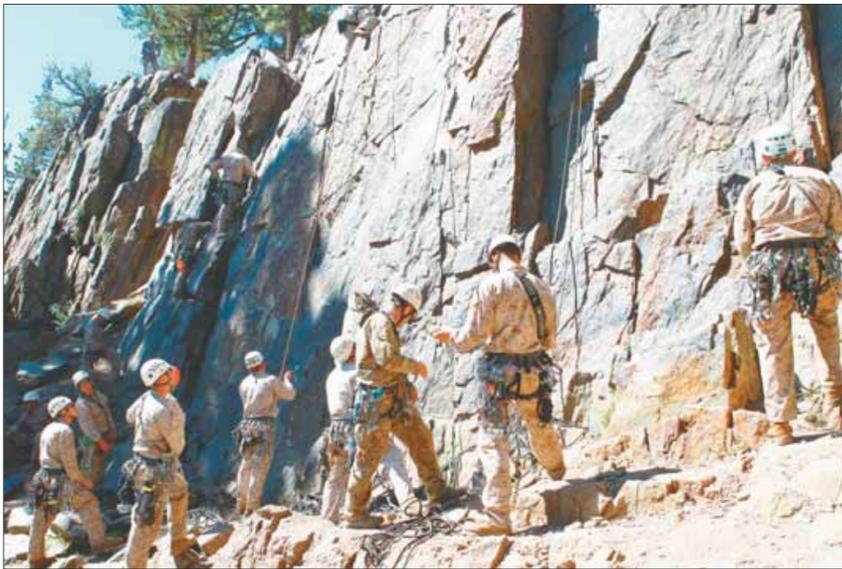
2nd Lt. Jordan Alley, a platoon commander with Company C, 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, hangs onto the rock face near the end of his 40-foot-tall top-roping exercise during the Mountain Leaders Course at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, Calif.

with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit later this year. His hopes are if they need to traverse any mountainous areas, he and his Marines will be ready.

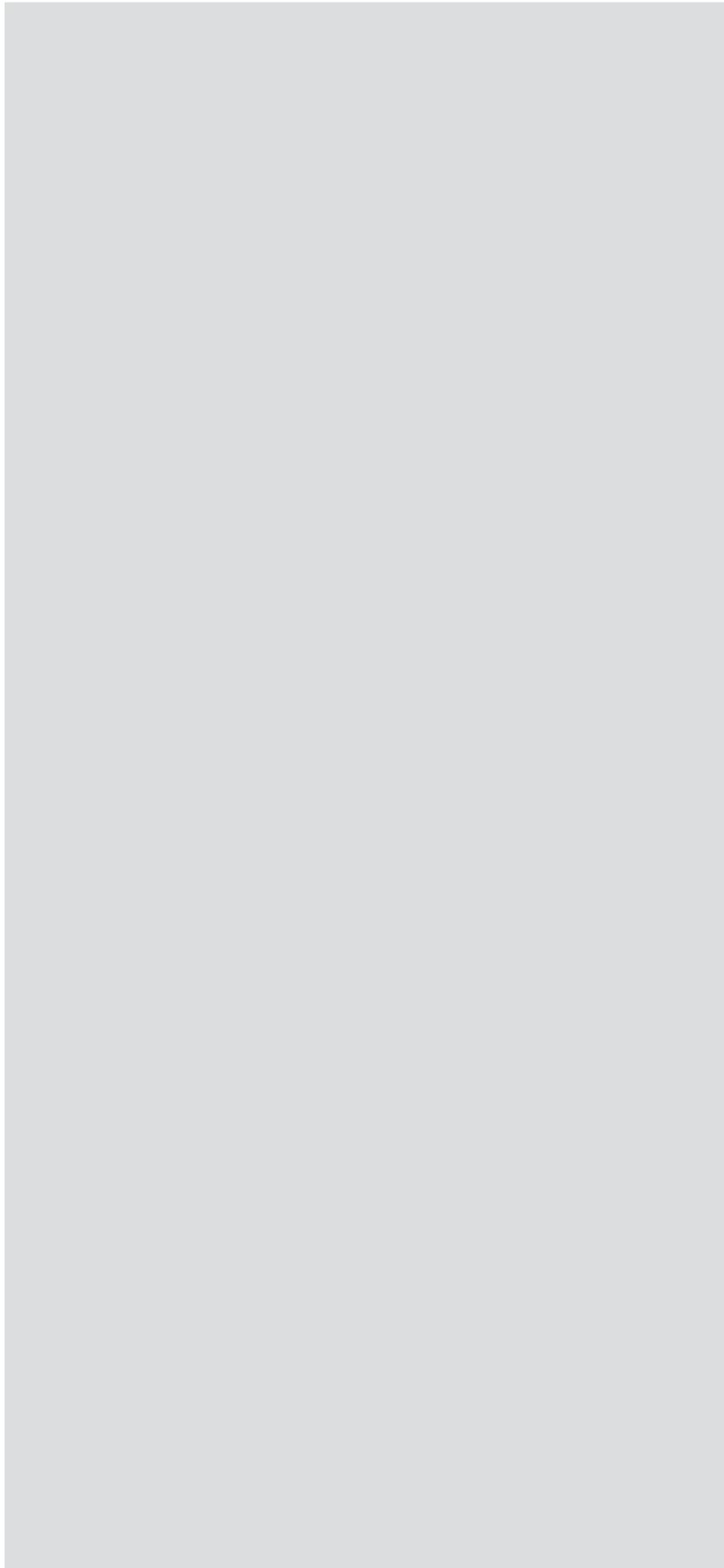
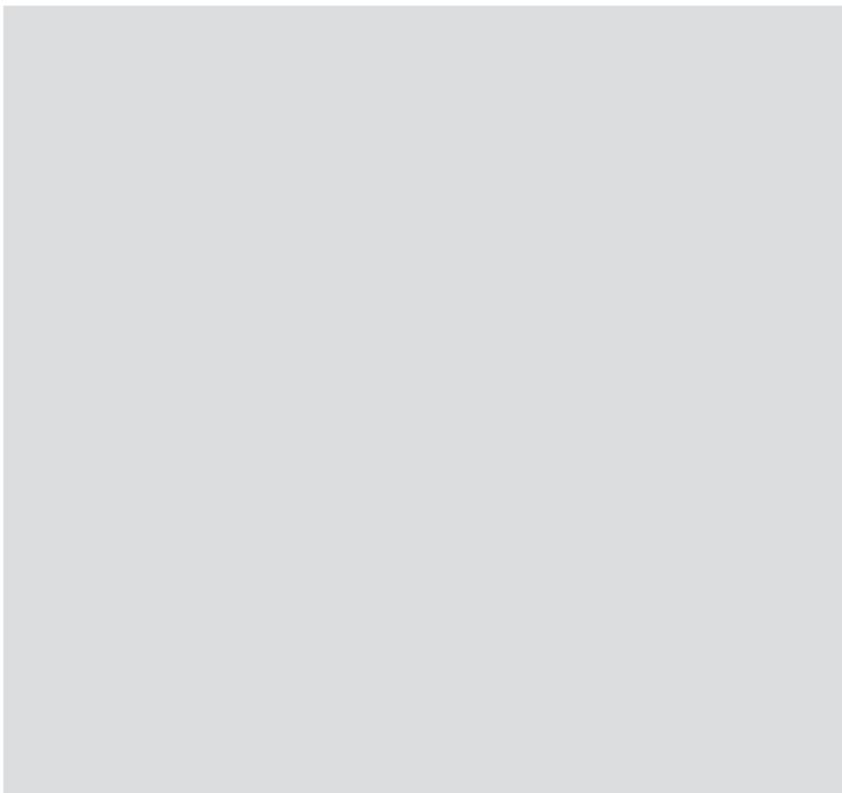
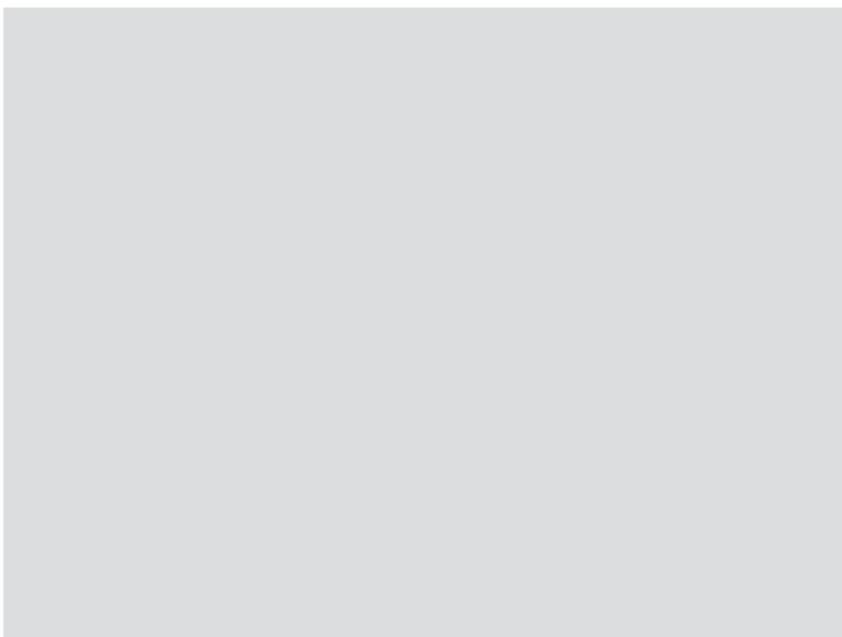
“You learn [climbing] by doing it,” said Alley. “It’s just another tool in the tool box for me.”



Spring-loaded camming devices, pictured above, are some of the many tools climbers use while negotiating rock faces. A cam is used by compressing a trigger, then inserting the cam into a crack or pocket in the rock. Releasing the trigger expands the cam. The friction between the cam and the rock is great enough that, when placed properly, it will hold the climber’s weight.



Servicemembers prepare to top-rope climb a 50-foot-tall rock face.



Heavy metal

BROTHERHOOD

Lance Cpl. Sarah Dietz
Combat Correspondent

Up until a few weeks ago when I thought of a tank, a giant metal gun on tracks came to mind.

The inner-workings of the tank, however remained a mystery. I knew too little about the crew, their battalions or the environment.

This was my first time working with 1st Tank Battalion. When I was assigned to go to Boise, Idaho, for a shooting competition with a tank crew from Company A, 1st Tanks, I expected to hang out with a bunch of rowdy guys who talked smack all week about the competition.

However, my first impression of the tank community was quite the opposite. I didn't see an unruly crowd of competitors.

I saw a family.

There are three tank battalions in the Corps. First Tanks, stationed at the Combat Center; 2nd Tanks, from Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C.; and 4th Tanks, a reserve battalion which has companies spread across the country.

As far as location, the battalions couldn't be spread further apart. But when put within close proximity, they embraced one another like old friends. Their's is a small community, comprised of roughly 800 tankers. Many of them know each other from previous deployments or months spent at their school house formerly at Ft. Knox, Ky., and now at Ft. Benning, Ga.

"The tank community is extremely small," said Maj. Jared Duff, the executive officer for 1st Tank battalion. "You develop a very strong bond, and you know your Marines."

The life of the tanker is different than the average Marine.

Inside the metal monster, four Marines sit inside a eight-foot-by-six-foot box awaiting orders. Each does their part to keep the vehicle operating efficiently. The vehicle is their battle vessel, protection and home.

The tank is a warhorse. The driver maneuvers the tank into position, while the loader pulls a round and places into the chamber. Then the gunner places the cannon on target.

Directing it all is the tank commander, who has a 360 degree view of the battlefield. He navigates and directs the driver, sets up sectors of observation and fire for the loader and gunner, and sets the tone for his crew as he oversees all activity in the tank, keeping his Marines on point.

Each movement these Marines make is in rhythm and fast. Each action could mean the difference between life and death in a combat situation.

The tankers are in rhythm because they know how one another operates and move in sync like clockwork. They are fast because they love one another like family and can't bear to let the other down.

"It's personal," Duff said. "You come to look at these guys like brothers. We rely on each other."

They literally live in a box and each other is all they have, said Gunnery Sgt. Ian Fisher, the 1st Tanks master gunner. "Loyalty is everything"

The tank is also the safest home the Marines have on the battlefield.

Tankers spend practically all their time in and around the tank in combat, when it is unsafe to exit the thick armored shelter that surrounds them; the tank's walls are what keep them alive. Sitting in a small space so close to each other, they form bonds stronger than even the camaraderie all Marines share.

Together, these men and their tanks form one devastating war machine.

"These guys reinforce the warrior ethos," Duff said. "They join to serve and deploy to fight. We have the best job in the Corps."

"The tank community is extremely small. You develop a very strong bond, and you know you're Marines."

— Maj. Jared Duff
Executive officer for 1st Tank Battalion



CPL WILLIAM J. JACKSON

A Marine with Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, grabs a carabiner at the top of his 50-foot top-rope exercise at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center's Leavitt Training Area Aug. 12. Top-ropeing, a climbing style, is one of the basic lessons Marines learn.

LTA, from A1

designed to provide service members with the confidence needed to perform in complex, compartmentalized terrain. The technical skills the individuals learn are essential to the commander for the completion of their unit's assigned mission.

"This type of training is crucial for deploying units," said Gunnery Sgt. Joseph Gilliland, the staff noncommissioned officer in charge of the Mountain Warfare Formal Schools. "Whether a unit conducts a cliff assault or not, the training we provide in areas of technical rope installations has an array of critical usefulness in gorge crossings, and one-rope bridges"

The Marines and sailors of Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, covered three main exercises at the LTA.

"Today we're learning to top-rope and belay," said Cpl. Leroy Gomez, a squad leader

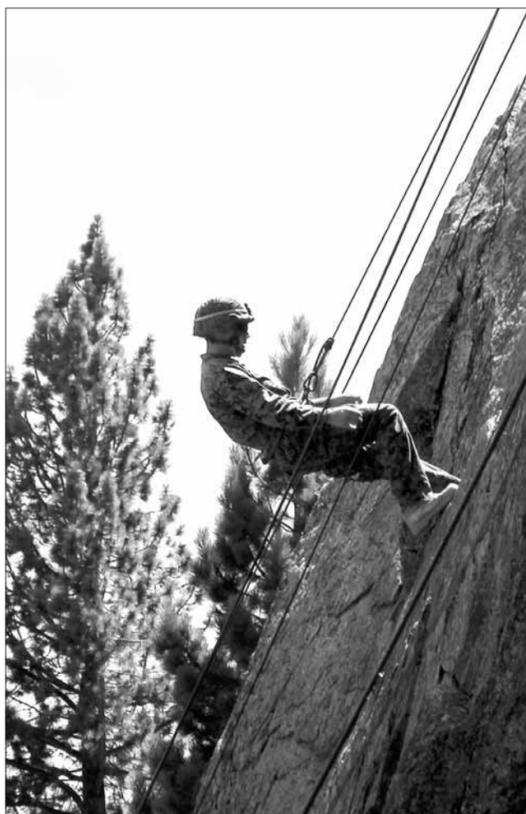
with Co. B, 1st Bn., 7th Marines, and participant in Mountain Exercise 7-11. "We learned night climbing, stream crossing and gorge crossing, too."

Gomez, who was an avid climber back home in Denver, says it's all about trust and confidence in the Marines' belaying abilities and the equipment provided for the climb.

Company B, 1/7, will utilize the mountain training during their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

"LTA allows students to see the big picture and hopefully understand it by seeing it work in the environment it is intended for," said Gilliland. "We also want them to learn and understand the basics of rock climbing, and LTA provides a basic platform."

"It's good training," said Cpl. David Sumner, a squad leader with Company B, 1/7, after crossing a seven-story gorge. "[The training] puts us out of our element."



CPL WILLIAM J. JACKSON

A Marine rappels down a cliff after a climbing exercise.

SJA CORNER

Do I need a will?

CAPT. DAVID SEGRAVES

LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICE

We live in a profession where death is a very real possibility. As such, we have will preparation services available for free from the legal assistance office.

Still, many Marines do not need wills. Well before deployment, Marines need to consider whether they need a will which includes considering their family situations, their assets and their desires for where they want their assets to go.

Single Marines or those with spouses and not expecting children may not need wills.

One very useful part of a will is designating guardians for children. Now, before you make a will and designate guardians for your children, make sure you talk to your spouse and agree who these guardians will be. No one wants a court fight when two spouses designate different guardians and die in the same accident.

You can also designate conservators for the assets children will be inheriting. This option may be advisable if you have a family member who will be a great guardian but is not good with handling finances. Finally, if you have children who stand to inherit your belongings, including your SGLI insurance, you will likely want to establish a trust to designate exactly who will control the money and how and when it will be distributed to your children.

Single Marines may be able to avoid probate altogether and not need a will if they only have certain assets.

Many financial accounts (savings, checking, mutual funds, etc) have Pay On Death designations available. If you fill out these POD clauses, these assets pass outside of

probate, no will needed. These clauses should only be used to pass assets to adults.

If you want to pass them to a minor, you will likely need a trust and possibly a will. Also, if you have real estate, and if you have it titled as joint tenancy with right of survivorship, the other person on the title will receive the property without needing a will. Some states also allow vehicles to be titled with right of survivorship, which may be a good option for those whose most valuable asset is their vehicle. Of course, one should be careful when selecting a joint owner as this owner has immediate rights to the property and this titling could trigger gift tax consequences.

The true default for death without a will is called intestacy or dying intestate. Each state has their own rules for passing assets when someone dies without a will, but they all share similarities. In general, if you are single without children, your parents will receive all your belongings. If you are married without children, the spouse receives everything. If you are single with children, your children receive everything. If this method of distributing your belongings is acceptable, you do not need a will.

Finally, regardless of whether you get a will, please get a durable power of attorney for healthcare and a durable power of attorney for finances. These documents enable you to select others to make medical and financial decisions while you are incapacitated.

Forms for these documents and our complete will questionnaire are available at the Combat Center Legal Assistance website: <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palm/sja/pages/LegalAssistance.aspx>.

ADVERTISEMENT

Back to school

Federal Impact Aid

What is Federal Impact Aid?

Federal Impact Aid is a program designed to provide funding to school districts with a significant portion of federally-connected students in their school system. These payments are meant to be reimbursements for revenue lost due to federally-owned, and therefore, tax-exempted, property (i.e. military bases and native reservations).

How does the Federal Impact Aid Program affect my child?

The Federal Impact Aid Program provides funding for schools in five categories:

- Basic Support Payments
- Payments for Property
- Disability Payments
- School Construction Payments
- Department of Defense Supplemental Impact Aid Payments.

Basic Support payments are distributed based on the number of federally-connected students enrolled in the school districts. Federally-connected students include those who have a parent in the U.S. Military, are Native American, live on federal property or have a parent who works on federal property.

Some of the other payments provide funding for special education programming and facility improvements.

What can I do?

It's simple! Every year your child receives a federal survey card that requests information regarding their federal connection. It is imperative that we have 100% of surveys completed. To receive the Basic Support Payments, the school district must have at least 400 of their students or three percent of their enrollment federally connected. To receive the supplemental funding from DOD, the district must have 20 percent of their student population federally connected.

The Morongo Basin Unified School District:

<http://www.morongo.k12.ca.us> 367-9191

The Morongo Unified School District is comprised of 11 elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools.

Additionally offered are two continuation high schools, two state preschools and a special education preschool. MUSD provides a well-rounded education to approximately 9,630 students in the SoCal Mojave High Desert in San Bernardino County, and offers programs including athletics, advanced placement and GATE courses.

Elementary schools:

Condor Elementary	367-0750
Friendly Hills Elementary	366-3812
Joshua Tree Elementary	366-8459
Landers Elementary	364-2382
Morongo Valley Elementary	363-6216
Oasis Elementary	367-3595
Onaga Elementary	369-6333
Palm Vista Elementary	367-7538
Twentynine Palms Elementary	367-3545
Yucca Mesa Elementary	228-1777
Yucca Valley Elementary	365-3381

Middle schools:

La Contenta Middle	228-1802
Twentynine Palms Junior High	367-9507

High schools:

Twentynine Palms High School	367-9591
Yucca Valley High School	365-3391
Monument Continuation High School	367-7273
Sky High Continuation High School	369-6310

REMINDER!

All Children in 7th grade and higher must get a TDAP vaccine

Due to a higher than normal number of reported whooping cough cases recently reported in California, new legislation requires that all students entering grades 7 through 12 during the 2011-2012 school year show proof of a whooping cough booster shot or TDAP.

**School starts
August 24**

For local entertainment see our LIBERTY CALL section on page B2

What can the School Liaison Program do for me?



Before you arrive at MCAGCC...

- Support during the transition of schools.
- Provide specific academic, location and registration information about MCAGCC schools.
- Decipher high school student credit transfers and varying school-to-school academic curriculum and schedules, as well as varying graduation requirements.

Once you're here...

- Communicate between you and your child's new school.
- Increase academic success and school involvement with your child.
- Facilitate college and career planning for your high school students.
- Consult with school personnel regarding family concerns.

When you leave...

- Supply information on how to make another smooth transition.
- Provide information on future School Liaison programs.

Who is the MCAGCC School Liaison?

School Liaisons provide a thread of continuity between different duty stations. If you're expecting orders, the School Liaison at your next assignment can provide information on local schools and area services.

It is their goal to provide parents with timely and relevant information, so they can make the best educational decisions for their children. The School Liaison is committed to the military child's education by providing and maintaining the relationship between the installation and the school district.

Carol Burton is the School Liaison for the Combat Center. She coordinates support services and to help maximize educational opportunities for your children. For residents of Twentynine Palms, Joshua Tree and Yucca Valley, your children will be attending Morongo Unified School District.

How do I meet with the School Liaison?

Walk-ins are welcome at the School Liaison's office in Building 1417 or you can make an appointment by calling 830-1574.

Visit our websites!

<http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/g5/sl/>
<http://www.facebook.com/combatcenterschoolliaison>

- Links to homework help.
- Information about local schools.
- A calendar of local events for kids.
- A timeline on college prep for high school students.
- Our monthly School Liaison newsletter.
- A list of websites focused on assisting military families.
- Information on the Exceptional Family Member Program.

Transportation and meals:

The Morongo Unified School District provides transportation privileges for pupils residing beyond walking distance through a contract with First Student Inc. Students eligible to receive home-to-school transportation are those students kindergarten through 6th grade who live at least two miles from the school of their enrollment, students 7th-8th grade who live at least two and a half miles from the school of their enrollment and students 9th-12th grade who live at least three miles from their school of enrollment.

While the Morongo Unified School District provides transportation, the cost of this service exceeds the cost covered by the State of California. As a result, it is necessary for the district to charge a fee for services.

School bus pass rates are charged on the scale below:

1st Child - \$100/semester

2nd Child - \$50/semester

3rd Child - Free

1st Child Reduced through Nutritional Services - \$25/semester

2nd Child Reduced through Nutritional Services - \$10/semester

3rd Child Reduced through Nutritional Services - Free

Free through Nutritional Services - Free

The income guidelines are established by the United States Department of Agriculture and are those used through the free/reduced lunch program. To receive a free or reduced bus pass, a copy of the Nutritional Services eligibility letter must be submitted with the bus pass application.

Other programs:

Exceptional Family Member Program:
 760-830-7740 or visit <http://www.mccs29palms.com/pages/mfamservices/EFMP/EFMP.html>

Children Youth and Teen Programs:
 760-830-3227 or visit <http://www.mccs29palms.com/pages/mfamservices/cytp.html#>

Officer Professional Military Education

Distance Education Program

Expeditionary Warfare School

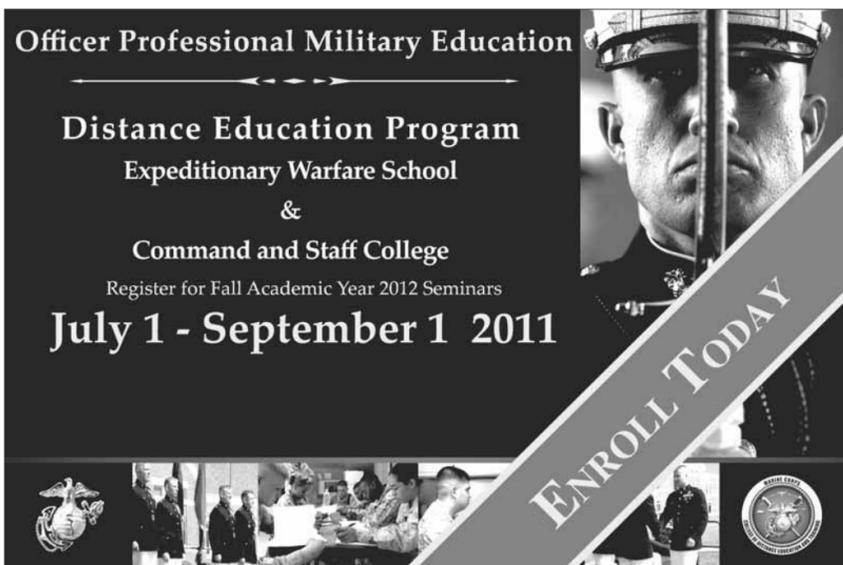
&

Command and Staff College

Register for Fall Academic Year 2012 Seminars

July 1 - September 1 2011

ENROLL TODAY



Combat Center Religious Services

Sunday

Immaculate Heart of Mary
8:45 a.m. - Confessions+
9 a.m. - Rosary
9:30 a.m. - Catholic Mass*
9:30 a.m. - Children's Liturgy of the Word
4 p.m. - Choir Practice
4:15 p.m. - Confessions+
4:30 p.m. - Rosary
5 p.m. - Catholic Mass
Christ Chapel
9 a.m. - Calvary Fellowship (Contemporary Worship*)
9 a.m. - Children's Church
10:30 a.m. - Redemption (A blend of traditional and contemporary worship)
10:45 a.m. - (Children's Church*)

Weekday Events

Immaculate Heart of Mary
Mon.-Fri. 11:45 a.m.-Catholic Mass
Christ Chapel
Mon. - Fri., noon - Prayer
Tuesday
Christ Chapel
9 a.m. - Christian Women's Fellowship* (Sept.-May)
Immaculate Heart of Mary
3:30-5:30 p.m. - Military Council of Catholic Women
Wednesday
Immaculate Heart of Mary
First Wednesday, 6 p.m. - Baptism preparation class and 7 p.m. - Knights of Columbus

Thursday

Immaculate Heart of Mary
9 a.m. - Adult Class
6 p.m. - Children RCIA
6:30 p.m. - RCIA (Sept.-April)
7 p.m. - Gr. 7 and Confirmation
Friday
Immaculate Heart of Mary
First Friday each month, 12:15 p.m.
4:30 p.m. - Exposition/Adoration Most Blessed Sacrament
Legend
* Indicates child care is provided
+ Call 830-6456/6482 for confession appointments



Muslim prayer space is available in the Village Center, room 87.

Jewish prayer space is available in the Village Center, room 93.

For more information call 830-5430.

Combat Center Trader Ads

AUTOMOTIVE

2008 TOYOTA YARIS. \$8,000 OBO. Approximately 64K miles. Good condition. Consistent maintenance. Call 622-4562.

2001 BOMBARDIER DS650. Immaculate. Can be seen at lemon lot. \$3,000 OBO. 819-9353.

2007 CR85R HONDA. \$1,500 OBO. 366-7626

2002 XR80R HONDA. \$800 OBO. 366-7626

CLASSIC 1957 CHEVY PICKUP. 350 engine, 3 speed automatic, \$6,900 OBO. 361-3509.

2007 SUZUKI BOULEVARD. Black and chrome, 1600 CC, \$3,000 in extras included. Asking \$7,500. 401-3739.

MISC.

SILVER US MARINE COINS. Set of 24: Bicentennial Coins. 37 years old. One ounce each. \$1,000.
Various coins: Proof US Mint, 200-year-old coins. One ounce. Each in own case. \$40 each. Call Bill 367-6030.

1940'S DAISY TARGETEER BB PISTOL. Adjustable rear sights. A steal at \$1,000. Call Bill 367-6030.

GOLF CLUBS. Ping Eye 2 Irons 1-SW \$225. Slazenger forged blades 2-PW \$200. Assorted putters and wedges. Call 413-4015.

BABY ITEMS: Solid wood baby crib, walker, stroller, wooden horse and more. All in excellent condition. Call 217-3310.

BUNK BED WITH MATTRESSES. White metal, \$200. 366-7626

COLLECTIBLE SPORTS, SCI-FI CARDS: Baseball, football from mid 80's to 90's. Star Trek and Star Wars collectible cards too. Individual heroes, team sets or make an offer on the whole collection. Call Stephen at 567-7921.

YOUR FREE AD HERE

The deadline for submitting Trader Ads is noon Wednesday, for the upcoming Friday's newspaper.

Trader Ad forms are available at the Public Affairs Office and may be filled out during normal working hours at Bldg. 1417. Ads may also be submitted

through e-mail, but will only be accepted from those with an @usmc.mil address. If you are active duty, retired military or a family member and do not have an @usmc.mil address you can go to the PAO page of the base Web site at: <http://www.29palms.usmc.mil>

/dirs/pao/ and complete a request to publish an ad.

The limitations for ads are: 15-word limit, limit of two ads per household and the Trader may be used only for noncommercial classified ads containing items of personal property offered by and for individuals authorized to

use this service. Such ads must represent incidental exchanged not of sustained business nature.

Ads for housing rentals will not be considered for the Combat Center Trader.

To have a "House For Sale" ad run in the Observation Post, applicants must

provide Permanent Change of Station orders and have the ad approved by Base Housing. This ensures the Combat Center Trader is not used for commercial real estate endeavors.

Ads are run on a first-come, first-serve, space available basis. If you have questions please call 830-6213.

ExFOB data a two-way street

By Diane Durden

The Experimental Forward Operating Base was not just an opportunity for vendors to showcase their products. It also provided Marine Corps officials the chance to collect real time usage data.

Personnel from Naval Surface Warfare Center were on site to collect information on each of the products throughout the week.

Data collected, such as voltage output, allows analysts to see how much power is being generated by the experimental auxiliary power units and solar units, two of the technologies presented.

Temperature readings were also taken to gauge how hot the environment was and what impact that had on the different systems.

"By obtaining power generation data and taking fuel measurements, we can tell how much power was generated and potentially how much fuel it takes [to operate]," said Eric Shields, an engineer with Carderock Division, Naval Surface Warfare Center. "The efficiency of the equipment [the technologies] support is what gives us the cost savings element."

Providing the Marine Corps with firsthand knowledge of a product's capabilities, the information allows leaders a chance to validate vendors' claims of their products' services.

"The data we're gathering is taken with the help of the vendors," said Shields. "They allow us to wire into their equipment and see that data."

The data is compiled into a report so the Marine Corps can make intelligent decisions about what is worth purchasing and what is not, he added.

Exchange of information is not just provided by the vendor to the Marine Corps. It's a two-way street. Vendors come to ExFOB at no cost to the government. In return, they get feedback from the Marines on-site and a data report.

From this, the vendors know how well their equipment performed and can see where they might need to improve their systems and ruggedize them to make it more field ready.

"We only provide that vendor their [own] data," Shields quickly added. "It's not a competition. It's a data gathering exercise."

EXFOB, from A1

our folks that are deployed."

Twelve vendors were invited to demonstrate products in three categories: auxiliary power units, high capacity alternators and concentrated solar power. Each of the three technologies focused on reducing the requirement for liquid fuel while providing increased power output.

Tactical-wheeled vehicles are one of the largest consumers of fuel, especially on idle. The auxiliary power units and high capacity alternators provide energy to on-board systems, while reducing the vehicles' fuel consumption.

Also showcased during the ExFOB were various types of concentrated solar harvesting equipment. A step above the typical flat panel solar array, these products track the movement of the sun. The small panels produce more power per square inch than a standard flat panel. Solar arrays not only produce power, but also provide hot water at remote bases.

The products demonstrated this year may not be ready for deployment, but that does not mean they didn't add to this year's ExFOB success.

"[ExFOB] is an opportunity for the industry to showcase what they currently have," said Maj. Patrick Reynolds, the branch head, Logistics Combat Element Technology Division, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory. "There is also an opportunity for the Marine Corps to shape what [the industry] is doing."

Several solutions provided by last year's event are already in use by Marines in Afghanistan. Two patrol bases that are forward deployed are currently operating entirely on renewable energy. A third patrol base is operating at 90 percent reduction in fuel and a three-week foot patrol was executed without battery resupply which reduced the weight load by 700 pounds.

"Renewable energy sources reduce the amount of fuel infantry Marines were using providing them with more flexibility," said Maj. Sean Sadlier, logistics analyst, Expeditionary Energy

Office, Headquarters Marine Corps.

"Combat effectiveness is flexibility on the battlefield," he added. Sadlier was recently deployed with equipment from last year's ExFOB.

Increasing energy efficiency and using renewable energy sources extends a Marine unit's sustainability in an expeditionary environment, making for a leaner, light force.

"We're looking for the 'killer app,'" said Sadlier. "This is just one process the Marine Corps is using to accelerate that process."

Since ExFOB provides industry with opportunities to demonstrate new capabilities, the annual event helps quickly move commercial technologies from concept to combat.

"It's a problem of how do we get from what we know to what we can do," said Burke. "I think the ExFOB has really moved forward with that. Taking what we know and getting it to what we can do and actually in the hands of the Marines in the field, that's what this represents."



DIANE DURDEN

Katherine Hammack [left] and Sharon Burke listen to a brief on the use of a high capacity alternator from one of several vendors during the Experimental Forward Operating Base 2011 at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Aug. 16. Burke is the assistant Secretary of Defense for Operational Energy Plans and Programs. Hammack is the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment



Festival Finale

Sgt. Heather Golden
Editor / Press Chief



A small girl waves goodbye to the band members before heading home to bed.

The Combat Center Marine Band closed out this year's Summer Music Festival with a patriotic bang at the Yucca Valley Community Center Saturday.



Gunnery Sgt. Joel Daniel, normally a tuba player, rocks out on the bagpipes with a song he arranged in honor of the birth of his daughter.

Catch the band's next performance when they open the Highland Games during Colorado Tattoo in Estes Park, Colo.



A patriotic local resident laughs after one of the band members tells a joke before his solo.

Staff top picks for Super Bowl



The Arizona Cardinals

The Arizona Cardinals will win the 2012 Super Bowl because no one will pay any attention to them (again). They will sneak into the playoffs (with a 9-7 record) by taking the NFC West Division (the worst in the NFL), while every other NFC team fighting for a playoff berth in their own Divisions will have epic battles, the Cards will only have to beat the 49ers, Seahawks, and the Rams (combined totals last year 20-28) AFC teams with 10-6 records will not make the playoffs. While the other playoff teams will be plagued by injuries that happened during the regular season

because they gave 100% during every game, the Cardinals will again have had minor "flashes" unevenly throughout the season, which will give the Cards the edge in the end. The Cardinals still have players (and fans) who remember their fantastic Super Bowl run that was tragically ended by a ball that was only caught because of the enormous amount of "Stick-em" used by the Steelers receiver. The Birds will again soar. Why? Because Kurt Warner said so. 'Nuff said.

— Michael King



The Philadelphia Eagles

This is the year to keep an eye out for the Philadelphia Eagles. Why? 1. Nnamdi Asomugha and Asante Samuel. Good luck to opposing quarterbacks finding an open receiver with these two on the field. 2. An upgraded defensive line (thank you, Jason Babin, newcomer Darryl Tapp and Juqua Parker). 3. A daunting offensive line (thank you, Ronnie Brown, Donald Lee and rookie Dion Lewis) And if LeSean McCoy gets back on his feet, watch out. 4. Michael Vick. There isn't a more dynamic

quarterback in the NFL right now. And he's also one hell of a leader. Vick doesn't quit, and knows the punch this dream team can pack. He's going to do everything he can to make sure they close out the season as champions. Look for them to breeze through the playoffs and come up against either the Colts or the Pats.

— Sgt. Heather Golden



The San Francisco 49ers

My choice for this season's Super Bowl pick is the San Francisco 49ers. Why? In a word, Joe Montana. OK, that's two words. Yes, I know he no longer plays for the 49ers and hasn't for quite some time. However, when I started watching football he was THE guy to watch. He was, and still is,

so cute. I fell madly in love. He is my next ex-husband. On another note, a more motivating note, their team colors: scarlet and gold. Marine Corps colors: scarlet and gold. Need I say more?

— Diane Durden

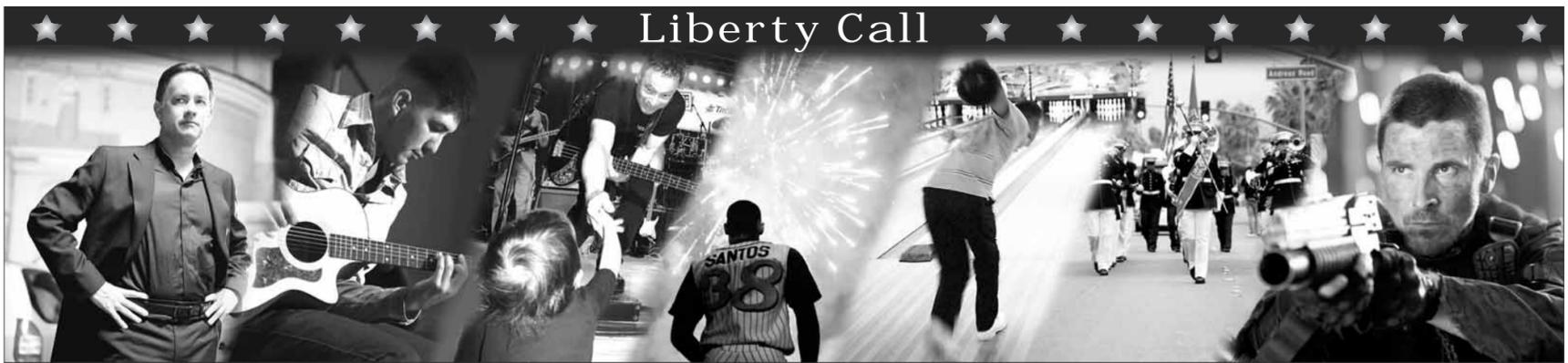


The New England Patriots

Bottom line. The New England Patriots are going to win the Super Bowl. Why? Two words, Tom frick'n Brady. Two more? Chad Ochocinco. The Patriots are perennial favorites, and will always have a shot to win all their games. Tom Brady will do for Ochocinco what he did for Randy Moss. They are going to be a deep threat to score on every pass, and the defense knows that. And c'mon, it's Boston. We're winners. Boston was the only

city in the last 10 years to have all major sport championships. Timmy Thomas and Bruins did it this year, the Sox are in contention, and I'm sure if the Celtics play basketball this year, they'll win. So again, Patriots, Super Bowl, locked.

— Lance Cpl. D. J. Wu



Liberty Call

Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Friday: Social Hour with food, 5 to 7 p.m. followed by DJ Gjettblaque, 8 to 11 p.m., Ladies Night
 Saturday: Variety Night, DJ Gjettblaque 8-11 p.m.
 Wednesday: Bosses Night 5 to 7 p.m.
 Thursday: Social Hour, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Fridays: Social Hour with food, 5 to 7 p.m.
 Monday: Free gourmet bar food, 5 to 7 p.m.
 Wednesday: Free gourmet bar food, 5 to 7 p.m.
 Thursday: Social Hour, 7 to 9 p.m.

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Fridays: Dinner, full menu, 4:30 to 10:30 p.m., Social Hour, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
 Monday: Steak night and full dinner menu 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.
 Monday-Friday: All-Hands lunch, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
 Thursday: Social Hour, 5 to 7 p.m.

Combat Center Officers' Club

Monday-Friday: All-hands lunch, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 Monday: Steak night, 5 to 8 p.m.
 Tuesday: LPA Night, 5 to 7 p.m.
 Wednesday: Cajun Shrimp Bowl, 5 to 8 p.m.
 Thursday: Taco Night, 5 to 7 p.m.

For complete calendars visit <http://www.mccs29palms.com>.

Local Events

Pappy and Harriet's Weekend Line-Up:

Uncle Lucius from Austin, Texas

Playing a mix of country, rock and blues
 When: 8 p.m., Friday, Aug. 19

The Evangenitals

Performing their unique cosmic country and hillbilly jazz
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 20
 Where: 53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
 For more information, call 365-5956 or visit <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

The Chaparral Artists Photographers on Display artists reception

The local artists organization displays the work of its best photographers. Refreshments will be served.
 When: 1 to 3 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 21
 Where: A Roadside Attraction Gallery, 69197 Twentynine Palms Highway, Indian Cove area.
 For more information call 366-0286.

Lower Desert

Drew Carey's Improv-A-Ganza

The famous improv group performs comedic skits
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 20
 Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
 49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon
 For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinoresort.com>.

Weezer

Alternative rock with a hint of punk
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 27
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
 84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
 For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Diana Ross

The blues/soul diva performs her many hits
 When: 8 p.m., Friday, Sept. 9
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
 84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
 For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Carlos Mencia

The famous comedian performs his stand up
 When: 8 p.m., Friday, Sept. 24
 Where: Agua Caliente
 32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
 For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Santana

The rock, salsa and jazz fusion master performs
 When: 8 p.m., Friday, Sept. 30
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
 84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
 For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, Aug. 19

Corey Lavel and Stix for all-hands concert

7 p.m. - No Movies

Saturday, Aug. 20

11 a.m. - **Free Matinee.** Madagascar, Escape 2 Africa, Rated PG

2 p.m. - Zookeeper, Rated PG-13

6 p.m. - Transformers 3, Rated PG-13

9 p.m. - Green Lantern, Rated PG-13

Midnight - Horrible Bosses, Rated R



COURTESY PHOTO

"Cowboys & Aliens" combines two of Hollywood's most durable genres, Westerns and sci-fi, as two rough and tough cowboys from both sides of the law pony up to fight some nasty, alien invaders.

Cowboys saddle up to fight space invaders

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"Cowboys & Aliens"

Starring Daniel Craig and Harrison Ford
 Rated PG-13

Two action-actor icons, Harrison Ford and Daniel Craig, pony up to fight some nasty, not-of-this-Earth troublemakers in "Cowboys & Aliens," a movie about exactly what its title suggests.

Among many other roles, Ford is best remembered for his washbuckling adventures as intrepid explorer Indiana Jones. Craig rebooted the James Bond franchise in 2006, playing the suave, death-defying British superspy in "Casino Royale" and its 2008 sequel, "Quantum of Solace."

In this mash-up of two of Hollywood's most durable genres, Westerns and sci-fi, the two actors play high-noon hombres on different sides of the law, banded together by fate to fight a common enemy. They're not Indy and 007, but echoes of both roles ring out as Ford and Craig race, chase, grunt, glare, shoot and scuffle their way across an Old West gauntlet of flying saucers, explosions and viscous intergalactic interlopers.

Ford is Woodrow Dolarhyde, a gruff cattle baron with a considerable amount of clout. Craig is Jake Lonergan, a buff-n-tuff, lonesome stranger who rides into town with a bad case of amnesia, and a strange metallic gizmo



COURTESY PHOTO

Harrison Ford plays Woodrow Dolarhyde, a gruff cattle baron. Daniel Craig is Jake Lonergan, a buff-n-tuff stranger who rides into town with a bad case of amnesia, and a strange metallic gizmo affixed to his forearm.

affixed to his forearm.

Olivia Wilde sprinkles some va-va-voom into the trail dust as a beautiful young woman of ill repute who may know more about the aliens than she initially lets on. Paul Dano is Dolarhyde's spoiled son, snatched up, up and away in a jarring nighttime air assault by the predators on terrified townsfolk.

Director Jon Favreau, whose resumé also includes "Iron Man" and its sequel, and the recent comedy "Zookeeper," handles everything with the craftwork necessary to combine real actors with extensive computer-generated effects.

But there's a been-there, seen-that feel to most of

the movie magic, which is decent without being dazzling. Most of that ground, it seems, has been broken. Until someone figures out a new way to make our jaws drop with wonder, awe and horror, one goopy, people-gobbling extraterrestrial looks a lot like the last one.

The plot bogs down in its second half with an additional (and mostly unnecessary) layer of complexity, seemingly as a concession to Wilde's character, who didn't appear at all in the 2006 graphic novel that inspired the filmmakers. But hey, the movie suggests, as long as we've got a sexy actress, let's figure out a tasteful way to get her disrobed, walking

through fire, and contributing to the plotline.

The two marquee stars don't really interact much, the "big" action pieces are fairly ho-hum by today's hi-tech, eye-candy standards, and the movie just sort of moseys along when it seems like it should be having a lot more galloping fun.

Most viewers will expect a combination of saddles and flying saucers to take them somewhere exhilarating and exciting, someplace they've never quite been before. But this Wild West romp mostly just zips around in circles of cowboy-and-Indian clichés and all-too-familiar space-invader bunk.



Whatever you're looking for, you can find it in the **Observation Post Classified** section



Visit the official MCAGCC facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/the-combatcenter>

Desert Detours: Sea World in San Diego



Welcome to "Desert Detours," a series that follows our correspondents around on their explorations of southern California. The "out-of-five" palm tree rating scale offers a glance at how worthwhile the writer considers a place to be. Locales will be judged on their accessibility, atmosphere, fun, cost and facilities. Keep an eye out every week for new shenanigans and hot tips on cool things to do.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DIANE DURDEN

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

Last week I mentioned I didn't get to see any penguins or polar bears. So this week, I left the hot temperatures of the high desert for the cool, balmy climate of San Diego and headed to Sea World.

I completely forgot about the significant difference in temperature from Twentynine Palms to San Diego. Although the cool air was a welcome reprieve from the dry, hot desert, I was a bit chilled.

I'm not usually an amusement park fan, but I was looking forward to spending the day with my family. We met at the entrance as the park opened for the day.

Entering the park was fairly easy. All of us had pre-paid tickets of one form or another; eliminating the need to stand in line. I purchased mine ahead of time at the Information, Tickets

and Tours booth at the Combat Center's Exchange, giving me a small discount off the gate price. As a retired service member, I am not eligible for the once per year free entry the park offers. That's limited to active duty and reserve members only.

Sea World has a variety of attractions for all ages: shows, rides and the more interactive animal fun.

We all know we go to see the Shamu Show. While it was an entertaining, informative show, it lacked some of the pizzazz it used to have.

After last year's incident when a trainer was killed by the whale, trainers no longer get into the tank. Without that interaction, the show involved mostly the whales swimming around and splashing audience members, with a few jumps thrown in to keep your attention.

Even though the show itself lacked luster, I was quite impressed with the

tribute to the Armed Forces before the show started. They asked service members to stand and be recognized, and I couldn't help but get choked up.

Pets Rule was the animal show that kept my attention the most. Dogs, cats and a pot-bellied pig performed some amazing tricks. What amazed me most were the cats that walked the tight-rope and traversed a kitty-size version of the Slide for Life. How did they ever train a cat to do that?

Animal shows are not the only attractions for visitors' entertainment. Visitors could feed the dolphins at their tank, for a fee, of course. There were also several aquariums with a variety of underwater plants, coral reefs and beautifully colorful fish to watch.

The tide pool gave visitors an opportunity to see and touch sea stars and other animals typically found

See **DETOURS**, B4



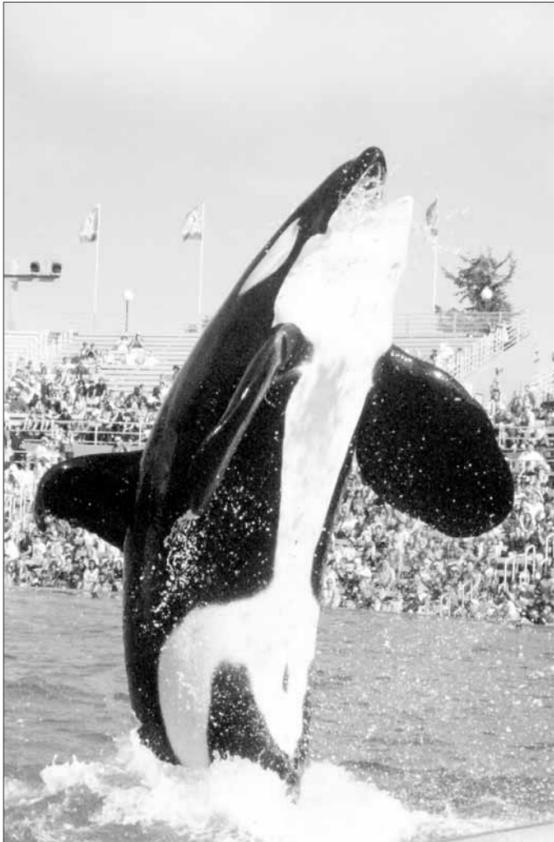
You will find this cuddly polar bear in his habitat at the end of the Wild Arctic ride.



[Above] The tide pool allows guests a hands-on experience with sea stars.



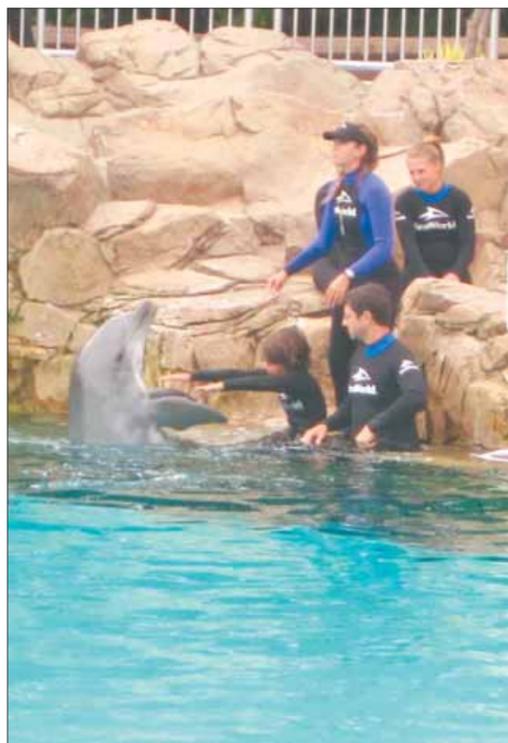
[Right] Lester, a rescued black lab, hides a toy bone in a trash can during the Pets Rule! animal show.



Shamu's awe-inspiring performance generates excited cheers from the audience as he leaps into the air.



One of several rides offered in the park, Shipwreck Rapids, is guaranteed to get you soaked.



[Left] Guests get nose-to-nose with these amazing creatures during the Dolphin Interaction event at Sea World. Wet suits are provided, allowing would-be trainers a chance to get in the tank with the dolphins. Other animal interaction fun is in the tide pool, where visitors can touch small sea creatures local to the area; and after the Pets Rule! show, where the show's stars hang out at the edge of the stage for a well-deserved belly rub or scratch behind the ears.

[Far left] Shamu's friends continue to entertain with synchronized leaps after Shamu's performance.

PHOTOS BY DIANE DURDEN

DETOURS, from B3

in the shallow pools of the California coast.

Remember that polar bear I was so anxious to see? I was

happy to finally find him at the end of the Wild Arctic ride.

Soar through the breathtaking, perilous, icy landscapes of the Arctic Circle on the simulated helicopter. The aerial tour ends

with a stop at the polar bear and beluga whale exhibits.

Multiple visits to the park would be worthwhile as there were so many attractions available. I couldn't possibly

see everything in one day. Schedules are published and readily available to guests so you could plan out your day.

I'm giving my visit to Sea World four palm trees,

because all in all, I had a great day, escaping the heat and spending time with my family. *Editor's Note: "Desert Detours" is a weekly series exploring opportunities for Marines and*

sailors from a firsthand perspective. All material included therein is the opinion of the writer and does not imply an endorsement by the U.S. Marine Corps or the Department of Defense.

