



February 17, 2012

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS OBSERVATION POST

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www.marines.mil/unit/29palms



Vol. 56 Issue 6

SWAT TRAINING



▶ Cops train with Marines for real life scenarios

LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

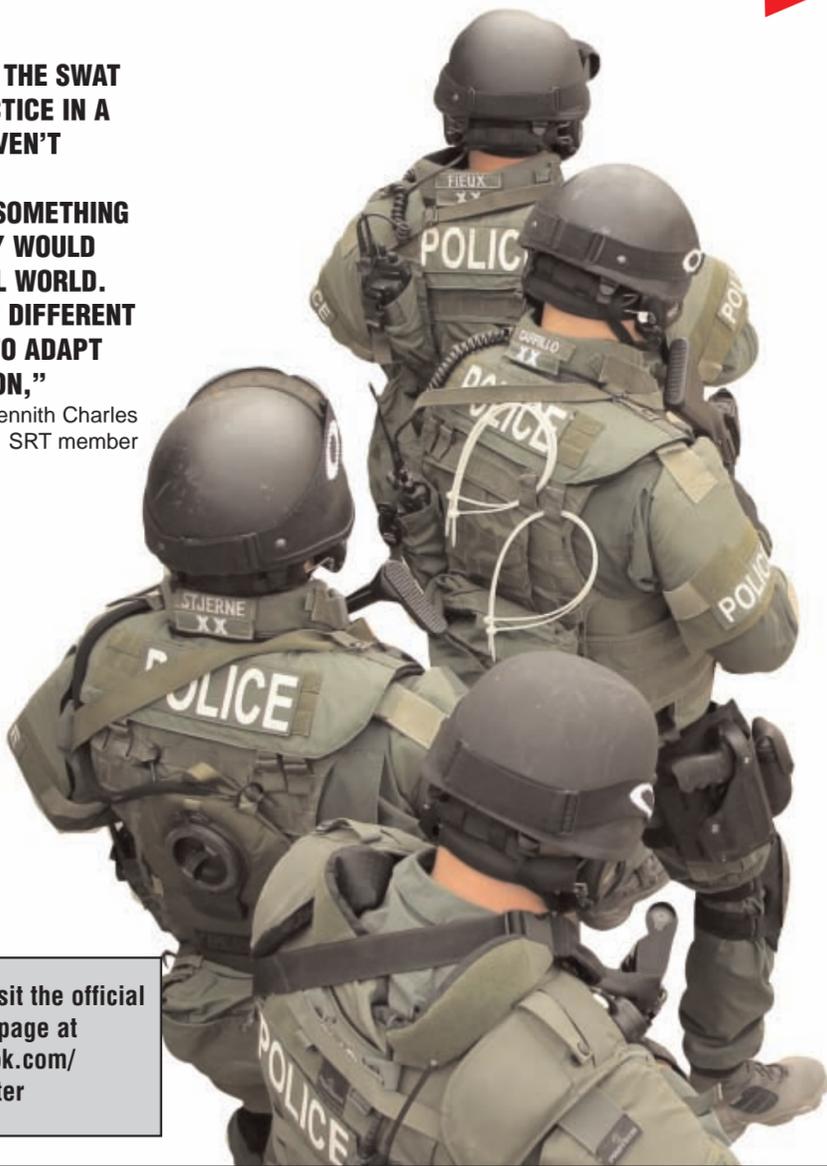
The Special Weapons and Tactics teams from the Palm Springs, Desert Hot Springs, Indio and Cathedral City police departments joined up with the Combat Center Provost Marshal Office's Special Reaction Team.

The Lower Desert teams make up a consolidated group called Desert Regional SWAT.

The teams went to Range 111 for a live-fire experience

"IT'S GOOD FOR THE SWAT TEAMS TO PRACTICE IN A PLACE THEY HAVEN'T BEFORE. IT GIVES THEM SOMETHING LIKE WHAT THEY WOULD GET IN THE REAL WORLD. IT'S SOMETHING DIFFERENT SO THEY HAVE TO ADAPT TO THE SITUATION,"

— Kenneth Charles
SRT member



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Members of the Combat Center's special reaction team charge into a building at Range 111 Jan. 8. The SRT teamed up with Desert Regional Special Weapons and Tactics teams for a joint live fire exercise aboard the Combat Center.

they couldn't duplicate outside the Combat Center.

"Live-fire isn't something we typically get to do," said Palm Springs Police Department Sgt. Bryan Anderson, team leader, Desert Regional SWAT.

This iteration of training isn't the first time Desert Regional SWAT has trained with the guys from SRT. The group from the Combat Center has gone to several locations to train with area SWAT. The team looks to train with them on a monthly basis.

"We've usually trained with simulation rounds, and we've trained in Camp Pendleton," said Anderson. "But, this is the best training that we've had."

See SWAT, A8

For more SWAT photos visit the official MCAGCC facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>

Combat Center receives EPA award

PRESS RELEASE

MCAGCC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recognized the Combat Center in a ceremony Feb. 8 with the Energy Star Combined Heat and Power award for leadership in producing electrical power and thermal energy with one system.

The installation's co-generation plant uses a natural gas driven turbine to generate 7.2 MW

of electricity for the base. The waste steam is then used to provide hot water and chill water for the heating and air conditioning systems aboard the Combat Center.

The co-generation facility is the centerpiece of the Combat Center's diverse power energy portfolio, including extensive use of solar energy systems and energy conservation programs. The facility alone saves over \$5.8 million in energy savings compared with the cost of separate production of electricity and thermal energy.

Over \$10 million per year is saved as a result

of the Combat Center's state-of-the-art multi-faceted energy approach.

The award was presented at the International District Energy Association's Annual Campus Energy Conference in Arlington, Va. The U.S. Army Garrison in Fort Bragg, N.C., will also be recognized for their CHP facility.

The Combat Center has also won the Federal Energy Management Award and the Secretary of the Navy Energy Award for the Marine Corps two years in a row.



Community sends their love to servicemembers

LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

PALM SPRINGS, Calif.-- Headquarters Battalion Marines collected Valentine's Day cards made for Combat Center service members by the residents of Outdoor Resort and students from St. Theresa Catholic School in Palm Springs Feb. 10.

"It feels good to get the support from the community," said Cpl. Jon Haelterman, personal property noncommissioned officer, Distribution Management Office, and one of the Marines who collected cards. "It's good to know we're cared about."

As the Marines arrived at Outdoor Resort, dressed in their service bravo uniforms, they were immediately greeted by residents who shook their hands and took pictures with them. As the morning progressed, the Marines received stacks of Valentine's Day cards made by the residents there.

Their next stop was the St. Theresa Catholic School. As they made their way through the school, the Marines once again turned heads as students stretched their necks out their doors to see the Marines walk by their classrooms.

"They were thrilled when they walked in this morning," said Linda Patton-Hiatt, history teacher, St. Theresa Catholic School.

The students were joined by college students from the Bukkyo University in Kyoto, Japan, who were there as part of a cultural exchange program. Students of both schools worked together to bake cookies, make origami cranes for good luck and write thank you letters to Marines.

Marines spent a few hours with the students, sitting down with them at long rows of tables, talking, learning to make origami cranes or baking cookies.

As the Marines were readying to leave, the students handed the Marines four boxes filled with letters, cookies and origami cranes, to take back and share with others remaining at the base.



LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

Lance Cpl. Cherish Kilson, postal clerk, Headquarters Battalion, learns to make an origami crane from a student at St. Theresa Catholic School in Palm Springs, Calif., Feb. 10, 2012.

See page A4 for TRAP photos





THE MARINES OF MONTFORD POINT

LANCE CPL. CHELSEA FLOWERS

DEFENSE MEDIA AGENCY

Every Marine remembers his arrival at recruit training. Marines shared feelings of fear, anxiety and doubt when faced with the challenges of boot camp. The Marines of Montford Point faced even greater obstacles than the rigorous training of the average recruit. These brave men broke through racial discrimination to earn the title of the few and the proud: the first African American Marines.

Before World War II, African-Americans were denied the right to serve in the Marine Corps.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order to address the discrimination in employment practices to include the armed forces.

During World War II, the nation was segregated under the Jim Crow laws, and the Marine Corps was no exception. Black recruits were not sent to either recruit depots in Parris Island, S.C., or San Diego for training but were completely segregated at a new training facility in Montford Point, N.C.

The first black recruits volunteered in early June 1942, and three months later stepped foot on Montford Point Camp to begin training as the 51st Composite Defense Battalion.

"A lot of pressure was put on these young men to perform to a very high caliber," said Robert B. Bruce, associate professor of history at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. "Any imperfection would have been seen as a failure of black people in general."

Two battalions, the 51st Composite Defense Battalion, and later, the 52nd, were trained specifically for combat and were deployed in the Pacific Theater.

A total of nine black Marines died in World War II. According to the National Archives, these fallen Marines weren't infantrymen.

More than 20,000 Marines passed through the gates of Montford Point before the desegregation of the Marine Corps in 1949.

Gunnery Sgt. William D. Mike III, drill band instructor at the Navy School of Music, Norfolk, Va., said he believes his success and the way Marines view each other can be

directly credited to the example set by the Montford Point Marines.

"These men paved the way," Mike said. "They set the precedent for the African-American Marine today. They are the backbone of what we have today for our Marines."

Although segregation is no longer an issue in the Marine Corps, remembering the obstacles the first African American Marines went through is essential to the future of the Corps.

On Nov. 8, 2011, the U.S. Senate voted unanimously to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Montford Point Marines. Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos supported the bill to ensure the Montford Point story continues to be told.

"Every Marine from Private to General will know the history of those men who crossed the threshold to fight not only the enemy they were soon to know overseas, but the enemy of racism and segregation in their own country," Amos said. "My promise to you is that your story will not be forgotten. It will take its rightful place and will be forever anchored in the rich history of the United States Marine Corps."

In addition to this honor, the Marine Corps has changed its curriculum at Officer Candidate School at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., to include a segment dedicated to the Montford Point Marines. The students are taught the history in a classroom setting with a culminating physical event called the Montford Point Challenge.

Teams of Marines must complete the challenge: a three-mile trail of obstacles, and log and ammo can carries in addition to water, mud and hills. The course is intended to mirror the difficulties the first African American Marines faced primarily as supply Marines during World War II.

New implementations such as these and the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal will honor the sacrifices of the Montford Point Marines and ensure they will never be forgotten.

"Marine Corps history in general is important to know about, but I think that these [Montford Point Marines] are unspoken heroes that they wanted to bring to light," said Sgt. Brett Nelson, primary physical training instructor for Charlie Company at OCS.

OFF-LIMITS ESTABLISHMENTS

MCIWest off-limits establishments guidance prohibits service members from patronizing the following locations. This order applies to all military personnel.

In Oceanside:

- Angelo's Kars, 222 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054

- Angelo's Kars, 226 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054

In San Diego:

- Club Mustang, 2200 University Ave.

- Club San Diego, 3955 Fourth St.

- Get It On Shoppe, 3219 Mission Blvd.

- Main Street Motel, 3494 Main St.

- Vulcan Baths, 805 W. Cedar St.

In National City:

- Dream Crystal, 15366 Highland Ave.

- Sports Auto Sales, 1112 National City Blvd.

Local off-limits guidance prohibits service members from patronizing the following locations.

In Twentynine Palms:

- Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Rd.

- STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.

In Yucca Valley:

- Yucca Tobacco Mart, 57602 29 Palms Hwy.

- Puff's Tobacco Mart, 57063 29 Palms Hwy.

In Palm Springs:

- Village Pub, 266 S. Palm Canyon Dr.

For the complete orders, but not off limits, check out the Combat Center's official website at <http://www.marines.mil/units/29palms>



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

830-3937



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

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[Puzzle solutions on A6]

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ACROSS

1. Whimpers
6. "Survivor" network
9. "Well done!"
14. "... and thereby hangs ___"
15. "Bali ___"
16. Staff anew
17. Soda shop freebie
18. Social connections
19. Cordial flavor
20. PIN
23. Have ___ at (try)
24. Tie up the phone
25. Tippler's road offense, briefly
28. Lustful god
31. Indicate a turn
36. Cube creator Rubik
38. Cavern comeback
40. Slug's trail
41. PIN
44. "Once upon ___ ..."
45. Culinary directive
46. Confined, with "up"
47. Take umbrage at
49. Baseball great Slaughter
51. Cambodian's neighbor
52. Symbol of might
54. "Bill ___, The Science Guy"
56. PIN
63. Sal of "Exodus"
64. "Dubya," as a collegian
65. Part of HUD
67. Scorpion attack
68. Keep out
69. Socialite Mesta
70. Oil magnate J. Paul
71. Where slop is served
72. Got to second base, in a way?

DOWN

1. Barker and Kettle
2. Singer James or Jones
3. Bit of Halloween makeup
4. Woolly Andean
5. When treated, it becomes sludge
6. "Blondie" creator Young
7. Ruination
8. Pantywaist
9. Having a salty taste
10. Janet of the Clinton cabinet
11. In the thick of
12. Bud holder
13. 1300 hours
21. Kitchen utensil
22. KLM rival
25. ___ flask (inspiration for the Thermos)
26. Put on paper
27. Roy or Niger of CORE
29. Newspaperman Adolph
30. "On the Beach" novelist Nevil
32. Hardly four-star fare
33. Bruce of Sherlock Holmes films
34. Appliance brand
35. Slowly, on a score
37. "All ___" (popular '30s tune)
39. Acto Ken or Lena
42. Winemaker's science
43. Sweden's monetary unit
48. ___ kwon do
50. IHO condiments
53. TV beatnik Maynard G. ___
55. Plumed wader
56. Take the bait
57. "Put a lid ___!"
58. Took a turn
59. Mattress support
60. Knee-high to a grasshopper
61. River of Aragon
62. Like most NBAers
63. Chow mein additive
66. Society page word

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WHAT I'VE LEARNED

THE COUNTRY GIRL

Angela Faye Huisinga
Lead Tractor Operator, MCCS

INTERVIEWED BY
LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

Feb. 13, 2012

> **I'm originally from Illinois**, a small farming community, population 400 at the time.
> **I lived there for 14 years** and then my father got stationed out here.
> **I miss fishing**, but I don't miss the

winters. I enjoy the heat.

> **I was a kid when we were back** there, so we did the typical things kids do. You go fishing, and you have older brothers, so you have BB gun wars and hope you don't lose an eye.

> **By that time, I already** knew how to operate a tractor.
> **We used to take the round metal sleds**, hook them up with a rope or a chain to the back of the tractor and go on the back roads.

> **We were a bit of a handful.**

> **My older brother had a Mustang**, and my dad had a Thunderbird. At night we use to take their cars out on the dirt roads. And that's how I learned to drive stick shift.

> **I've got two big dogs, two small dogs**, one pot bellied pig, one goose and seven ducks. I just love animals.

> **I enjoy taking the dogs out for walks.** There are no homes across where we live, so I take the dogs out there and they can go run, chase rabbits and what have you.

> **Being from a farming community**, I've always been growing things outdoors since I was a kid. Naturally, when I started working in landscaping, I enjoyed and stayed in it. I do on my off time what I do at work. That's what I enjoy doing.

> **I do garden. I grow my own vegetables** and all that kind of good stuff. Any type of vegetable that you can get going out here.

> **You'd be surprised how much** you can grow out here in this desert if you just give it the water and just give it some care.

> **I like doing home improvement projects.** My house was basically a fixer-upper. Still is a fixer-upper.

> **I've always been employed here**, since I started working for Indian Trail Nursery in 1980

> **I was the first female maintenance** worker hired by the County of San Bernardino at the Twentynine Palms Parks and Recreation.

> **Coming out here, I learned more** about growing turf, trees and that kind of thing.

> **One time I was working at De Valle soccer field**, and I was in a hole about to my waist. It was full of mud, and the clay is so bad over there that I got literally stuck in the hole. I had to call my boss to come get me out. I spent half an hour trying to get myself out until I realized, "Angie you are not getting yourself out of this hole." Had I not called him, I'd probably still be in that hole.

> **What I've been lucky about is the men** I've worked with have been open-minded enough to let a woman come aboard. They were open-minded enough to first hire a woman and second just treat me just the same the guys and teach me the same as the men.

> **Eventually I became** better than a lot of the guys.

> **When people recognize** what you do and appreciate what we've done for you, playing on the fields and knowing the work is appreciated, that is the best thing about the job.

> **Right now I see myself living** in Twentynine Palms the rest of my life.



CPL. COLBY BROWN

Women get one step closer to combat

LANCE CPL. CHELSEA FLOWERS

DEFENSE MEDIA AGENCY

For the last several years, in the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan, women have fought and died in combat zones. Although not serving in infantry units, female medics, military police officers and intelligence officers have been ushered

onto the obscure front lines of combat to aid ground troops. Now, the Pentagon is proposing new regulations to reflect this existing reality.

The Pentagon passed a new ruling Feb. 9 to lift some of the restrictions on positions that women can hold, putting them closer to the front lines. The topic of women serving in

See **COMBAT, A4**

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



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The first woman African American combat pilot



When Capt. Vernice Armour became a Marine in 1998, she also became America's first female African American combat pilot. Armour deployed twice during her time in the Corps, protecting the men and women on the ground as an AH1-W Super Cobra attack helicopter pilot.

Lance Cpl. Chelsea Flowers
Defense Media Agency

Ever since she was young, Capt. Vernice Armour wanted to be a cop. But more than that, she wanted to speak and be a role model. It wasn't until she became America's first female African-American combat pilot in the Marine Corps that those dreams began to come true.

Armour comes from a Marine family. Her grandfather, William Holman, was a Montford Point Marine who enlisted in 1942 and served in World War II. Her stepdad, Clarence Jackson, served three Vietnam tours as a sergeant.

Armour first became interested in the military while in college when she joined the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

"While in ROTC, I saw a woman in a flight suit," Armour said. "After that I became very interested in aviation."

Armour, however, didn't seriously consider joining until she had graduated from Middle Tennessee State University and became a Nashville police officer.

"I realized I could always be a cop," she said. "But I didn't always have the chance to be a combat pilot."

The Marine Corps was at the top of Armour's list.

"I only wanted to be in the Marine Corps," she said. "For me, it was the toughest. It was the biggest challenge."

When Armour spoke with an Officer Selection Officer, he told her she would be the first female African American combat pilot, not just in the Marine Corps, but in all military branches.

"I said, 'What? Are you serious?'" Armour said.

Armour would be going where few women, and most certainly no other black woman, had ever been before.

This worried Jackson, her stepdad. He had seen the way women were treated in the Corps while he served and didn't want Armour to experience any discrimination.

But Armour knew what she had to do.

"I said, 'Dad, if I don't do it, who will? At some point, somebody has to step up to pave the way for everyone to move forward,'" Armour said.

Armour was aware of possible discrimination and challenges, but she was determined.

"I knew a lot would be riding on my shoulders," Armour said. "I knew it would be hard. I knew there was a potential that there could be biases out there as well about whether women deserve to be in the Marine Corps, or combat and flying in that platform."

Regardless, in October 1998, Armour started her historic journey at Officer Candidate School on Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. Following OCS in 2001, Armour earned her gold wings and was sta-

tioned at Camp Pendleton with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169 as an AH1-W Super Cobra pilot.

Although prepared to face prejudice, Armour said she didn't notice any real discrimination.

"There is friction all the time in different places," Armour said. "Friction is natural. When I had friction with someone it could've been because I had short hair, I smiled in the morning, I could bench press more than them, I rode a motorcycle, or because I'm a woman, or because I'm black. But honestly, I didn't care because my number one goal was to focus on the mission and be the best pilot I could be."

After Sept. 11, 2001, Armour and other combat pilots prepared for deployment.

"I knew right then my life had changed," Armour said. "We all knew we would be going somewhere – and soon."

For Armour, her first deployment would be in February 2003. As Armour crossed the border from Kuwait into Iraq, the reality of the situation began to sink in.

"It was so surreal because you're not shooting at cardboard; you're not shooting at tires and wood," Armour said. "There were people on the ground, trying to take us out of the sky to kill us. It was a huge reality check. All the training came into laser-sharp focus."

Suddenly gender and race didn't seem to

matter. All that mattered was accomplishing the mission.

"My number one goal was to be the best pilot I could be up there in the air to protect and serve my brothers and sisters on the ground," Armour said.

There were times during that deployment when Armour wondered how she and her comrades would make it out of certain situations, but they never doubted that they would give it their all.

"Marines don't settle," Armour said. "Failure's just not an option for us."

Armour returned from her first deployment with her new title as the first female African American combat pilot. She was deployed again to Al Asad, Iraq in 2004 with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit before separating from the Marine Corps in 2007.

The experiences Armour gained while in the Marine Corps now allow her to pursue her dream of being a role model and a motivational speaker.

"The Marine Corps prepared the platform for my purpose," Armour said.

She has since published a book, "Zero to Breakthrough," and is a traveling speaker.

Her role as the first female African American combat pilot most certainly has inspired and will continue to inspire future generations of Marines, African Americans and women to greatness.

COMBAT, from A1

combat roles has been one of great controversy. For the past several years the lack of clearly defined front lines have forced women into imminent danger. Although never assigned to infantry units, women still provide support from the air, deliver supplies and provide medical assistance to units at the forefront of combat.

"Women are contributing in unprecedented ways to the

military's mission," said Leon Panetta, Secretary of Defense. "Through their courage, sacrifice, patriotism and great skill, women have proven their ability to serve in an expanding number of roles on and off the battlefield. We will continue to open as many positions as possible to women so that anyone qualified to serve can have the opportunity to do so."

Officials say the new ruling will open up more positions such as communications, intelligence and logistics at the lower

battalion level, not just the combat brigade level. This means that women won't have new jobs, but will be allowed to work closer with units whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground.

The policy changes will not go into effect until after 30 days of continuous session of Congress later this spring.

Although infantry roles will still not be open to women, if the new ruling passes, it leaves open the possibility for future changes in that direction. Only time will tell.

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WeekINPhotos

Cobra Gold 2012



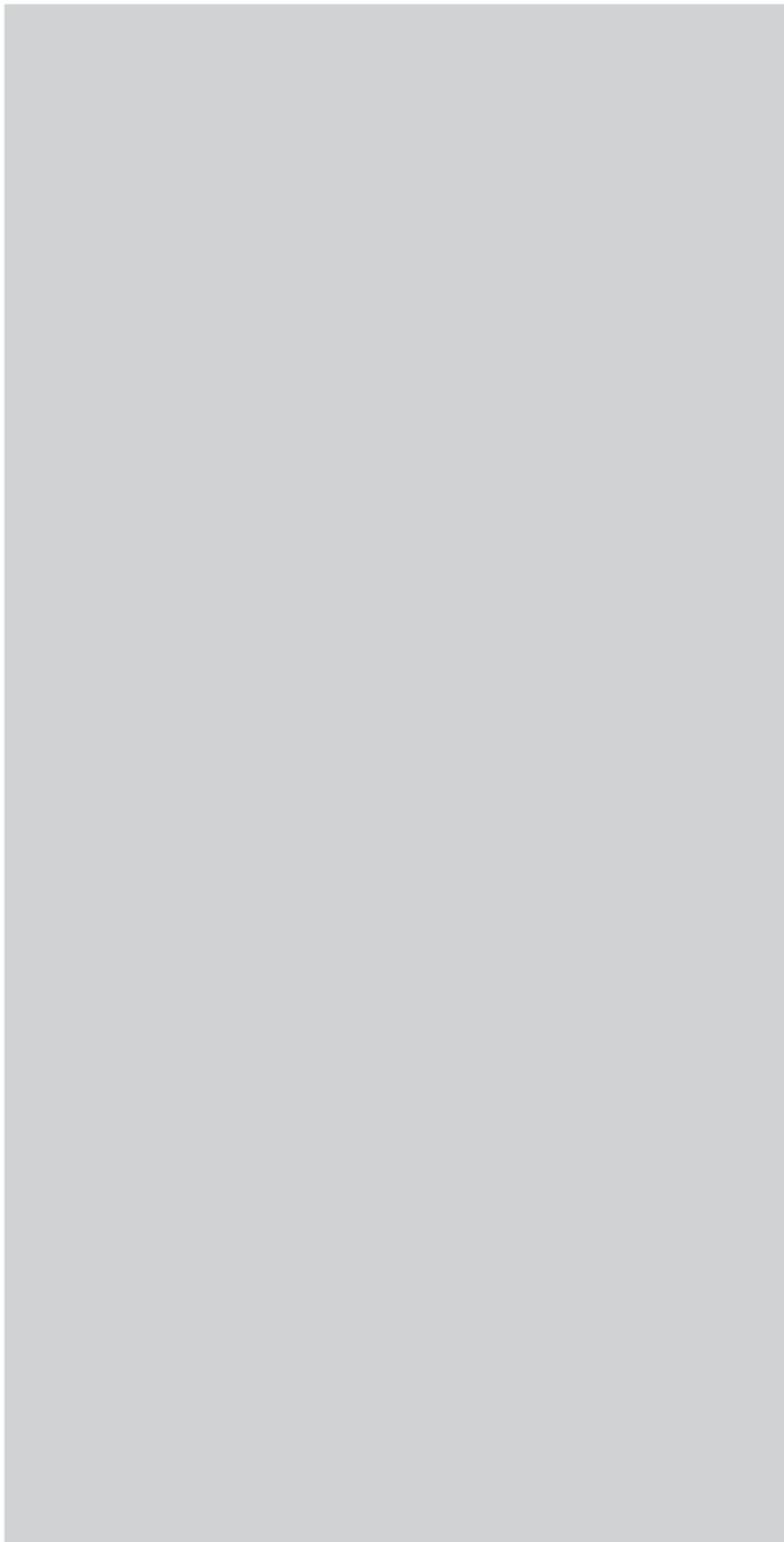
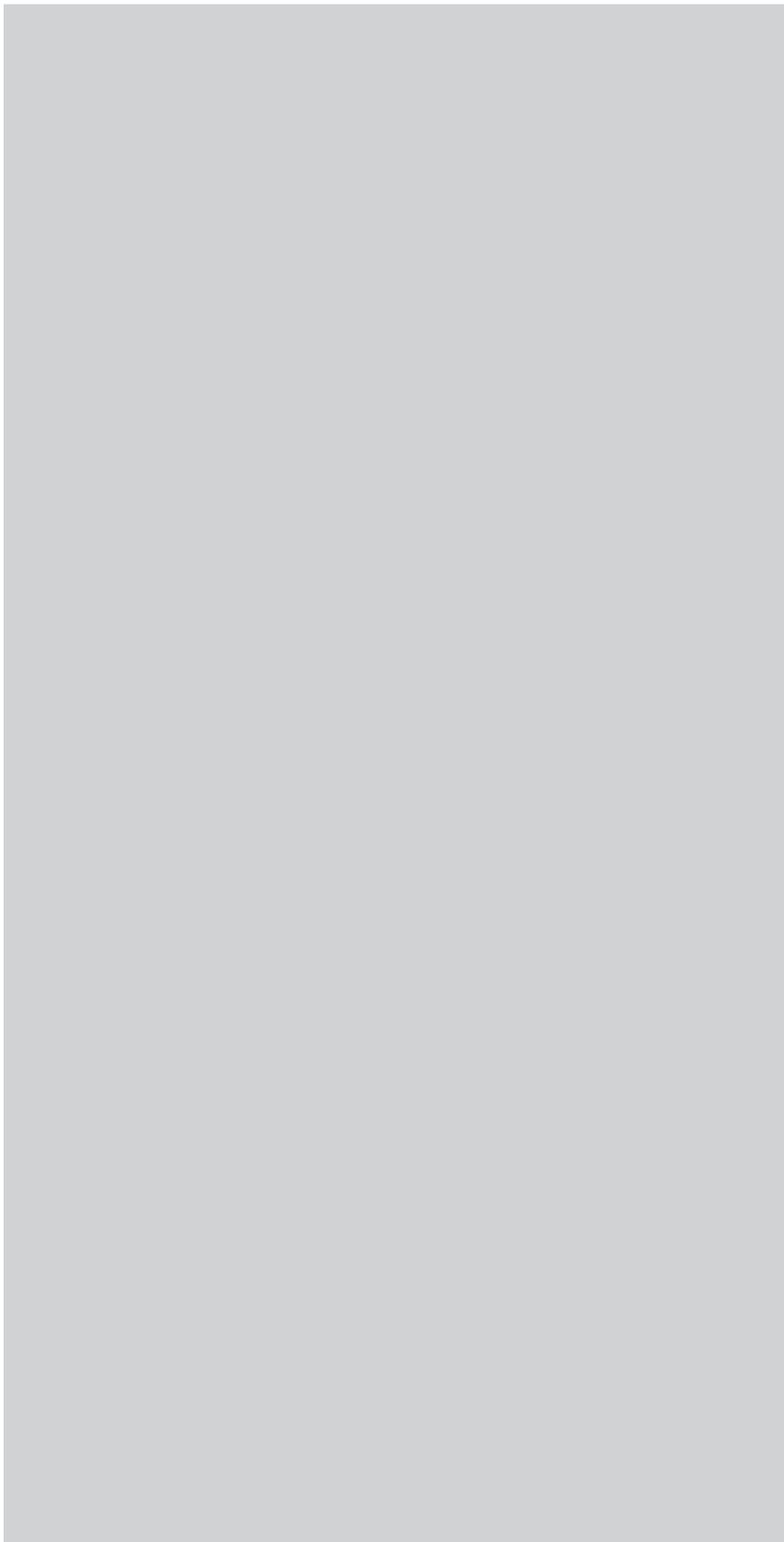
PHOTOS BY CPL. GARY J. WELCH



[Top Left] CHAI BADAN PROVINCE, Kingdom of Thailand - A Marine with Company A, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, reports the unit's progress to his commanders during a Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise here, Feb. 15. CALFEX was conducted during Exercise Cobra Gold 2012 and included units from the 31st MEU, U.S. Army, Royal Thai Army and the Royal Thai Marine Corps. CG 2012 demonstrates the resolve of the U.S. and participating nations to increase interoperability and promote security and peace throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The 31st MEU is the U.S.'s expeditionary force in readiness in the Asia-Pacific region.

[Top Right] CHAI BADAN PROVINCE, Kingdom of Thailand - Marines with Company A, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, provide suppressing fire on targets with an M240B machine gun during a Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise here, Feb. 15. CALFEX was conducted during Exercise Cobra Gold 2012 and included units from the 31st MEU, U.S. Army, Royal Thai Army and the Royal Thai Marine Corps.

[Left] CHAI BADAN PROVINCE, Kingdom of Thailand - Marines with Company A, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, and Royal Thai Marines prepare to begin an assault during a Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise here, Feb. 15. CALFEX was conducted during Exercise Cobra Gold 2012.

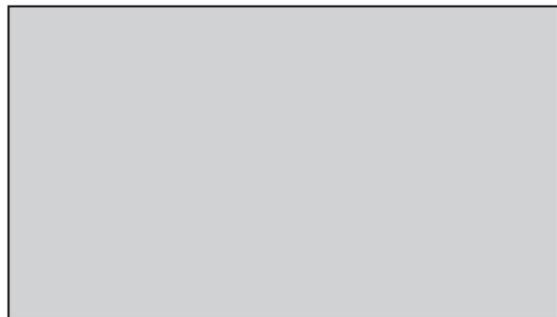


TRAPPE

PHOTOS BY SGT HEATHER GOLDEN



An AH-1W Super Cobra with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 469, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., flies toward a simulated enemy objective during a Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel exercise at the Combat Center's Lavic Lake training area Feb. 4. The Super Cobras honed in on flares representing small arms fire and anti-aircraft attacks. They cleared the way for a pair of MV-22 Ospreys, from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 161, MCAS Miramar, to fly in and retrieve two notionally downed pilots.

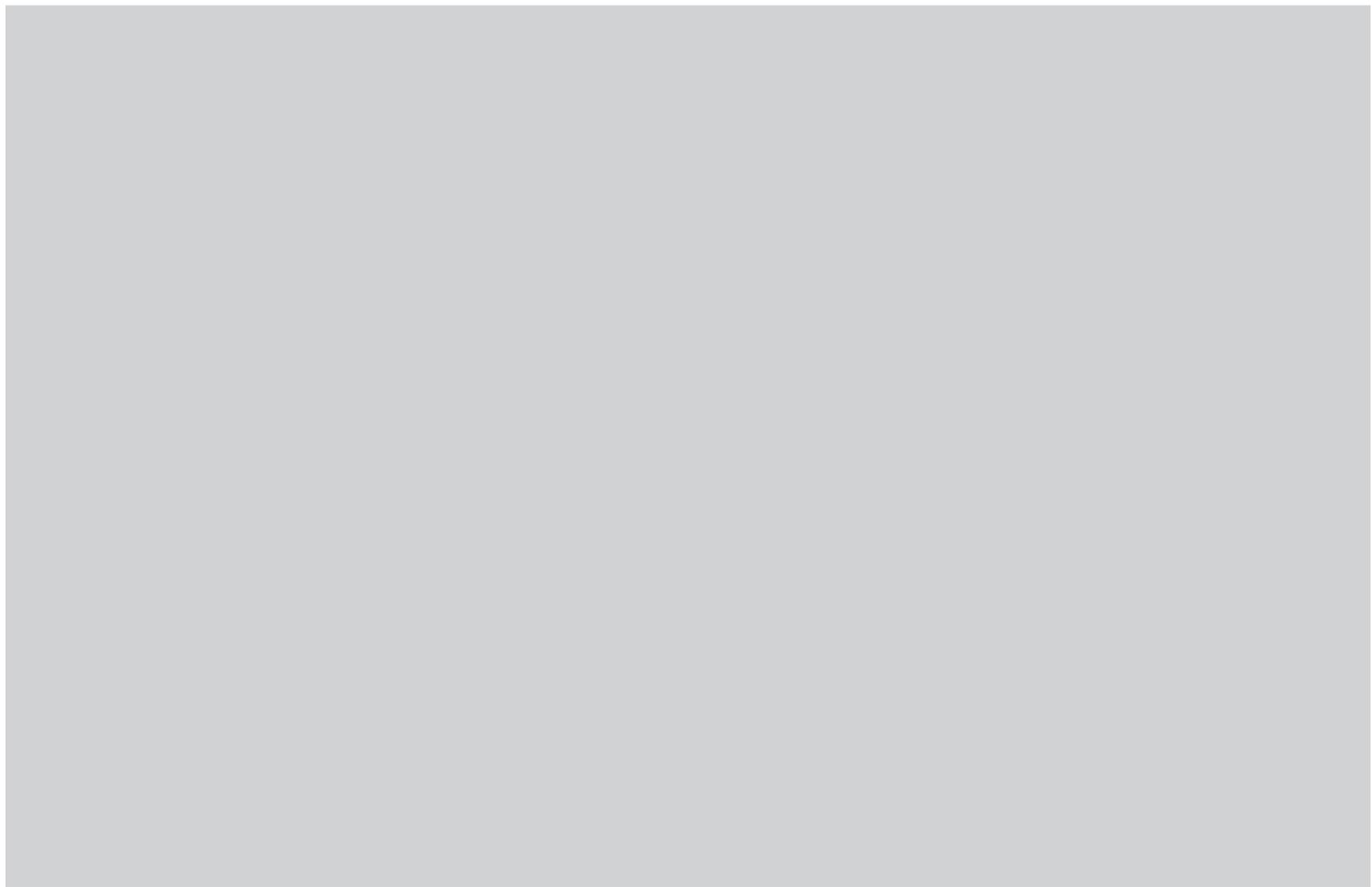


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1	6	4	3	9	5	8	7	2
9	7	3	1	2	8	6	4	5
5	8	2	7	4	6	1	3	9
6	1	9	4	7	3	5	2	8
4	5	8	2	6	9	3	1	7
3	2	7	5	8	1	9	6	4



D Aircraft take to the skies in pilot rescue recovery simulation



[Above, left] Two MV-22 Ospreys prepare to land near two notionally downed pilots during a TRAP exercise Feb. 4. Ground unit Marines in the aircraft provided security once the birds landed and made sure the stranded pilots were safely aboard before the Ospreys headed back to the airfield.

[Above, right] Marines participating in Enhanced Mojave Viper carry a simulated casualty to the back of a waiting MV-22 Osprey.

[Left] An AH-1W Super Cobra gunner checks over his shoulder before he comes back around to again engage the enemy target.



PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. D. J. WU



SWAT, from A1

The visiting police officers weren't the only ones who benefited from the day's events. SRT learned new SWAT techniques and shared ideas with their local counterparts.

"We gain a lot from the SWAT guys just being here," said Marine Sgt. Matthew McCaskill, commander, Combat Center SRT. "They have a lot more experience out there with hostages and barricade situations."

A Desert Regional SWAT sniper also came along to test out SRT's sniper range.

"It's a pretty nice range out here," said PSPD Sgt. Frank Browning, sniper. "The range has drop-down targets, so I know right away if I hit it or not."

The teams practiced breaching drills at one

of the Military Operations on Urban Terrain towns. The unfamiliar location kept the Desert Regional SWAT team on their toes.

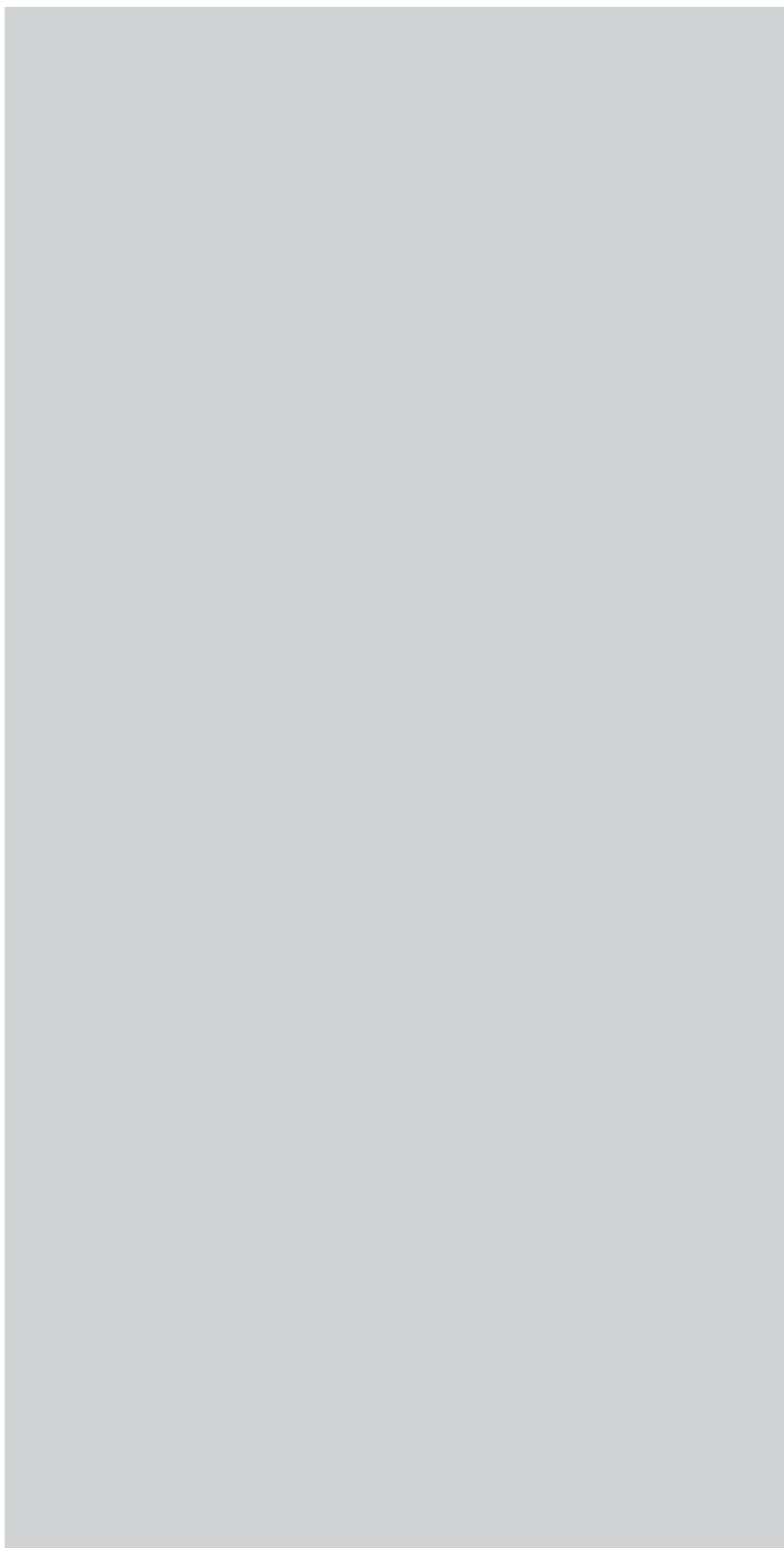
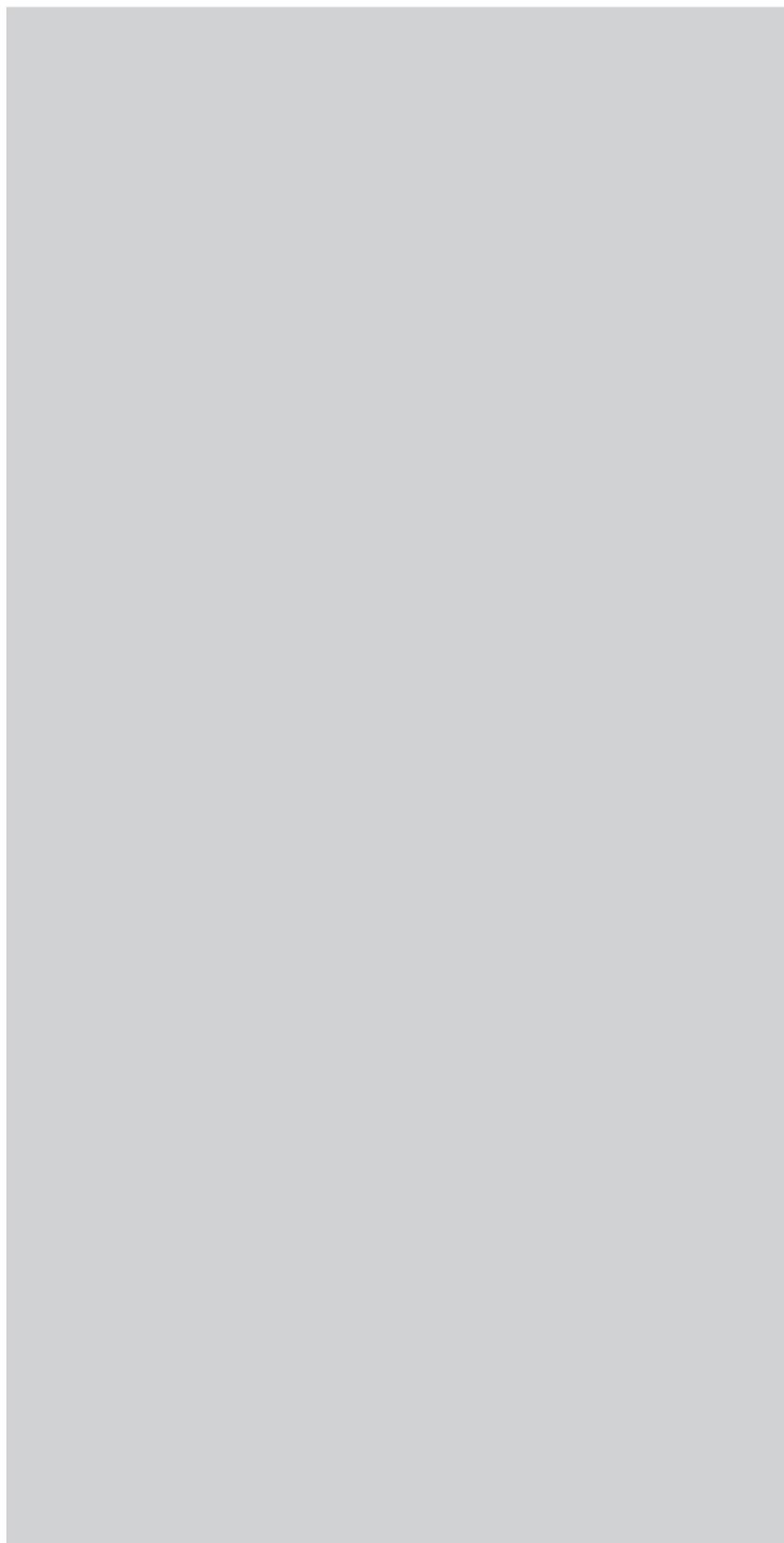
"It's good for the SWAT teams to practice in a place they haven't before," said Kenneth Charles, SRT member. "It gives them something like what they would get in the real world. It's something different so they have to adapt to the situation."

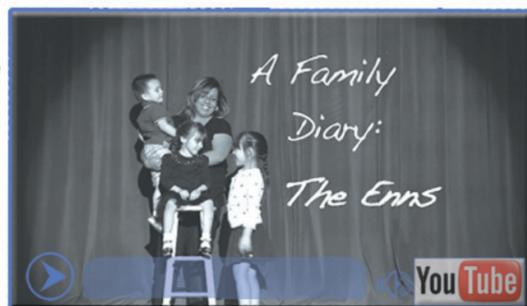
Desert Regional SWAT ended the day with a debrief about how their training went and the role the new location had in what they learned. General consensus from the police officers was that they enjoyed the day and are eager to train here again.

"We really appreciate what the Marines do here," Anderson said. "It's an honor to train here beside them."



[Top] Members of the Desert Regional SWAT team go over their plan of attack in a simulated urban building at Range 111, Feb. 8. The SWAT teams joined up with the Combat Center's Special Reaction Team for live fire training. **[Above]** Palm Springs Police officer Sgt. Kyle Stjerne has his gear ready for live fire training at Range 111. **[Left]** The Combat Center's SRT prepares to enter a building for a dry run of a live fire exercise.





Do you know your HISTORY?

BLACK HISTORY

OUR REPORTERS ASK KIDS IN CLASS, ADULTS AROUND THE COMBAT CENTER



ANTHONY TARVER



JUSTIN J. JOHNSON



ANDREA ROLLINS



BRANYAN PANZARELLA



JORDAN I. SLATON



MIKE MULLIN



JOSHUA ANDERSON



CHEYENNE M. HANSON

Why is Black History Month important?

5: Black History Month is important because of all things African-Americans have done and all the things they have invented.

4: It describes the past and how they got freedom. If slavery hadn't happened African-Americans wouldn't have been born.

Who was Harriet Tubman?

1: Harriet Tubman was one of the conductors and she helped free over 200 slaves to the North. She used to be a slave but ran away.

2: Harriet Tubman was a leader of the Underground Railroad. She was a black lady that wanted to get north, because slavery wasn't as big in the North. She was known for leading the Underground Railroad.

What was the Underground Railroad?

3: A hidden group of people that would move from the South to the North, just like a path. I don't think it was actually underground, except for the basements when they hid in houses.

8: The Underground Railroad was basically a way for slaves to get out of slavery and get to the North.

What year did Black History Month start?

6: I actually don't know. 1926?

7: 1900?

How did slaves get to America?

1: They were taken from their homeland and put in boats where they came to America to work.

8: On boats. I don't think they were expecting what would happen.

Who were the abolitionists?

7: They protested slavery and felt strongly against it.

2: (Pause)...uhhh...(reflect)...I don't know.

Why is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. so famous?

7: Dr. Martin Luther King was so famous because he was the innovator of his time, you know he just, he fought for something he knew was right and he made a big difference.

Was he really a doctor?

7: (Looks up at the sky)...Was he?



Liberty Call

Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

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

Bloodstripes NCO Club

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

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Friday: Social Hour, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
 Monday-Friday: Lunch from 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
 Monday: Steak night and full menu, 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.
 Tuesday: Social Hour, 5 - 7 p.m.
 Thursday: Social Hour, 5 - 7 p.m.

Combat Center Officers' Club

Monday: Steak night, 5 - 7:30 p.m.
 Monday-Friday: All-hands lunch, from 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
 Thursday: Happy Hour, 5 - 7 p.m.

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

Local Events

Lost in Yonkers

When: Every Friday & Saturday from March 9 to April 7
 Where: Theatre 29
 736377 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
 For tickets and information call 316-4151
 or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

The Sumner Brothers

Country, folk, blues and root music
 When: Thursday, March 1, 8 p.m.
 Where: Pappy and Harriet's
 53688 Pioneer Town Road, Pioneer Town, Calif.
 For more information visit
<http://www.pappyandharriets.com>

Free Line Dance Lessons

Learn to dance to traditional country music
 When: 5 - 9 p.m., every Sunday
 Where: Willie Boy's Saloon and Dance Hall
 50048 29 Palms Hwy, Morongo Valley, Calif.
 For more information, call 363-3343.

Lower Desert

The Doors Tribute

Free Friday concert series
 When: 8 p.m., Friday, Feb. 17
 Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
 46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
 For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit
<http://www.spotlight29.com>.

Terry Fator

"America's Got Talent" winner puppet master live
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 18
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
 84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
 For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit
<http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Melissa Manchester

Live music performance
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 25
 Where: Agua Caliente
 32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
 For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit
<http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Larry the Cable Guy

Live blue collar comedy performance
 When: 8 p.m., Friday, March 23
 Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
 49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
 For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit
<http://www.morongocasinosort.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, Feb. 17

6 p.m. - We Bought a Zoo, Rated PG
 9 p.m. - The Adventures of Tin-Tin, Rated PG
 Midnight - The Darkest Hours, Rated PG-13

Saturday, Feb. 18

11 a.m. - **Free Matinee** The Big Year, Rated PG
 2 p.m. - War Horse, Rated PG-13
 6 p.m. - Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol, PG-13
 9 p.m. - The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, Rated R
 Midnight - The Devil Inside, Rated R

Sunday, Feb. 19

2 p.m. - We Bought a Zoo, Rated PG
 6 p.m. - Joyful Noise, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. - The Devil Inside, Rated R

Monday, Feb. 20

2 p.m. - The Adventures of Tin-Tin, Rated PG
 6 p.m. - The Darkest Hours, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. - The Devil Inside, Rated R

Tuesday, Feb. 21

7 p.m. - The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, Rated R

Wednesday, Feb. 22 - Closed for Power Outage

Thursday, Feb. 23

7 p.m. - The Adventures of Tin-Tin, Rated PG

High-flying yarn of real-life WWII heroes misses its honorable mark



COURTESY PHOTO

The Tuskegee Airmen, a group of World War II fighter pilots trained in Tuskegee, Ala., were America's first black military aviators. Overcoming formidable racial barriers in the segregated military, they were eventually recognized as some of the war's best pilots.

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"Red Tails"

Starring Cuba Gooding Jr. and Terence Howard
 Directed by Anthony Hemingway
 125 min., PG-13

The Tuskegee Airmen, a group of World War II fighter pilots trained in Tuskegee, Ala., were America's first black military aviators. Overcoming formidable racial barriers in the segregated military, they were eventually recognized as some of the war's best pilots.

Producer George Lucas brings their rousing story to the screen in "Red Tails" with a solid, mostly all-black cast of relatively unknown actors and slam-bang, realistic-looking sequences of high-flying dogfight action.

The airmen proudly painted the tails of their airplanes red to announce themselves

to their foes, later appropriating Red Tails as their own unofficial name.

The struggles faced by these real-life war heroes, who fought the Army's then-prevailing view that black soldiers were "inferior" in every way to white soldiers, is mirrored somewhat in the opposition encountered by the movie's superstar producer in getting the project off the ground. Lucas spent nearly \$100 million of his own money to make and market the movie after being turned down by every major studio, all of which doubted that mainstream audiences would flock to a "black" film with no major white stars.

Providing a promising opening weekend, moviegoers may well prove Lucas' gamble right. But despite its high aim, "Red Tails" never quite becomes the movie monument its inspiring subject deserves. It's "Top Gun" meets "Glory," but lacking

either of those two movies' pep, pop, star power or production values.

It's awash in war-movie clichés and saddled with a predictable script that sends its one-dimensional character stereotypes (the steely officer, the greenhorn, the reckless daredevil, the boozehound squad leader, the doomed loverboy) rambling around a meandering, melodramatic plot.

Anthony Hemingway, whose previous work includes the TV series "CSI: New York," "Oz" and "The Wire," makes his big-screen directorial debut. But he seems stuck in television mode, unable to unfurl his dramatic banner into longer, bigger movie proportions. And for a loaded story about such a racially explosive chapter in U.S. military history, it's surprisingly soft where you'd expect to find jagged edges.

Terence Howard and

Cuba Gooding Jr. play the Red Tails' commanding officers, standing up to the white Army brass (Brian Cranston of TV's "Breaking Bad" and Gerald McRaney) that doesn't think their squadron is up to the job.

The fight scenes are the movie's strong points, using a seamless combination of computer-generated effects and live action to convey a sense of both the danger and the excitement of aerial combat—and the cramped, claustrophobic, sometimes deadly confines of WWII fighter-plane cockpits.

"From the last plane, to the last bullet, to the last minute, to the last man..." the Red Tails chant in unison before taking flight, "we fight! We fight! We fight!"

The real-life Tuskegee Airmen fought, flew and soared in more ways than one. Too bad this movie about them doesn't quite rise to the same level.

 **The Combat Center has its own YouTube channel**
 Find it at <http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>.

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

WATER SURVIVAL



Photos by Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi



[Top] Cpl. Ryan Kopasz, lighting and marking technician, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, swims as part of the annual water training qualifications at the Training Tank Feb. 2.

[Center] Cpl. Robert Sancibrian, motor transport operator, and Cpl. Ryan Kopasz, both with MWSS-374, swim laps in the Training Tank pool as part of their water training qualification. Sancibrian and Kopasz both tested and passed at the intermediate level.

[Left] Cpl. Robert Sancibrian, motor transport operator, MWSS-374, jumps off the platform as part of the intermediate level water training qualification. After jumping, both Marines were required to swim laps in the pool.

