Personnel to Combat Center

Center commands to coordinate and schedule times for charge, Combat Center Personnel Office. To alleviate long there's a line out the door,” said Larry Ward, officer in walk into the DEERS office.

Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System office within 30 days. will be emailed to card holders still in possession of the out- sion by October. guidance for the re-issuance of Marine Corps sponsored CAC. 

CAC is not the updated version. However, October 1, 2012 that may not happen if your expecting the dialog box to pop up asking for your per- slide your Common Access Card into the card reader when we come to work at the Combat Center. You 

DDIIAANNEE  DDUURRDDEENN “There’s a huge inconvenience to the customer if Marine Corps personnel are cautioned not to simply 

Combat Center personnel to receive new CAC

DIANE DUKERN

We all take for granted the ability to log onto the com- munications network to transmit information. To receive this we need a card reader, a card and the Common Access Card (CAC). But what about the CAC readers? They are made to allow the network to access the information on the card and all the data that is stored on the card.

MCMWTC teaches Marines with unusual class environment

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. ALI ARMS

Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, Calif, is the only training center that provides high altitude cold-weather training for Marines. Knowing how to deal with the type of environment could mean the differ- ence between life and death if a Marine is found in similar battlefield conditions around the world.

“The environment can kill you much faster than the enemy can,” said Sgt. Matt Simpson, red hat instructor, MCMWTC.

Red hat instructors educate Marines on survival in the mountains environment through the pre-environmental training class. These classes cover every- thing from survival techniques, such as water procurement, to the effect of the cold-weather environment on Marine’s health, weapons and movement.

However, these classes aren't in the usual classroom setting with chairs and a projector. Instructors lead Marines up through two miles of steep hikes into the mountains to conduct the classes.

“it gives Marines more of a feel of the environment,” said Staff Sgt. Brandon Miller, red hat instructor, MCMWTC.

Marines in the course strap on their cold-weather gear and hike up with snow shoes, boots and ski poles to assist them through the snow. What Marines don’t realize is their class begins with their first step.

As they use the gear to get up the hills, they learn from mid and arms about the equipment and the environment. By the time they get down for their first lesson, they already have an idea of what they are learning and how it applies to them during the training.

The students then learn about the gear in a more formal manner. As the class training continues, they realize

See BRIDGEPORT, A5

Tech Expo visits Combat Center

Biannual exposition brings new ideas to installation

LANCE CPL. ALI ARMS

During the Tech Expo at the Combat Center, vendors come together to show off the latest technologies to the Combat Center. From new information systems to equipment, the Expo offers many vendors the chance to come to the Combat Center and show their products to potential buyers.

Many of the companies have already worked with units here on the base,” Hawkins said. “It's more of a networking event for everybody.”

Hawkins and the event organizers, National Conference Services Inc., serve as bridges between the Combat Center and the companies at the expo.

“We work with people with Mojave Viper and others out in the field and ask what they wanted,” Hawkins said. “We have relationships with all these companies. When we think of an idea or something they want to see, we try and get those compa- nies out here.”

Also, with one of the Marine Corps’ largest schools, the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, a school based on technology, the Tech Expo provides learning opportunities for the students and their instructors.

“I’m always looking at the new technology to see what we could use at the school hours,” said Master Sgt. William Hill, chief instructor, Company A, MCCES. “We also have the students coming out here to see the tech such as well.”

The Tech Expo’s multi-faceted approach had a wide reach of audiences at the Combat Center and only looks to get wider.
The Combat Center Observation of Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Nationally, April is being recognized as National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Throughout this month, the Combat Center will take the opportunity to increase the awareness of intervention in preventing sexual assault each and every day of the year.

Whether you are a Marine, Sailor, Civilian Marine or a family member, the Marine Corps is your family! Preventing sexual assault throughout the Combat Community requires an all-hands effort to eliminate its occurrence. Sexual assault prevention takes many forms, beginning with the continued education of all hands and the steadfast attention of commanders and leaders at every level. As importantly, all of our members of the community must demonstrate the moral courage to intervene when their instincts tell them that a situation is deteriorating and the potential of sexual assault emerges. For too often, alcohol is the common denominator that fuels the rise of such dangerous situations, but alcohol is not an excuse for violating the clear standards for our behavior, or for committing a crime.

We must also have the commitment to victims of sexual assault that they will be treated with dignity, sensitivity, and respect and that they receive the appropriate medical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual assistance. I can think of no more important example of our Commandant’s priority of “Keeping Faith with our Marines, Sailors and families.”

I am proud to lead the Combat Center’s charge against sexual assault. Those who commit sexual assault have no place in our Corps or our aboard the Combat Center. “Hurts one. Affects all,” the theme for 2012, succinctly captures our collective challenge. Please join me during this month, and throughout the year, in reinforcing in every corner of our community our steadfast commitment toward eliminating sexual assault.

G. W. SMITH, JR.
Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps

Commanding General
Hi-Desert Publishing Co.

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Trousers are an infinitive. I've never been part of a great suit. But I'll be spending the next month with them in the wilds of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

The Battalion outfitted me for the next month in the snowy mountains. I received my cold-weather gear, half of which was almost surrealistic to me. Some of it I recognized, such as the khaki tops and bottoms. But other things took me by surprise. Nonetheless, I signed for it all assuming I'd need it at some point. The last thing I want is to be left freezing in the snow.

Next to it lay the “Happy Suit,” a giant fluffy, tan-colored top and bottom that I’m sure has got to keep me warm, even in the icy mountains. It would keep me “happy.” I imagined myself wearing it, and got even happier. I’m pretty sure it’s going to make me look like a medium-toasted Pillsbury doughboy.

The first thing that caught my attention were the “Mickey Mouse” boots. These white boots are larger than my head, and looked like my everyday, issued combat boots easily fit inside. Although they seemed like they’d be practical in a snowy environment, they still looked ridiculous.

“Is this the best part of the trip?” one said leaning back in the bus seat.

“Sadly, that’s true,” responded the other.

“We have never ceased to amuse me. Marines’ ability to fall asleep under any condition. Snow, desert, lying down or standing up, if a Marine is given the opportunity to rest, he appreciates it as a state of hibernation.

Meals, Ready to Eat. The unit was determined to make as little stops as possible. There were restrooms in the back of each bus and the Marines were each given a package of MREs, Ready to Eat. The unit was determined to make as little stops as possible. The Marines made small talk as the buses headed out, laughing and joking about one thing or another.

Two Marines sitting behind me on the bus continued a conversation about the dreaded trip to the snowy highlands.

“Hey, this is the best part of the trip,” one said leaning back in the bus seat.

“Sadly, that’s true,” responded the other.

“Five minutes into the bus ride, the bus became dead silent. The Marines had entered into a state of hibernation.

It has even ceased to amuse me. Marines’ ability to fall asleep under any condition. Snow, desert, lying down or standing up, if a Marine is given the opportunity to rest, he appreciates every minute of it.

Within ten minutes I joined them in the deep slumber. The only time we woke up was at the few stops we did make during the long nine-hour drive.

After arriving at our destination, we stepped off the bus into a gloomy, brisk atmosphere.

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As told by

Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi, combat correspondent

The Observation Post

April 6, 2012 A3

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Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi, combat correspondent

(1)
The Marines of Infantry Officers’ Course performed a mountain attack in the culminating event during their Palm Field Exercise in the Combat Center’s Bullion Training Area March 21.

This final and intense exercise puts their training to the test. “It’s focused on everything they have learned since the beginning of IOC,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Shelby Lasater, IOC gunner. “The platoon commanders are here making the decisions.”

The mountain attack saw the student platoon commanders in control of the operation. The leaders have to gather intelligence and then plan accordingly to complete the mission. “They have to figure out their geometries of fires as well as everything else it takes to get to the objective and take control,” Lasater said. The first platoon to take on the scenario, executed in a quick and quiet fashion. This aroused little advice and varied praise from the instructors overseeing the operation.

First platoon’s plan went smoothly compared to second platoon’s less-stealthy maneuver. Second platoon’s Marines were crushed by enemy fire, their approach avenues blocked and they struggled to recover. “We’re watching to see if they learn from their mistakes,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Bob Tagliabue, The Basic School gunner.

This course is designed to make these officers into infantry platoon commanders. There are very few places in the Marine Corps where the officers can conduct a mountain attack like the one they did. “The Combat Center’s mountains are very similar to the ones found near Kandahar and Helmand provinces in Afghanistan,” said Col. Julian Alford, commanding officer, The Basic School, IOC. The mountain attack is a recent addition to PALM FEX. “This is our fifth iteration of the attack,” Alford said. “We wanted something that would simulate conditions they would find in Afghanistan.”

PALM FEX was already established in the course. Adding a mountain attack just made sense, Alford said. The officers went on to make their final attack of PALM FEX on range 210A. The students integrated techniques they learned earlier in the course, including combined operations between armor and infantry.

“These young men are ready to take 40 Marines into combat.”

- Col. Julian Alford

Photos by Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi

Story by Lance Cpl. D.J. Wu

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[Above] Marines with the Infantry Officers’ Course, carry a simulated casualty down a steep hill during a mountain attack in the Bullion training area March 21. The mountain attack was part of their four-day culminating exercise from PALM FEX.
why they were so affected by their warming layers, the cold temperature and the elevation. “Walking in snow shoes wasn’t that different, you just have to pick up your feet more,” said Lance Cpl. Michael Mennemeyer, mortarman, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. “What really gets you is the elevation.”

The combination of the class and experiences the hike gave them, make the knowledge stick more firmly. All the while, as they sit in the freezing, high-altitude environment they will soon be training in, they acclimate to the temperature and elevation and learn how to use their warming layers effectively.

The pre-environmental training teaches Marines not only how to survive a mountainous combat-zone but to function, fight and move efficiently in cold, high-altitude environments.

“I can’t guarantee you’ll be comfortable,” Miller said. “But you’ll be alive.”
Every Marine is held to a set of standards, physically and mentally. Every unit is responsible for ensuring their troops are physically fit and can meet certain standards. However, it is an individual Marine’s responsibility to seek higher education and intellectually develop themselves.

The Combat Center’s Base Education Office, in conjunction with Copper Mountain College, provides military members and their families a way to improve their academic skills through the Military Academic Skills Program. “MASP was originally a means whereby Marines could raise their GT scores to allow them to change military occupational specialty or to improve their chances for promotion,” said Randy Fischer, MASP English teacher. “But in recent years the overwhelming majority of our students are those who are separating from the Corps or those who want, while still in the Corps, to begin college work and feel the need to brush up on their basic skills.”

The class has recently grown in popularity and in some cases they have had to create a waiting list for the next class, Fischer said. “I decided to take it because I’m going to go to college,” said Cpl. Paul M. Childers, field radio operator, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment. “I went through the application process and got accepted, so I just wanted to get back into the school mindset. I needed a refresher after being out of school for four years.”

The class is completely free-of-charge. The only thing you’ll have to spend is time and energy toward learning. The course is four weeks long, and classes run Monday through Friday in Building 1526. “Math is held in the morning from 8:00 to 11:30 a.m., and English is in the afternoon from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m.,” Fischer said. “To sign up, you’ll need to obtain a contract from Copper Mountain College Base Programs Office in Building 1526 that will need to be signed by your command, giving you permission to be absent from work to attend the classes. So far as the Department of Defense is concerned, the entire parameter is pre and post,” said Fischer. “They want to see a dramatic improvement between a test taken in the beginning of the course and a similar test taken at the end, and we achieve that.”

The program accepts students with high school level academic skills down to elementary school levels. “The average improvement in scores is really significant, in fact it’s dramatic,” said Fischer. “They’ll jump typically three, four and five grade levels along the course of this class. Our goal is to get them up to 12.9, which is the first year of college.”

MASP teachers are highly qualified and curriculum caters to a wide spectrum of learning levels and styles. “We are all adjunct teachers, which is to say that we are contracted by Copper Mountain College to come out here and teach the Marines,” Fischer said. “The teachers vary in teaching styles, and we are all required to have a Master’s Degree.”

“The teachers are all different and very personable,” Childers said. “They all have different ways of teaching, which for me was good. I can sit there and listen to them. They’re interesting and intelligent, which helped me a lot.”

For more information contact CMC Base Programs Office at 830-6133. The next orientations for upcoming classes will be held on May 14.
Fight Club 29 is an interesting group. Just about all the members are part of the military in one way or another. But it’s not about the military when it comes to the team. The team is a family and they act like it too.

It was another early morning. It was cold. I knew there were going to be nine fighters in the tournament but I didn’t know what to expect.

I went to the meet up spot a little early as usual, just so I wouldn't miss anything.

The first two people I met were a couple of guys I've never seen before. I turned out that one of them was a visiting coach from Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., and the other was a student from the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School and not to the team.

Finally the van came and one Dahlen Wilson was the driver. You could tell it was Dahlen because the van approached cautiously, well below the speed limit.

Shortly after Dahlen arrived, Arthur “Neno” Brown Powell got there and we were off to coach's house.

Coach Mark Geletko is a character. He's a retired sergeant major, former professional Muay Thai fighter and boxer. Coach knows a bit about fighting.

The team has a reputation with the event organizers. Fight Club 29 cleaned up the tournament last year, winning multiple gold medals and having members representing the United States at the world championship in Russia.

This year was much of the same.

Fight Club 29 had nine competitors in this year's national tournament. The team fought well in each of their bouts with only a few hiccups. The guys on the team are serious about the way they fight and the way they prepare to fight. For example, maybe one of the fighters was a few pounds over their weight class, they would work hard to the last minute to drop the pounds and make weight, then have to do a hasty rehydrate to get ready.

The team showed, in force, just how good they are. Tom Eaton won two gold medals, one in an impromptu entry to the gi competition and one in his schedule no-gi bracket. “Big” Mike fought hard in his heavyweight bracket combined with super-heavyweights to win gold. Dahlen took silver on losing to his teammate Brandon Collins. “Neno” and Nick Kaluza also took silver.

After the tournament, the guys showed a bit more of their human side. They showed how tired they were and how they were proud or how disappointed they were with how they did.

The team looks ahead to their trip to Russia to represent the United States in the world championship. Mark Geletko is scheduled to be head coach of the world team and is pleased to be taking his own guys. The silver medalist may also get their opportunity to fight, currently sitting as back-ups.