



Steel Knight ignites

Lance Cpl. D.J. Wu
 Combat Correspondent

Exercise Steel Knight began as a combined arms live-fire exercise in the early 1990s when the commander of 1st Tank Battalion wanted a field training opportunity for his tankers. Since then it has grown to the exercise we know today, a division-level CALFEX that focuses on coordinated fire support and mechanized maneuvers.

The exercise utilizes assets from more than a dozen units from across the 1st Marine Division, including units aboard the Combat



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

A Mine Clearing Line Charge explodes as 1st Tank Battalion tanks prepare to assault through their objective during a portion of the combined arms exercise known as Steel Knight Dec. 12, 2008.



CPL. ANTHONY WARD JR

Marines with Company G, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, patrol through a bridge construction site during Operation Golden Gate in Sangin, Afghanistan, Nov. 10. Co. G is tasked with providing security for the entire construction site along the Helmand River for the duration of the construction project. **Complete story on A4**

Center.

SK13 is the Division's largest annual training exercise. This year, the exercise will be conducted from Nov. 26 to Dec. 18 and will run concurrently with Exercise Valiant Mark and the Tactical Training Exercise Control Group's Integrated Training Exercise.

"This is the one exercise a year that the division goes out to conduct core mission essential task (MET) training," said Maj. Tom Kisch, exercise coordinator. "It is like a culminating event for the division. Throughout the year, battalions and regiments conducting their own independent training focusing on their own METS. During Steel Knight, the Division brings together all the different elements of the division."

This advanced training event will make use

See **STEEL** page A5

Officers mentor future leaders

Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi
 Combat Correspondent

Commissioned officers in the Marine Corps have an opportunity to leave a lasting impression on teenage students with ambitions of becoming the next generation of America's leaders.

The annual United States Senate Youth Program, sponsored by the United States

Marines by virtue of their leadership skills, maturity, role model attributions, professionalism and dedication makes them great candidates to the future young leaders of this great nation."

— Hattie Powell-Ray

Senate, provides 104 high school students from across the country with a chance to visit the nation's capital and learn about the functions of the U.S. government from March 9 to 16.

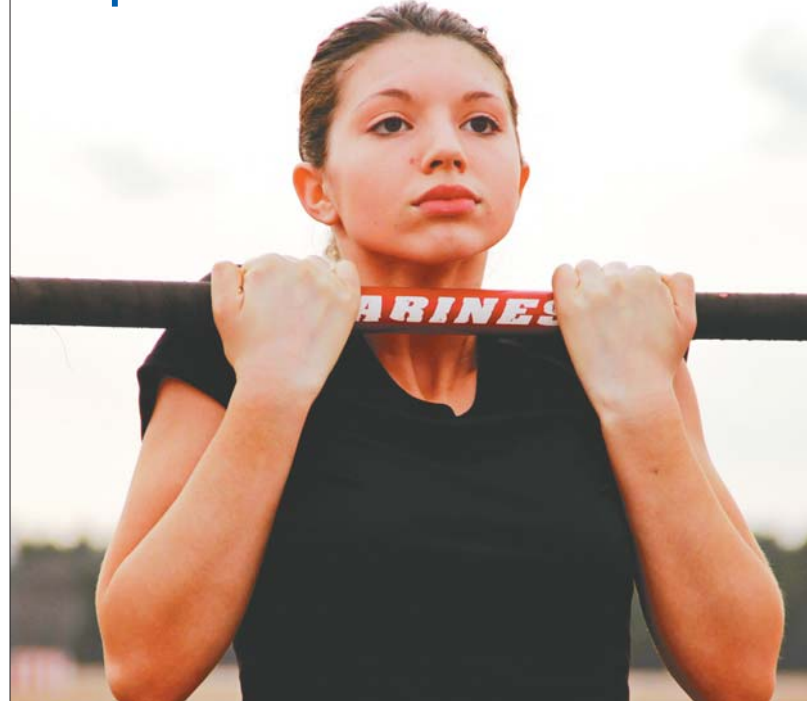
"Washington Week is an intensive week of unparalleled educational activities in the nation's capital designed to deepen the student delegates' understanding of the federal government and give them direct access to those who lead it," said Hattie Powell-Ray, public affairs specialist, Community Relations Branch, Division of Public Affairs.

Seventeen military officers will act as the mentors to the participants, leading them in the week-long program, teaching them about the role of the military in the government and connect with students, who may have no prior experience with the military.

The Marines will lead students throughout Washington, D.C. and meet members of the government including a Supreme Court justice,

See **MENTOR** page A5

Pull-Ups required for females



COURTESY PHOTO

Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi
 Combat Correspondent

The first phase of a change in female Marines' physical fitness test requirements is scheduled to start at the beginning of the new year. Starting Jan. 1, 2013, female Marines will be given an option of whether to do pull-ups or the flexed arm hang during their PFT.

This will act as a transitional period to allow female Marines to adjust to the new physical requirements for the test. By 2014, pull-ups will completely replace flexed arm hang.

Female Marines are going to be required to be able to complete a minimum of three pull-ups for a score of 40 points to pass the test and need a total of eight pull-ups to get the maximum 100 points. However, these current scoring tables are subject to change as information is gathered and assessed.

Although the flexed arm hang will be phased out, it will still remain for recruiting aspects. Females entering Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island or Officer Candidate School are given the option to use the flexed arm hang for their initial strength test. By the end of graduation, the Marines are expected to complete their PFT with pull-ups.

For more information on the changes in female physical fitness standards, refer to ALMAR 046/12 at www.marines.mil/News/Messages/Almars.aspx.

SCORING

8-100 points	5-75 points
7-95 points	4-65 points
6-85 points	3-40 points



The next evolution in firepower has arrived

Sgt. James Mercure
 Combat Correspondent

As full integration of the Infantry Automatic Rifle into the Marine Corps' arsenal becomes complete, the M249 Light Machine Gun, formerly the Squad Automatic Weapon, slowly fades into the history of the Corps.

The SAW has seen action since 1984 and has protected Marines ever since. Its replacement, however, is an automatic rifle of similar size and weight of the M16A4 service rifle already issued to rank and file Marines. The familiarity with this new weapon is almost instant for Marines.

"The IAR has fewer moving parts than the SAW does, making it a lot more 'grunt friendly,'" said Lance Cpl. Tyler Shaulis, an IAR gunner with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 7. "It has a direct piston system, so there are fewer jams. It stays cleaner longer, with less carbon build-up after it's been fired. The muscle memory stays the same with it as it would an M16. If an IAR gunner goes down, any Marine

could grab the weapon and lay down accurate suppressive fire without thinking twice."

For the Marines, the change has been a positive one, with only a few minor suggestions for the new rifle issued to them in early October before the deployment.

"It's a huge improvement to have a more accurate weapon," said Staff Sgt. Mathew Henderson, the platoon commander of Personal Security Detachment, 2/7 Marines, currently on his fourth combat deployment. "We want to broaden the application of its use. For instance, using an IAR in a sniper platoon instead of a SAW would be a huge advantage."

To potentially lower costs, Marines with the battalion are looking at ways to implement the IAR in place of a more expensive weapon already in use.

"This weapon platform could be used as a multipurpose weapon system in the infantry squad, i.e., using an IAR as an automatic rifle and as a designated marksman rifle," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Chris Jones, infantry weapons officer, 2/7. "In the current fight when there is a limited exposure and a fleeting target that blends in with the local populace, it is more important to have a more accurate rifle with a better optic. If you can get

See **RIFLE** page A5

M27 IAR (Quick Look)

- Weight: 8 pounds
- Maximum effective range: 550 meters (point target)
- Purchasing: 4,476
- Ammunition: 5.56 mm NATO rounds
- Magazine: 30-round magazine
- Number issued to infantry battalions: 84 IARs
- Number issued to light armored reconnaissance battalions: 72 IARs



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This week in Combat Center History



Reprinted from the Observation Post dated Nov. 27, 1998 Vol. 44 Issue No. 46

1st Tanks provides support during CAX

LCPL. JASON ANGEL
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

First Tank Bn. recently combined its destructive capabilities with those of Camp Pendleton's 1st Bn., 1st Marines, during Combined Arms Exercise 2/99.

During the four-week exercise, 1st Tanks supported the "grunts" in numerous taskings. These include the provision of fire support, and aid in mobility and shock affect.

"Shock effect is the fear that fills the hearts of all enemy troops as they stare down the barrel of an M1A1 tank," said GySgt. Michael E. Mummey, "C" Co, 1st Tank Bn., tank leader. "Its benefits are limitless."

The tankers also provided the Marines of 1/1 with mission-essential breaching capabilities. This entailed breaching anything from common concertina wire to deadly land mines.

Both can be extremely difficult for the foot-mobile grunt to pass, according to 1stLt. Edward J. Handler IV, "C" Co, 1/1 executive officer.

"These tankers provide us with a great service," he said. "(Tanks) make many obstacles obsolete, but more importantly,

they offer protection to our infantrymen and combat engineers."

When the obstacles in specific are mines, combat engineers are used to disperse them. With the use of bangalore torpedoes (explosive-filled pipes), many of the mines are destroyed.

The wreckage is then pushed away by M1A1 tanks, which have mine plows attached to their fronts. From there, a path is formed, opening the doors of death and destruction, "Leatherneck" style.

"This training is really important to us," Handler said. "We don't train with tanks very often, so what we do here is crucial."

The teaming of the two titans was no coincidence.

"(Bravo Co.) 1st Tanks, as well as 1/1 is preparing for a WestPac in June," said Sgt. Tim L. Duvall, a 23-year-old Loco, Okla., native and 3rd Plt., "B" Co., tank commander. While on the six-month deployment, the Marines will be in direct support of 1/1.

"We have a lot of junior Marines out here," Duvall said. "This CAX represents the first field operation for many of them. Viewing the entire combined arms picture, before deployment, is very significant for these Marines."

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See answers on page A4

GETTING THERE

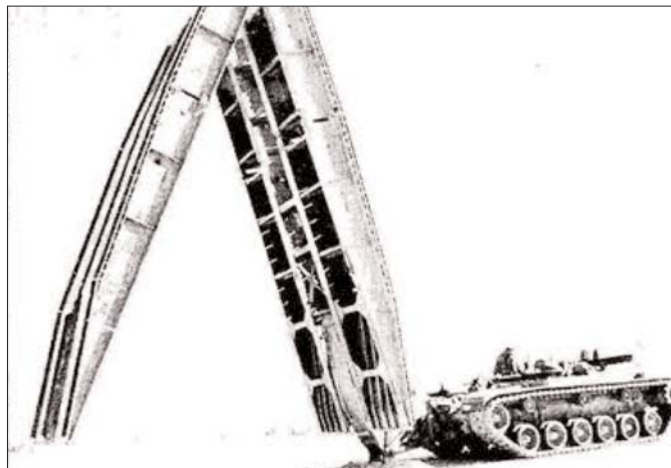
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ACROSS

- Bull artist
- Short shot to the green
- Filled to overflowing
- Pot starter
- Give a new look to
- Organic fertilizer
- Goblet part
- "Exodus" author
- Prefix with physics
- Prepare for an AKC show
- Oktoberfest vessel
- Liquored up
- Lohengrin's love
- Fireballer Nolan
- Chicken gizzard, e.g.
- Use TNT
- One-?liner, e.g.
- Timber wolf
- Lomond et al.
- Blood-?typing letters
- Avoider of meat products
- High: Abbr.
- Leap for Sarah Hughes
- In unison
- Fastened, in a way
- Mermaid feature
- G-men and T-men
- The heart is largely this
- Problem for Pauline
- Do some carpentry
- Author Zola
- Man Friday
- Low-?pH stuff
- "Jurassic Park" DNA preserver
- "Jurassic Park" beast
- Singer Braxton
- Fresh-mouthed
- Faxed, say
- Manuscript encl.

DOWN

- Goes the distance
- Emcee's task
- Bothered incessantly
- Word on an invoice
- Caked with dirt
- Life saver
- Beatnik's "Gotcha!"
- Oater band
- Sampras foe
- Work at the diner
- Do a critic's job
- Calvary letters
- Mullins of the comics
- "Dang it!"
- T-?shirt size: Abbr.
- Trojan War warrior
- "I pass," in poker
- Apple's apple, e.g.
- Abba of Israel
- Physical fitness
- Dull as dishwater
- "Damn Yankees" vamp
- Circus lineup
- Upload data, say
- Caffeine-?laden nut
- Market price
- Throw in
- Where morays are caught
- Cry from the first in line
- Tiffs
- Whacks sharply
- Apres-ski beverage
- Pork cuts
- Ace Rickenbacker
- Spherical veggies
- Rachel's baby in "Friends"
- Barbecue fare
- Some euro predecessors
- Yemeni port



LCpl. Johnny L. Fleming, a 23-year-old Radcliff, Ky., native and armored vehicle launching bridge operator, and LCpl. Ronald M. Girard, a 27-year old Boston native and assistant driver, raise the bridge after completing an exercise. AVLBs are used during breaching operations and allow vehicles to cross obstacles or ditches.



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

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- 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.
- K Smoke Shop, 5865A 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>

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

THE SCHOOL SUPPORTER



Patti Burke
Office Technician, Condor Elementary
50, Avon, Illinois

INTERVIEWED BY
LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
LANCE CPL. LAUREN A. KURKIMILIS
November 26, 2012

> **I grew up** in Avon, moved out here in '93.
> **I have a big** family, a lot of siblings, step-siblings and half-siblings, altogether 11 of us. I'm in the middle.
> **It was interesting, fun.** At one point there were seven of us that lived together. There was a lot of fighting but we got along.
> **I don't get to** see them as much as I like to, but I go home every couple of years and then I get to see everything.
> **I've been working** in the school system since my youngest was in kindergarten. She's 24 now, so I've been working in the school system for over 20 years.
> **I started working** with kids, supervising them in the cafeteria at my kid's school.
> **I was a noon** supervisor and basically I would supervise the kids in the lunchroom and on the playground. That was a lot of fun. I was younger back then so I could interact with the kids on the playground.
> **I liked being where** my kids were, that way, I was more involved in their school. I only worked for a few hours when I first started, because I also volunteered in the classrooms.
> **When other kids** come back that have moved out of the area, it's fun to see how they have grown up and what they're doing. They recognize me more than I recognize them.
> **Then, I went to** working with special education and autistic kids and did that for about 10 years.
> **When I got into** the special ed department I was an IA for severely handicapped kids. I enjoyed that. Every day was a different experience with them, teaching them how to do things.
> **Basically it was socializing** them with the other kids. I worked one year in a high school and there we taught them life skills, things they'd need in everyday life.
> **When they succeeded** at something it was really exciting. It was a little different than a traditional classroom. I found that more rewarding.
> **I worked with autistic children** for a while. That was really rewarding, because a lot of them don't know how to play or anything so you get to teach them how to play. It's something they have to be taught how to do. So part of your job is to actually play.
> **We would go** outside and they'd go down the slide and we'd go with them. We'd get on the swings with them and imagine one of us getting on those little bicycles with them. We did things like that.
> **In the classroom,** we'd hold their hands to teach them how to write and teach them how to play with blocks.
> **Our goal was to get them to be** able to go into a regular kindergarten class with little or no support at all.
> **Now, I've worked** in the office for about 10 years. I get to interact with all the ages now, the whole school. I still get to go into the classrooms every once and a while and I'll read stories to them, which I like doing.
> **I just enjoy being** around the kids here. They are very respectful to me. We have fun together and we can joke around with each other and they know when to stop.
> **I'll tease them.** Like they'll come up to me and ask for a band-aid and I'll say, "That'll be \$4." They'll look up at me and say, "Ms. Patty I don't have \$4." Some of them will start to act like they're going to give me the money and I'll tell them, "Oh no, I'm just kidding, sweetie. You can go get a band-aid."
> **If I had to work** with all adults I probably wouldn't still be working. It's the kids that keep me coming. I love it, I love the kids. I'm just not ready to give it up yet.

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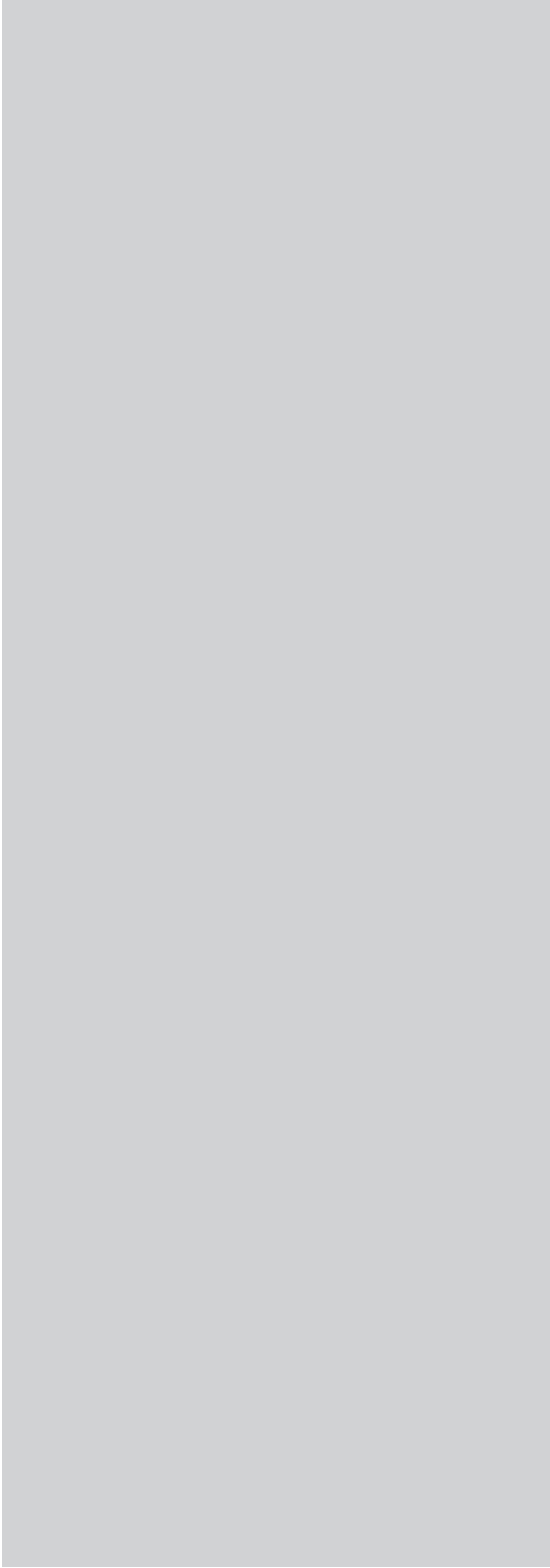
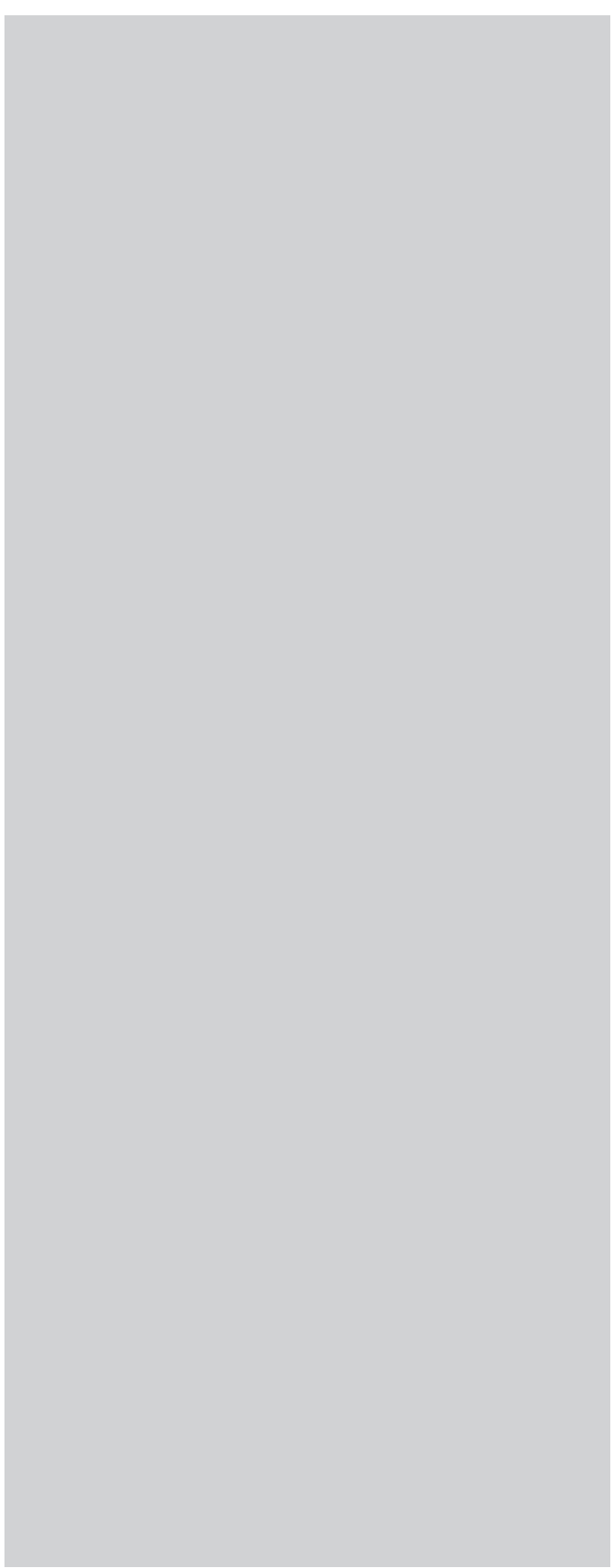


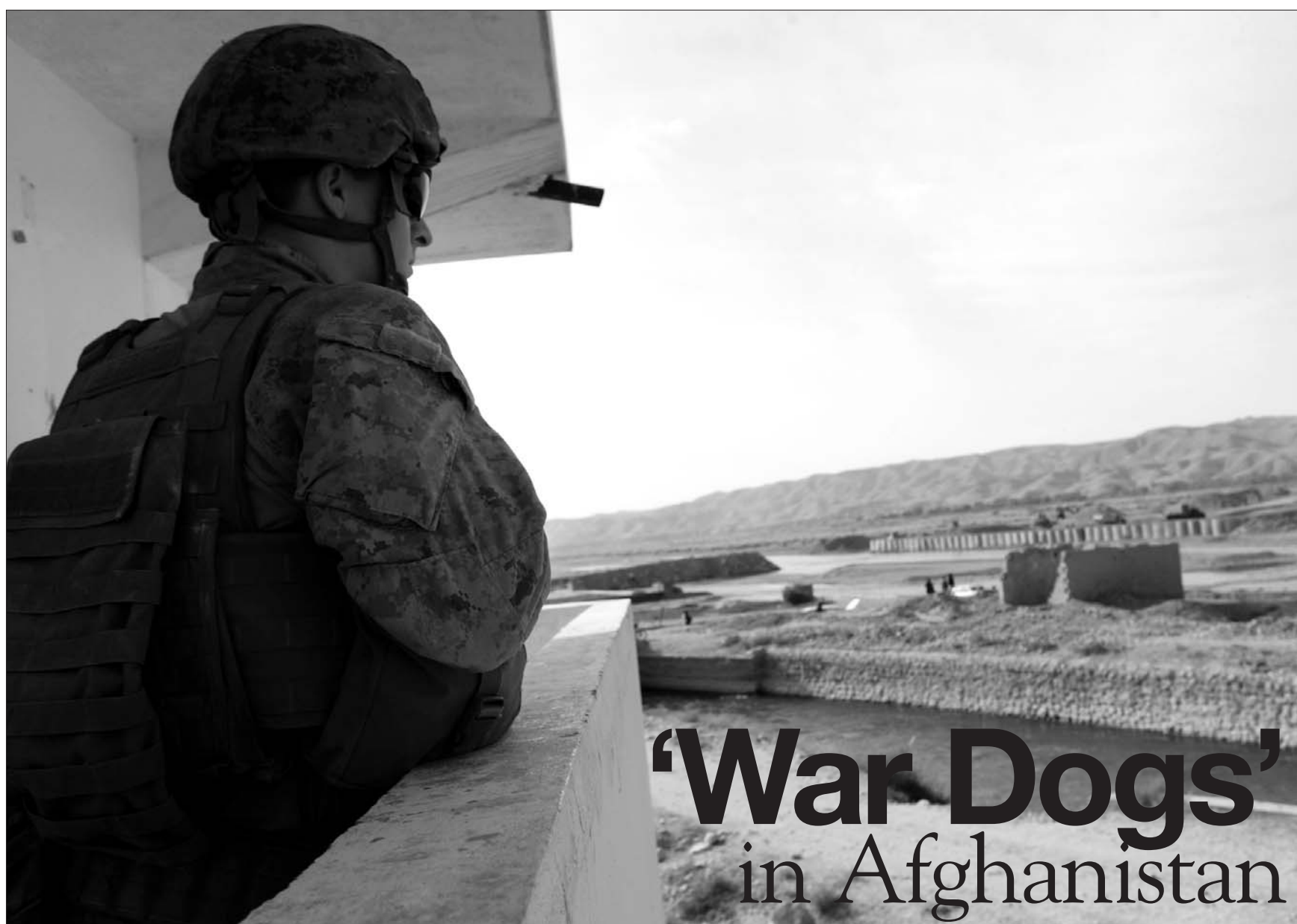
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'War Dogs' in Afghanistan

PHOTOS BY CPL. ANTHONY WARD JR.

2/7 Marines provide security for Operation Golden Gate

Cpl. Anthony Ward, Jr.
Regional Command Southwest

AFGHANISTAN — Combat engineers man their heavy equipment, pushing thousands of pounds of earth around while building and improving an area vital to the progression of southern Afghanistan.

To enable the Marines, sailors and soldiers to focus on the mission at hand and to alleviate the worry of constantly looking over their shoulders for an enemy threat, the Marines of Company G, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 7, are present and providing security.

Operation Golden Gate is the first major operation being conducted by RCT-7. It will provide the Sangin and Musa Qal'ah districts with a bridge to connect the two regions and aid in boosting local commerce and improving quality of life.

"For Golf Company, it's definitely an honor to be a part of a big project like this," said Capt. Miles G. Warren, company commander. "We've done minor platoon-level operations, but nothing with this high of visibility on it."

Co. G plays a big part in this operation by keeping the enemy fighters at bay and protecting the troops on the ground from the local patrol base, which overlooks the entire construction area.

"Right now our main job is to provide security to the north and east of the Helmand river for the bridge construction," said 1st Lt. Michael K. Murtaugh, 4th platoon commander with Co. G. "We're usually here for about two days at a time and with the platoons we have back at (Forward Operating Base) Sabit Qadam, it usually works out to us coming out here every week or so."


Four platoons are tasked with the cumbersome mission of providing overwatch to the area, each one taking the burden of standing post for hours in the heat of the afternoon sun and during the cold, unforgiving nights in Sangin.

"No one wants to stand post, but there's a purpose behind it," said Cpl. Kyle M. Taormino, squad leader with 4th platoon. "Everybody has to do their part. It's good what we're doing, and it brings a sense of security to the guys on the ground. I know I would feel safer if I knew I had a bunch of (infantrymen) watching my back."

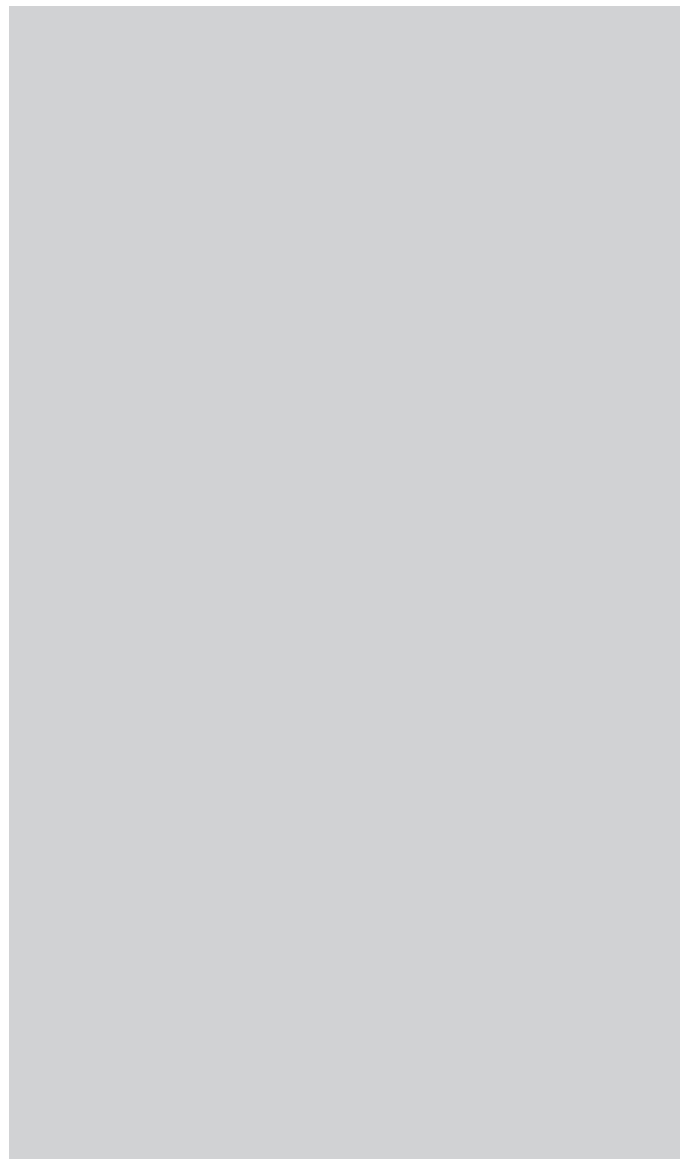
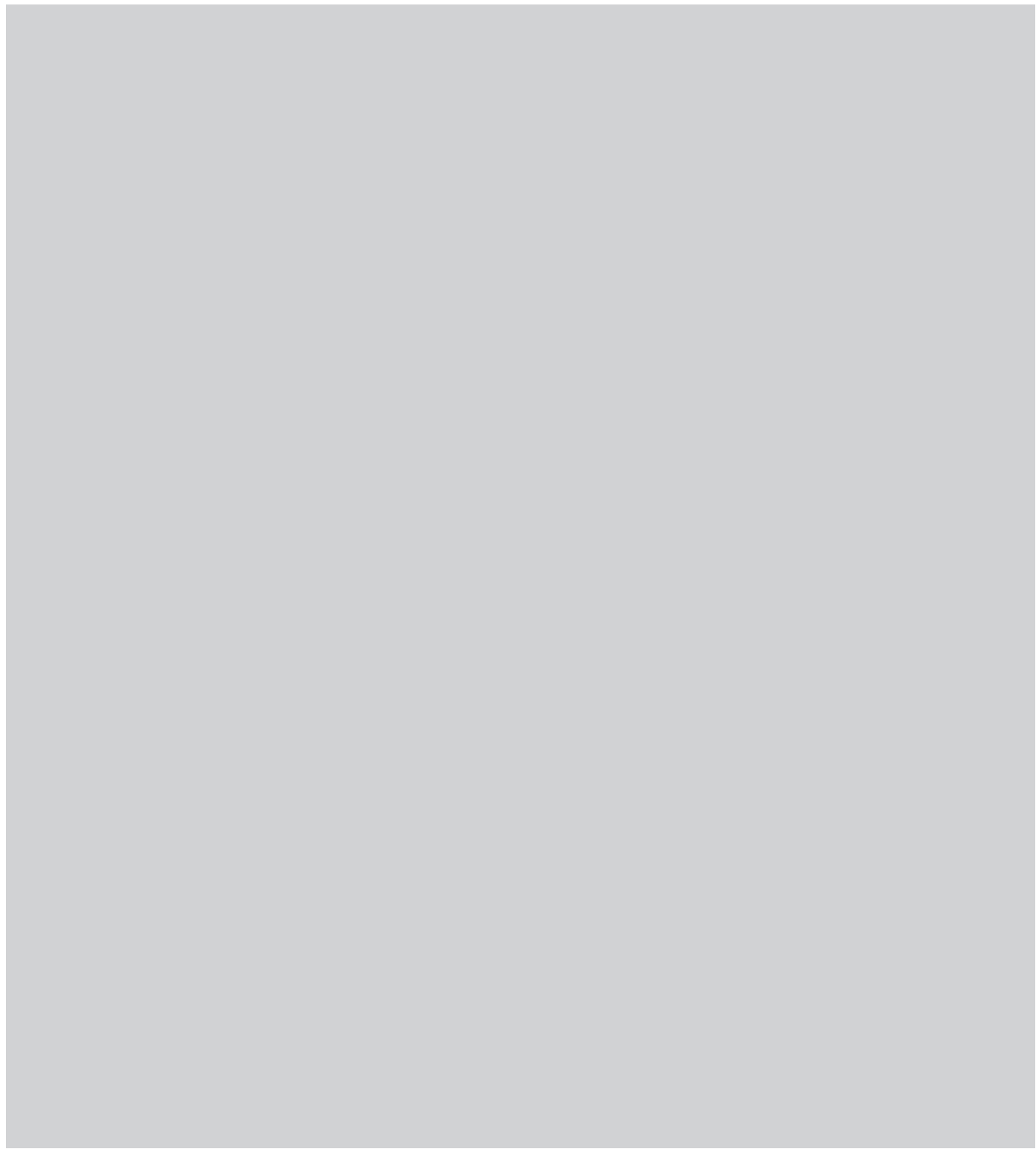
The Marines of Co. G are used to taking the fight to the enemy, returning fire when fired upon and sending the insurgents on the retreat. As they provide security for Operation Golden Gate, they take the fight to the enemy in a different way by enabling the local people and creating an infrastructure that will last for years to come.



Marines with Company G, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, conduct a routine patrol during Operation Golden Gate in Sangin, Afghanistan, Nov. 14. With a constant presence in the area, the Marines are tasked with securing a bridge construction site for the duration of the operation.



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





COURTESY PHOTO

A Marine with 1st Intelligence Battalion fires a M249 squad automatic weapon during a pre-deployment training program field exercise July 12, 2011.

RIFLE, from A1

positive identification faster, you can kill the enemy rather than a weapon that provides audible suppression; audible suppression being the bullets hitting everywhere but on target, and the enemy only hearing the sounds of gunfire.

"In a time of fiscal restraints, one rifle potentially serving two purposes would be huge," added Jones from Sullivan, Ind.

Although the SAW will be missed by some of the "saltier" Marines who have used it before, the IAR brings about a new breed of machine gunner and the squad he supports with it.

"We're going back to what we had in World War II with the Browning Automatic Rifle," Henderson said. "Since the 1980s, we gave the infantry squad the light machine gun, and now we're having another shift in the Marine Corps to get back to what we were doing right the first time."

MENTOR, from A1

senators, cabinet members, federal agency leaders and the President of the United States.

The Marine Corps will nominate eight officers, ranking from 1st lieutenant to lieutenant colonel, to lead in the program. The officers will act as counselors, facilitators and representatives of the Marine Corps.

"Marines, by virtue of their leadership skills, maturity, role model attributions, professionalism and dedication, makes them great candidates to the future young leaders of this great nation," Powell-Ray said.

The William Randolph Hearst Foundation, funding the program, will provide lodging, meals and incidental expenses during the days of the program, however air-fare is at the participants' expense.

Officers selected for the program are also required to attend a three-day orientation, prior to the commencement of the program and must arrange their own lodging and meals for orientation days.

Any officers wishing to apply to become an officer mentor are encouraged to submit an application package electronically to hattie.powell-ray@usmc.mil. Details about the information required for the package can be found on Marine Administrative Message 652/12.

For more information about the program, refer to the MarAdmin or go to www.usenateyouth.org.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL



LANCE CPL. MANUEL F. GUERRERO

[Top] The crew of "That's What She Said," a tank with Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, talks before going to bed Oct. 25, 2009 at the Combat Center during the combined arms exercise known as Steel Knight.

[Above] Marines with 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion drive their vehicles away from a resupply point during Exercise Steel Knight Dec. 9, 2008.

[Right] Two tanks with Co. D, 1st Tanks, proceed to their next mission Oct. 25, 2009 at the Combat Center during Exercise Steel Knight.

STEEL, from A1

of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., and Combat Center training ranges. It will include I Marine Expeditionary Force and the Singapore Armed Forces in their participation of Valiant Mark.

"On our part, we're helping the exercise fill in their white space training," said Maj. Robert Bell, current operations officer, TTECG. "When they're not in their formal exercise, we're going to support with additional training."

The exercise involves live-fire training while integrating mechanized assets. The focus of the exercise is to train to core competencies in the combined arms arena.

Portions of the experience will be taking place in the Combat Center's training areas. They will be conducting varied sizes of attacks to improve unit

and individual combat proficiency.

The exercise will culminate with a four-day live-fire final exercise that will improve the division's ability to execute its primary mission.

"Steel Knight comprises of 'white space' training from Nov 26 - to Dec 9, where all units conduct individual training in prep for the division Final Exercise (FINEX)," Kisch said. This is the largest Steel Knight live-fire exercise conducted ever to date with over 6,000 personnel involved."

SK13 stresses the division's part in coordinating and controlling an operation of this size. It will test their command and control capabilities and their warfighting functions.

The CALFEX is in full swing and will be for the next couple of weeks. The Marines in the division will conduct exercises throughout the Combat Center's Training Ranges.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

3/11 Post and Relief



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Sgt. Maj. Gregory D. Harting, oncoming sergeant major, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, salutes Lt. Col. Christopher Escamilla, commanding officer, 3/11, at the Post, Relief and Retirement Ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Nov. 28. Harting took post as sergeant major as Sgt. Maj. Maximino Torres retired after 26 years of service in the Marine Corps.



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

367-3577 For Advertising



MILITARY FAMILY SUPPORT

Caring for military families has become a national priority with the launch of the White House's "Strengthening Our Military Families" initiative and the related "Joining Forces" campaign.

Special to the Observation Post

Marine Corps Family Team Building

The mission and focus of Marine Corps Family Team Building (MCFTB) is to improve the quality of life for our service members and their families by providing reliable, high quality programs and services that promote healthy lifestyles and improve morale, unit and personal readiness and retention. MCFTB is comprised of the following:



"In our military families, we see the best our country has to offer. They demonstrate the virtues that have made America great for more than two centuries and the values that will preserve our greatness for centuries to come."

-President Barack Obama

Readiness & Deployment Support

Readiness & Deployment Support enhances unit readiness by delivering mobile family education programs to all ages. Designed specifically for Marines, sailors and families, these programs increase awareness of relevant readiness issues, while offering individuals creative ideas to build a healthier family. We cover a variety of topics including command support, information & resources, pre-deployment briefs, readiness training and return & reunion workshops.

Pre-Deployment for Marines and Families

This workshop highlights key areas of personal and family preparation for single Marines, married Marines and their respective families; either active duty or reservists. Suggestions for personal and family preparation including important documents, emergency communication, money management, operational security, sources of assistance and information and referral resources are provided.

Pre-Deployment for Children and their Parents

This program uses age-appropriate activities for children age five and older to prepare for the upcoming deployment. The adult component combines discussion and demonstrations to highlight ways parents can support their children and recognize common reactions children may exhibit due to deployment related stress.

Deployment Success

This workshop is designed to promote deployment success for the spouse or significant other at home during a deployment and includes suggestions for fun things to do, goal setting and resources. This is a great opportunity to assess progress thus far, get new ideas for continued success and also networking with other Marine Corps spouses and significant others.

Self Care

This workshop is designed to promote deployment success through self-care for the spouse or significant other at home during the deployment. It includes information about stress management, staying connected with your Marine, dealing with emotional ups and downs and resources.

Kids and Deployment

This workshop is designed to promote deployment success for kids, including reactions to deployment, ways parents can help and resources.

Return and Reunion- Spouses and Significant Others

Spouses and significant others of returning Marines are eager to talk about homecoming anticipation, expectations and concerns. The ideal time to discuss homecoming is approximately a month before a unit returns from deployment. This allows enough time for communication to occur and plans to be made before the Marine returns.

Return and Reunion for Kids and their Parents

This program uses age appropriate activities for children age five and older to prepare for the upcoming return, reunion and reintegration with their Marine parent. The adult component combines discussion and demonstrations to highlight ways parents can support their child during this time.

Return and Reunion for Parents and Extended Family

This program answers questions about what to expect at homecoming, provides suggestions on celebrating homecoming with their Marine and addresses concerns about the effects that serving in a combat zone might have on their Marine.

Reintegration- Strong Marine Couples

This training provides a forum for couples to assess their recent deployment experience in an effort to further strengthen their relationship. This educational workshop addresses the effect of reintegration on a relationship, allows couples to assess the level of relationship satisfaction and provides communication tools and resources for couples to use to strengthen their relationship.

For more information call 830-3124 or 830-3127.

Family Readiness

The Marine Corps' most valuable asset is the individual Marine and their family. The Unit Family Readiness Program will educate and empower both Marines and families members to achieve and maintain a high state of personal readiness and resiliency in response to life, career, and mission events by providing the information, tools, and resources to empower them to take care of themselves and successfully balance the challenges of a military lifestyle.

The mission of the Unit Family Readiness Program is to train and prepare Marines and families to ensure optimum resiliency when faced with life cycle events. When every Marine and family in a unit reaches the optimum level of resiliency, a high state of personal and family readiness will result thereby ensuring the unit's high state of readiness. The Unit Family Readiness Program shall provide support through proactive outreach and intervention in the form of the following functions: Official Communication; Information and Referral; and Marine and Family Readiness and Deployment Support (RDS).

Command Team Training

Family Readiness Command Team Training is designed to guide command team members in their responsibilities of their family readiness program. This training provides the required information to implement and execute a successful family readiness program and a Command Team Handbook with necessary supplemental information for program operation, guidance, and referral.

Family Readiness Officer

Family Readiness Officer Training is designed to orient and guide the Family Readiness Officer in their responsibilities within the Unit, Personal and Family Readiness Program. This training provides the required information to operate as a successful Family Readiness Officer and as a member of the Family Readiness Command Team.

Command Team Advisor/Family Readiness Assistant

The Command Team Advisor/Family Readiness Assistant Training is designed to guide Command Team Advisors and Family Readiness Assistants in their responsibilities within the Unit, Personal and Family Readiness Program. This training provides required information to operate as a successful Command Team Advisor/Family Readiness Assistant and as a member of the Family Readiness Command Team. CO/Senior Enlisted Spouse The Command Team CO/Senior Enlisted Marine Spouse Training is designed to orient and guide CO, Sergeant Major, and/or Senior Enlisted Marine Spouses in the responsibilities and operating components of their roles within the Unit, Personal and Family Readiness Program. This training provides the required information to operate as a successful Command Team Commanding Officer, or Senior Enlisted Marine spouse as a part of the Family Readiness Command Team.

For more information call 830-4163.

Lifestyle, Insight, Network, Knowledge & Skills

L.I.N.K.S. is an official Marine Corps program which helps families connect to the Corps.

The Marine Corps has expanded its definition of family, to include the family Marines were born into, sworn into, and married into. The L.I.N.K.S. program now offers multiple classes to accommodate all aspects of a Marine's family: L.I.N.K.S. for Spouses, L.I.N.K.S. for Teens, L.I.N.K.S. for School-Age Kids, L.I.N.K.S. for Marines, and L.I.N.K.S. for Marine Parents and Extended Family.

L - Lifestyle is a way of living; in this case, it means understanding the military community and the unique lifestyle it offers.

I - Insights come from experienced Marine Corps spouses, who relate their experiences of living the Marine Corps lifestyle. These spouses understand first hand what you are going through and who want to help you adapt to the new culture you married into.

N - Networking represents the relationships you form during L.I.N.K.S. and throughout your journey in the Marine Corps.

K - Knowledge is what you will leave with and what will help you understand and navigate the Marine Corps culture.

S - Skills learned to help you enjoy and thrive in our Marine Corps community.

For more information call 830-1696.

LifeSkills

The LifeSkills Program provides facilitation of various workshops in such areas as Four Lenses, Family Care Plans, 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families, Beyond the Looking Glass and Pre-Marital, Interpersonal, Choices, & Knowledge (P.I.C.K.). PREP is a program supported by LifeSkills that provides couples with tools to enhance their communication and problem-solving skills. Spouses Learning Series (SLS) is a four-hour workshop that helps a spouse focus on empowerment, time management, goal setting and accomplishments.

For more information call 830-3115.

These programs and many others are supported at all major installations by Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) through a MCFTB office staffed with a MCFTB Director, MCFTB Administrative Assistant, Family Readiness Program Trainers, Readiness & Deployment Support Trainers, LifeSkills Trainer, L.I.N.K.S. Trainers and L.I.N.K.S. Administrative Assistant.





Liberty Call

Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Monday: Margarita Mondays
 Thursday: Rockin' Karaoke 7-10 p.m.
 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.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Monday: Margarita Mondays
 Thursday: Warrior Night 4:30 - 9 p.m.
 Friday: Karaoke Night 6 - 9 p.m.

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Friday: Steak Night, 4:30 - 8 p.m.
 Monday-Friday: All-hands lunch from 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
 Monday: All-hands steak night, 4:30 - 8 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: Taco Night, 5 - 7 p.m.

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

Local Events

Free Line Dance Lessons

Learn to dance the night away
 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.

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

Lower Desert

Pacquiao vs. Marquez 4

Fighters take the ring
 When: 6 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 8
 Where: Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa
 32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
 For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Journey

Classic band performs
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 8
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
 84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
 For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Ohio Players and The Family Stone

American funk groups perform
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 29
 Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
 46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
 For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit <http://www.spotlight29.com>.

Mariachi Divas

Quintet performs
 When: 9:00 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 15
 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, November 30

6 p.m. - Here comes the Boom, Rated PG
 9 p.m. - Pitch Perfect, Rated PG-13
 Midnight - Taken 2, Rated PG-13

Saturday, December 1

10:30 a.m. - Free Matinee Elf, Rated PG
 12:30 p.m. - Hotel Transylvania 3D, Rated PG
 3 p.m. - Frankenweenie 3D, Rated PG
 6 p.m. - Looper, Rated R
 9 p.m. - Argo, Rated R
 Midnight - Sinister, Rated R

Sunday, December 2

12:30 p.m. - Frankenweenie, Rated PG
 3 p.m. - Alex Cross, Rated PG-13
 6 p.m. - Hotel Transylvania 3D, Rated PG
 9 p.m. - Paranormal Activity 4, Rated R

Monday, December 3

9 p.m. - Taken 2, Rated PG-13

Tuesday, December 4

7 p.m. - Frankenweenie 3D, Rated G

Wednesday, December 5

5:30 p.m. - Looper, Rated R
 8:30 p.m. - Sinister, Rated R

Thursday, December 6

5:30 p.m. - Frankenweenie, Rated PG
 8:30 p.m. - Pitch Perfect, Rated PG-13

Kids repel invading forces



COURTESY PHOTO

A small town in the Pacific Northwest, like the rest of the nation, is overrun by hostile foreign forces. Thank goodness for the local high school football team, the Wolverines, which sprints off the gridiron and heads to the hills to become a strike force of patriot fighters.

NEIL POND

"Red Dawn"

Starring Chris Hemsworth & Josh Peck
 Directed by Dan Bradley
 Rated PG-13

The bad news: We've been invaded. The good news: Kids are taking America back!

That's the plot of "Red Dawn," in which a small town in the Pacific Northwest, like the rest of the nation, is overrun by hostile foreign forces. Thank goodness for the local high school football team, the Wolverines, which sprints off the gridiron and heads to the hills to become a strike force of patriot fighters.

If that has a vaguely familiar ring, you're probably hearing the distant echoes of 1984, when the original "Red Dawn" brought the same basic story to the screen. Back then it was Russians dropping into Colorado, not North Koreans taking over Washington state.

The 1984 movie starred a roundup of the decade's young stars, including Charlie Sheen and Patrick Swayze. It wasn't Shakespeare by any stretch, but it has held up relatively well in cold storage as a slice of gung-ho, Reagan Era, all-American cheese.

And it's a practically a nostalgic masterpiece compared to this misguided remake.

I'll leave the debate over the plausibility of a successful North American invasion by North Korea paratroopers to military tacticians and armchair generals. And there's certainly drama to be found in a story about brave rebels anywhere fighting for their heartland. But this

movie's got some real problems beyond its basic premise.

Its star power is concentrated in Chris Hemsworth, who wasn't a star yet when he took on the lead role of a young U.S. military vet newly returned to his hometown from a tour of duty in Iraq. He'd go on later to make the blockbusters "Thor" and "The Avengers" while "Red Dawn" underwent major tweaking.

When this "Dawn" was filmed nearly three years ago, the bad guys were Chinese. Its release was stalled when its studio, MGM, filed for bankruptcy, and producers had time to ponder the prospect of losing millions of dollars by offending potential distributors in China. So a new opening was created, dialog was overdubbed, scenes were re-cut, and the invading army's identifying markings were digitally changed to those of North Korea. No doubt that created a real mess in the editing room.

Josh Hutcherson also had "Red Dawn" in the can before he started shooting his role as Peeta in "The Hunger Games." The other lead actor, Josh Peck, may someday break free of the goofball, teen-sitcom stigma from his Nickelodeon "Drake and Josh" comedy series, but I'm afraid "Red Dawn" isn't going to give him much of a career push.

Adrienne Palicki (Tyra Collette from TV's "Friday Night Lights") plays a hometown hottie who takes with surprising swiftness to the life of a resistance fighter. Jeffrey Dean Morgan (Denny Duquette on "Grey's Anatomy") shows up mid-movie as a U.S. military militia commander who's heard about the Wolverines and seeks them out for their help.

The story stretches credibility at every turn. The dialog sounds like it was cribbed one line at a time from an action-movie build-a-script book ("It's a good day to die!" "Show us your guns, girls!" "We're the Wolverines, and we create chaos!") Shaky-cam action scenes are so jarringly shot and edited they're practically incomprehensible.

And, oh, the unanswered questions: Why have we been invaded? What do the Chinese—I mean, the North Koreans—want? Why does the Pacific Northwest look like Michigan? (Oh—that's where the movie was filmed.) Why are some citizens (like the cheerleader girlfriend of Peck's character) held in detention camps, and others allowed to go about their lives, shopping on Main Street and eating at Subway? And just how do you turn a losing football team into a teenage strike force of crack, bazooka-wielding guerrilla warriors?

Perhaps they've been weaned on combat video games, on which the movie actually seems to depend for much of its dramatic structure: lots of blasting, little time for explanation, little hope for anyone who doesn't like the taste of red meat, and characters that fall cleanly on one side or the other of the good guy/bad guy line.

In one scene, the young rebels, during a moment of exhausted repose in their hillside hideout, reflect on the things they miss. One says toilets that flush. Others mention pizza, hot girls, TV and videogames.

"Dude, we've been living 'Call of Duty,'" says another. "And it sucks!"

Yes, it certainly does. And dude, come to think of it, you totally nailed it.