



OBSERVATION POST

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS

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May 10, 2013

Vol. 57 Issue 18

EXFOB conducts hybrid experiments

Cpl. Sarah Dietz
Combat Correspondent

The Combat Center hosted its annual Experimental Forward Operating Base Wednesday to demonstrate and evaluate new hybrid energy-efficient technology which will better equip Marines in combat readiness.

The ExFOB brings together stakeholders from across the Marine Corps' requirements, acquisition and technology development communities to bring their ideas of new technology to the Corps and test them in an urban environment.

"It's about saving fuel, keeping fuel convoys off the battlefield," said Ken King, WARTEC manager, Marine Forces Pacific Experimentation Center. "A lot of Marines die in those types of convoys and a Marine that doesn't have to refuel is a Marine who can be out there in the fight somewhere and getting the mission accomplished."

Vendors have been testing new technology at the ExFOB since 2009. This year, 10 companies tested 13 hybrid systems as well as nine government sponsored demonstrations which will include efficient cooling systems; individual Marine power

"A lot of Marines die in those types of convoys and a Marine that doesn't have to refuel is a Marine who can be out there in the fight somewhere and getting the mission accomplished."

— Ken King

and water systems; and power planning and management capabilities.

"The reason why we are here is because we are filling capability gaps that have been in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Maj. James Richardson Jr., Logistics Combat Element branch head, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, Quantico, Va. "Some of the largest things we are moving on the battlefield in Iraq and Afghanistan is fuel and water. If we can save fuel at different locations, via (Combat Outposts) or FOBS, it's going to be a big win."

A problem Marines face in combat is equipment and power sources breaking down. System developers come to the Combat Center's ExFOB to seek solutions to those issues.

"We've noticed in the Marine Corps, generators aren't operating as efficiently as they should be," King said. "This is about getting the generators to turn off at some point and use power that's harvesting batteries, and a thing that helps us get power into those batteries is the solar."

See **EXFOB** page A5

DESERT SCIMITAR

Combat Center units support 1st Marine Division annual training



3rd LAR conducts route reconnaissance mission

Cpl. Ali Azimi
Combat Correspondent

Marines with Company A, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion took part in 1st Marine Division's annual Desert Scimitar training exercise when they conducted a route reconnaissance mission

from check point 47 at the Lava training area to check point 38 at the Delta training area, May 3.

The mission was one of many recon exercises the battalion has conducted since the beginning of the exercise April 28. Their role in the mission was to help determine enemy presence and influence in the

area and the route's availability as a pathway for other Marines.

They served as the division's mobile reconnaissance element, their eyes on the ground.

"Usually we mostly do work-ups, for specific events like Marine Expeditionary Units or Afghanistan, so it's more focused on us as a company or a battalion," said Cpl. Jean-Aubert Madere, vehicle commander, Co. A, 3rd LAR. "This is a much broader scale so it's a lot more logistics. It kind of plays more into the big picture."

Desert Scimitar is a division-sized exercise which utilizes the division's many assets including the Combat Center's 3rd LAR. The unit set up their center of command at the Lead Mountain training area during the beginning of the exercise but their mission in support of the division took the LAV crews much further.

They set up observation post with views of simulated enemy targets being fired upon by artillery units. 3rd LAR Marines spotted the rounds to make sure they were hitting their proper objectives.

"We spent two days on a screen position in front of Regimental Combat Team 5," said Capt. Pete Ableson, commander,

See **3RD LAR** page A5



CLB-7 provides combat exercise necessities

Cpl. Sarah Dietz
Combat Correspondent

Combat Logistics Battalion 7 took the backstage role of 1st Marine Division's Desert Scimitar exercise. The unit began their field operation April 17 and ended Monday.

Desert Scimitar is one of 1st Marine Division's annual division sized exercises held in Marine Corps

Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., and the Combat Center.

The Marines of CLB-7 supported the units training in the field with their logistical needs, which included water, fuel, transportation, communications and food.

"We supported 1st Marine Division and all they needed," said Cpl. James

See **CLB-7** page A5

RANGE MAINTENANCE

RTAMS keeps ranges running

Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
Combat Correspondent

Among the Combat Center units involved in supporting Desert Scimitar was Range Training Area Maintenance Section. RTAMS' primary mission is to support the training that takes place aboard the Combat Center.

"The desert would be annihilated with trash if we didn't do our jobs."

— Mark Carrington

According to Raymond Clark, RTAMS Maintenance Supervisor, the Marines and civilians are faced with a variety of jobs throughout their time with RTAMS. Everything the unit does is by the numbers to prevent injuries from happening while working in sometimes hazardous conditions

"We keep all the training rolling on base," said

See **RTAMS** page A5

Assistant chief of staff retires



LANCE CPL. LAUREN A. KURKIMALIS

Col. Joseph P. Granata retired after serving 26 years in the Marine Corps during a retirement ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, May 3. Granata served as the assistant chief of staff, G-4 Installation and Logistics, since May, 2011. His wife, Rene Granata, their children and grandchildren were in attendance at the ceremony.

Chaplain of the Marine Corps Religious leader visits Combat Center

Cpl. William J. Jackson
Combat Correspondent

The 18th Chaplain of the Marine Corps, Rear Adm. Margaret Kibben, visited the Combat Center to speak with Religious Ministry Teams about deployments and discuss current affairs within the Chaplain Corps May 7.

Kibben, who also doubles as the

the hardships and procedures for providing religious ministries during the 4 teams' upcoming deployments for Operation Enduring Freedom and the Unit Deployment Program.

The four teams' were taught about the core competencies, to provide, facilitate, care and advise as a religious leader within their unit.

Moses, the Combat Center's assistant chief of staff for Religious

"As we look at what the Navy and Marine Corps are retracting toward as we wrap up OEF, the mission of the Navy and Marine Corps is going to be humanitarian assistance and disaster relief response."

— Rear Adm. Margaret Kibben

deputy chief of Navy chaplains, visited four RMTs from 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment; 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment; Marine Aircraft Group 11 and Combat Logistics Battalion 7 during the Integrated Training Exercise on her West Coast tour of Marine Corps installations.

During this time, she sat in on Cmdr. Steven Moses' briefing about

Ministries, said the teams were very happy to have Kibben reach out and offer words of encouragement and tips to be successful religious leaders.

Kibbens also had time to speak with the RMTs and about their career progress, and made sure they set themselves up with the right tools necessary to reach out to the units and provide faith



CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

The 18th Chaplain of the Marine Corps, Rear Adm. Margaret Kibben, speaks with Religious Ministry Teams about deployments and discusses current affairs within the Chaplain Corps at the Combat Center's protestant chapel May 7.

groups with support if necessary. "As we look at what the Navy and Marine Corps are retracting toward as we wrap up OEF, the mission of the Navy and Marine Corps is going to be humanitarian assistance and disaster relief response."

See **CHAPLAIN** page A5

Barracks MANAGEMENT

Headquarters Marine Corps mandates new classes

Cpl. Ali Azimi
Combat Correspondent

The Combat Center has recently seen construction throughout the base. Several new bachelor enlisted quarters have been built and these modern barracks are an innovation compared to their predecessors. They offer many amenities to the Marines that live there, but like anything in the Marine Corps, old or new, it's the responsibility of the Marines to take care of what they have.

Headquarters Marine Corps mandated that managers of these residences take classes on current standards and strategies for barracks management as part of Marine Corps Order 11000.22, a Corps-wide policy on the requirements of maintaining its housing enterprise.

Combat Center BEQ managers finished the course April 30.

"Significant investment in family, bachelor and transient housing infrastructure has resulted in unprecedented improvements in married and single Marines' quality of life," said Rick Worrell, deputy director of training, Military Housing and Lodging Institute. "It is critical that this investment in housing assets is managed and maintained in order to sustain the desired quality of life and meet the expectations of Marines and their families."

The institute was contracted by HQMC to provide the proper training to civilian and Marine BEQ managers on every base across the Corps.

"There's been a lot of training at the installation level, but this is a new order," Worrell said. "There are a lot of rules and regulations you have to understand and be able to articulate well enough. With all these buildings going up, we want to make sure we take care of what we've got."

The two-day basic course provided the BEQ managers with a wide variety of specialized

training in all areas of military and privatized housing operations.

"I thought it was a good course," said Emmett Guiette, barracks coordinator, G-4, who attended the course. "It hit some of the highlights that barracks managers should follow."

They covered topics from room assignments to inventory control as well as the responsibilities that fall on the shoulders of barracks residents.

"The old (barracks) are harder to take care of than the new ones, but the new (buildings) still need to be taken care of," Worrell said. "These brand new buildings come to us after two, three years of construction. They're still new."

MHLI continue on to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., as part of its tour of training at Marine Corps installations. They are scheduled to return to the Combat Center in June to teach a more in-depth intermediate course on barracks management.



CPL. ALI AZIMI

Military and civilian bachelor enlisted quarters managers attend a basic class taught by Rick Worrell, deputy director of training, Military Housing and Lodging Institute, April 30, 2013. The institute was contracted by Headquarters Marine Corps to further train barracks managers on the proper procedures to take care of the housing areas under their care.

UnitedHealthcare, TRICARE help expedite authorizations

TRICARE West

MINNETONKA, Minn. - TRICARE Management Activity is temporarily waiving the requirement for authorization of care in order to expedite service in its West Region, served by UnitedHealthcare. The waiver applies to any referrals obtained, or care received, from April 1 to May 18, 2013.

Referrals are typically entered electronically, generating an authorization from the managed care support contractor. While UnitedHealthcare works to clear pending referrals, West Region enrollees who are referred to a network specialist for TRICARE covered services will not need an authorization. Beneficiaries should request a written copy of their referral or ask their care provider to fax a copy to the specialist. The waiver does not apply to beneficiaries using TRICARE Standard.

UnitedHealthcare Military & Veterans began serving the TRICARE West Region April 1, 2013. Since then, the company has experienced referral and care authorization volumes that exceeded historical norms and related challenges processing them in a timely manner.

"UnitedHealthcare has committed the full resources of the company - at all levels and in all areas - to provide beneficiaries, care providers and Military Treatment Facilities with high-quality service and support," said UnitedHealthcare Military & Veterans CEO, Lori McDougal. "We understand issues have arisen that need immediate improvement, and we are taking aggressive actions to fix them. We sincerely apologize for any delay in services that TRICARE beneficiaries and care providers are experiencing as a result of these challenges."

West Region beneficiaries can get more information and sign up for updates at www.uhcmilitarywest.com or www.tricare.mil/westtransition <http://www.uhcmilitarywest.com>

About UnitedHealthcare

UnitedHealthcare is dedicated to helping people nationwide live healthier lives by simplifying the health care experience, meeting consumer health and wellness needs, and sustaining trusted relationships with care providers. The company offers the full spectrum of health benefit programs for individuals, employers and Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, and contracts directly with 780,000 physicians and other care professionals and 5,900 hospitals and other care facilities nationwide. UnitedHealthcare serves more than 40 million people in health benefits and is one of the businesses of UnitedHealth Group, a diversified Fortune 50 health and well-being company.

For more information about UnitedHealthcare contact Bruce Jasurda (815) 342-1852 or by email at Bruce_Jasurda@uhc.com



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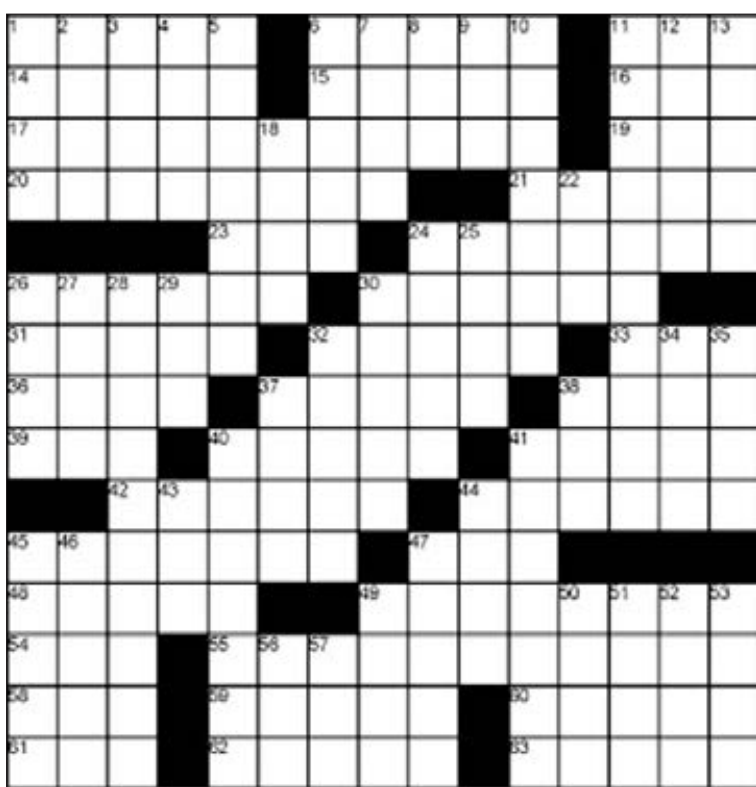


The Combat Center has its own YouTube channel. Find it at <http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>

AT THE HOSPITAL

See answers on page A5

- ACROSS**
- Teen love
 - Golf hazards
 - A Bobbsey twin
 - Haile Selassie follower, for short
 - Fire up
 - Game with a 108-card deck
 - Part of a fire drill
 - Corduroy feature
 - Gardener's sackful
 - Butter up
 - "Spare tire," essentially
 - Eye impolitely
 - Nasal partition
 - Oregano and others
 - To no ___
 - Zero-point Scrabble tile
 - Attila, e.g.
 - Yardage pickup
 - Treaty result
 - Whittle away
 - Charades "little word"
 - Sudden thrust
 - Blue-haired Simpson
 - Camera card contents
 - Did a valet's job
 - Most minute
 - Kobe currency
 - One in a cast
 - By necessity
 - West of Hollywood
- DOWN**
- Field yield
 - Red in the middle
 - Meat-grading org.
 - Editor's direction
 - Injurious
 - Lovers' liaison
 - Small, agile deer
 - "La Cage ___ Folles"
 - "___ Love You" (Beatles hit)
 - Change for the worse
 - Bottom-dwelling kin of the great white
 - Singer O'Day
 - "Check," in poker
 - Good soil
 - "___ you for real"
 - "The final frontier"
 - Fork feature
 - It's a long story
 - Politico Bayh
 - Certain summer job holder, maybe
 - Plating metal
 - Smelting by products



- "The Devil and Daniel Webster" author
- Spur on
- "___ I say more?"
- Snub-nosed dogs
- The usual
- Hamlet's slayer
- ___ Mann of '60s pop
- "O Sole ___"
- Cuzco's country
- No longer feral
- Words of compassion
- Affirmatives
- Attack, as with eggs
- Gawk at
- Like McCoy?
- Traffic marker
- Means justifiers, for some
- Kanye West specialty
- Self-perception

SUDOKU 2900-D

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			5		4	7		



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 - Club San Diego, 3955 Fourth St.
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 - K Smoke Shop, 5865A Adobe Rd.

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 - Village Pub, 266 S. Palm Canyon Dr.
 - Whispering Palms Apts., 449 E. Arenas Road
 - NYPD Pizza, 260-262 N. Palm Canyon Drive

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WHAT I'VE LEARNED

RDML Margaret KIBBEN

Warrington, Pa. 18th Chaplain of the Marine Corps



KIBBEN IS THE 1ST FEMALE
CHAPLAIN OF THE MARINE
CORPS AND THE MOTHER OF
A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

> **The Chaplain of the Marine Corps** is the one responsible for the 290 chaplains and equal number of RPs assigned Marine Corps units. I'm responsible for making sure they have the resources they need, that they have an awareness of the items that the Commandant of the Marine Corps is interested in and wants to make sure we address and we respond to his requirement to keep faith with our Marines and sailors

> **It's a figurehead** and that's where it's so exciting. It's not Margaret Kibben; it's the Chaplain of the Marine Corps.

> **I'm also the advisor to the Commandant** as far as religious ministries across the Marine Corps and the issues that are impacting Marines and their families.

> **It's a long story**, but the short version is, I was called to (being a chaplain.) I was called to ministry when I was in 8th grade and the summer before my senior year in high school I felt a call to military ministry and pursued that.

> **My dad was a sailor in World War II** and received his commission afterwards through the reserves. I had an exposure to the military so I really like the idea of combining what I felt was a call to ministry to the context of military life.

> **I'm married** and I have a daughter.

> **You want to do well**, succeed and contribute everything you have and yet there's another area to which you're called and that's your family. You want the best for your children and you want to be engaged in their lives and it's a delicate and challenging balance.

> **It helps the children understand** that life has its choices. Part of those choices involves contributing the talents and gifts you've been given. Not only to your own personal enjoyment but also to the outer world.

> **Give them an example of what it means** to provide a balance, love those whom you have chosen to love, as well as to serve in a way that you have felt you have been called to serve.

> **My husband is** a retired Marine; he retired about six years ago. Well, he's a Marine that's now retired; let's make sure I say that right. For us it worked incredibly well because he understood the environment that I was functioning in and I understood the environment in which he was functioning.

> **The biggest challenge was** we had several duty stations where we were not together.

> **My daughter, Lindsay**, who is going to be 16 next week, has a sensitivity to the needs of people that she wouldn't have had otherwise, because I'm a chaplain, from the night of 9/11.

> **The night of 9/11**, I was in the DC. area and I was called to be one of the chaplains in the area. She was four at the time. I put my uniform on at night, which was unusual, and she says, "Mommy, why are you going out?" and I said, "Well, because a number of people have died and their families are sad and they need to talk to somebody." She says, "Then you should go."

> **She was four**, I'm pretty proud of her. She's a cool kid.

> **A part of it is just who she is**, but because of her exposure to that value of religious ministry in this environment, she understood at the most elementary level, that what chaplains do is incredibly important to the spiritual welfare of our people.

> **She's learning how to drive** and we have a party I have to get home to cook for.

> **She's a sweetheart, she's effervescent**, she has a lovely sense of humor, she's grounded, she has a depth of spirit that many people never even get near. She's very considerate and very caring and a very sensitive child.

> **She's a special needs child** she has cystic fibrosis, so she's had some medical challenges. She has met those life challenges with strength and courage.

> **She has such character** and such strength that she is in many ways an example to me. Humility, I think it is.

> **Having a daughter while in the military** is a blessing and a challenge and as much as you want for your children's stability, you know you want them to be able to grow up in the same house. On the other hand, they get a chance to see things and they are much more sophisticated than kids that don't grow up in a military environment.

> **I pray for my daughter's health** and that she can live a long and fulfilling life. She has so much to contribute and my husband feels the same way, so I can say that's what I wish for my family. It's not just for Lindsay, it's for all of us.

> **We are a family of faith** so they get it. It's that tension, I want to be home but I travel quite a bit.

> **In my faith**, Jesus said let the children come to me because of their innocence and their openness and their willingness to believe even though everything around them says not to. That's what she is to me.

> **I wasn't called to be** a female minister. I was called to be a minister.

> **What I knew was that ministry** in this context would be a daily event. It wasn't just church on Sundays and that's what appealed to me. It wasn't just church on Sundays it was an eat, sleep, breathe, enjoy and endure all of the things that military members eat, sleep, breathe, enjoy and endure.

> **Wow, I've had a heck of a good time.** I have felt equipped, divinely equipped, and I believe time and time again that I am exactly where I need to be for the people with whom I am serving.

> **That has been incredibly rewarding**, and I can say this has happened at this duty station or this happened at that duty station, but if there's an overall theme it is I felt a call, I responded to that call and I believe that I have been equipped for that call and have been reminded of that on a regular basis.

Interviewed by Cpl. William J. Jackson
May 7, 2013

PHROGS

Corps' historic birds take final flights

Gunnery Sgt. Jennifer Antoine
Combat Correspondent

The Marine Corps has a long and storied history with the bird they affectionately call the "Phrog." More than four decades have passed since the CH-46A Sea Knight entered the Corps' arsenal, and now 49 years later, the birds will be resting their wings as their last flights come to an end as the Corps transitions to the MV-22 Osprey.

Pilots of this aircraft believe it to be one of the most reliable aircraft the Corps has used, but with the advancement in aircraft technology and today's demanding, ever-changing battlespace, it is losing its spot as the go-to aircraft.

The Marines have been using variations of the CH-46 helicopter since the Vietnam era, where its history of troop and cargo transport began. As a purely defensive platform, its mission is taking Marines to the battle as well as conducting other assault support such as combat resupply, aerial reconnaissance,

community for almost 50 years, said Master Sgt. Lewis Young, maintenance chief, HMM-364, 15th MEU.

It has been used to conduct missions in such auspicious places as Danang, Khe Sahn and Saigon, and following Vietnam, they were used to evacuate Marines from Grenada and Beirut and flew missions in the Persian Gulf, Bosnia, Kuwait and more recently in Iraq and Afghanistan, where the 46 squadrons conducted thousands of casualty evacuations of Marines wounded in action.

"The versatility of (Phrog) is one of its best attributes," said Young. "It covers a wide spectrum of missions from aerial reconnaissance to (casualty evacuations) to assault support and can land almost anywhere."

The CH-46 got its nickname "Phrog" because of its appearance.

As it lands, the aft landing gear sits lower, so it looks like it's squatting and the chin bubble windows go up to a point on both sides, so it looks like it's smiling.



CPL. JOHN ROBBART III

when it comes time to make the transition to the newer, faster MV-22.

The Table of Operation/Table of Equipment for the new MV-22 squadrons was matched as closely as possible to mirror that of the CH-46 squadrons, so many enlisted crewmembers will simply transition to the new platform.

However, they also have the option to conduct a lateral move through Headquarters Marine Corps, just as any Marine choosing to change occupational specialties.

Pilots can submit requests to the transition board, which establishes the eligibility criteria for a limited number of pilot positions.

The board will match up pilots with the need of the Corps. Some of the pilots for the MV-22 will automatically transition to the new aircraft and some will be selected by the board.

If a pilot is not chosen to automatically transition or selected by the board they will no longer be in a flight status and can choose to conduct a lateral move as well.

"It's a transition to a new airframe, so there are some challenges that come with that.

In this case, it's particularly challenging given that it's a slightly different flight regime with a tilt rotor aircraft," said Field. "From the piloting perspective, though, flying an airplane is still flying an airplane, so there are certain skills that transfer over like navigation, communication and air sense."

Marines from HMM-364 (Rein.), currently assigned to the 15th MEU, are looking forward to the transition to the new aircraft, but reminisce fondly of their great history as a Phrog squadron.

The unit has been active for more than 50 years, even before the introduction of the CH-46.

Prior to 1964, the unit was a UH-34

helicopter squadron that had the same troop transportation mission.

Pilots, maintenance crew and crewmen of the Phrog believe the transition to the technologically advanced Osprey is a huge move for Marine aviation as it retires these aircraft.

"These 46s have been around since Vietnam," said Leggett. "Not just the model, but the actual airframe. These are the helicopters that lifted Marines in casevacs."

However, it's not just today's Marines who have a soft spot for these aircraft.

Field tells of being at static displays during air shows and watching Vietnam veterans look at the bureau number (vehicle identification number for aircraft) and realize it was the exact aircraft that lifted them from dangerous zones.

Staff Sgt. Aaron Beltram, maintainer, HMM 364, 15th MEU, has a similar experience.

"One of the aircraft we had in my last squadron was the exact helicopter my father was shot down in during Vietnam," said Beltram. "It was a little strange to be flying in to combat in the exact same helicopter my dad did years before me."

While the Osprey is able to get more Marines, further distance, in a shorter time, Marines from the 46 community are sad to see it put to rest.

Field hopes the Marine Corps can communicate to the public what a momentous event it is to have this aircraft retired.

"Aircraft come and go, we transition and modernize our fleets all the time across the services, but nowhere has a single airframe (helicopter) been used for so long and been involved in so many different operations," said Field. "It's safe to say it has seen service on every continent and all major operations and missions the Marine Corps has taken part in since Vietnam."



CPL. BOBBY J. GONZALEZ

casualty medical evacuation and acting as a command and control platform.

The first model of the twin-turbine, tandem rotor Sea Knight was designed for the Marine Corps in 1961 as a medium assault transport helicopter and made its first flight in 1962.

Although it wasn't until 1964, during the Vietnam War, that it began its military service carrying troops and cargo to and from Navy ships in the China Sea.

However, the first model, the CH-46A, didn't have enough power or a reliable enough transmission to handle the harsh combat conditions it faced.

These problems led to advancements of the CH-46D in late 1967, which showcased a more powerful transmission and lighter, stronger rotor blades, which allowed it to climb faster than its predecessor or the UH-1.

From 1968-1971 the Corps received the upgraded CH-46F, which included improvements in avionics and all-weather performance, a better navigation system and three M-2 .50-caliber machine guns.

It quickly became the Marine Corps' main airframe in Vietnam, being used in airmobile assault, logistics and combat support as well as medical evacuation and combat search and rescue roles. It wasn't until the mid-1990s the current version, the CH-46E was put in to use.

The Sea Knight has earned its place in Marine Corps history.

It has been the workhorse of the rotary

It has an average capacity of 12 combat loaded Marines and 4,000 pounds of cargo.

Its flight distance is dependent on cargo weight, winds and fuel, said Sgt. Maj. Derek Leggett, sergeant major, HMM-364 (Rein.), 15th MEU.

According to Maj. Heath Jameson, CH-46 pilot, HMM-364, 15th MEU, not only is the aircraft exceptionally reliable, but should maintenance become necessary, it is incredibly easy to repair as well.

Because it has been around so long, it has a very mature supply system, making it possible to get the bird back in the air as quickly as possible.

Not only is the bird extremely effective and easy to maintain, but its safety record is among the best in any type model series in the Marine Corps right now, said Lt. Col. John M. Field, commanding officer, HMM-364 (Rein.), 15th MEU, adding the success and safety of the aircraft is attributed to the fact that it has been used for such a long period of time.

For most of its service, the 46 community boasted approximately 145 Phrogs spread throughout 17 (15 active, 2 reserve) squadrons. Today, however, as the Corps conducts a transition to the MV-22 Osprey and closes in on the transition completion date of October 2015, the number of squadrons has decreased to 5 (4 active, 1 reserve), with only approximately 60 birds left in service.

Marines who hold military occupational specialties in the 46 community have options



CPL. JOHN ROBBART III

[Top] A CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter with HMM 364 (Rein.), 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, hovers above the water as Marines with Kilo Company, Battalion Landing Team 3/5, 15th MEU, conduct helo casting exercises at Arta Beach, Djibouti, Feb. 11. The helicopter was conducting exercises as part of sustainment training during the MUE's Western Pacific Deployment 12-02. The 15th MEU is deployed as part of the USS Peleliu Group, and is scheduled to complete its eight-month deployment and return to Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton Sept. 13.

[Above, left] Marines with Lima Company, BLT 3/5, 15th MEU, exit a CH-46E Sea Knight during Exercise Red Reef 13, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Jan. 7. Red Reef is a bilateral amphibious exercise between the 15th MEU and Saudi forces that focuses on expanding levels of cooperation, enhancing mutual maritime capabilities and promoting long-term regional stability and interoperability between U.S. forces and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

[Above, right] A CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter with HMM 364 (Rein.), 15th MEU, prepares to land at Arta Beach, Djibouti, Feb. 11.

You Tube

Hey Combat Center fans –
Spread the word!
The Combat Center has its
own YouTube channel.
Find it at
<http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>.

CLB-7, from A1

Hay III, CLB-7. “We were the main effort for support.”

The Desert Scimitar exercise came at a unique time for CLB-7. The unit recently received new Marines who have never been to the training areas aboard the Combat Center. Leaders with CLB-7 saw Desert Scimitar as positive experience to prepare for the battalion’s upcoming deployment early next year.

“We have a lot of new inbound Marines fresh out of school,” said Gunnery Sgt. Michael Ramirez, company gunnery sergeant for Headquarters & Services Company. “A lot of these kids have never been to the field. They don’t know how to operate in a field environment.

“It’s kind of a rude awakening for some of the new Marines coming in, but overall, these Marines did a fantastic job,” Ramirez added.

The Marines of CLB-7 used the exercise as an opportunity for mentorship and passing guidance to the younger Marines.

“It was a great experience for everybody,” Ramirez added. “Everybody played a role in either mentoring these new Marines, giving these Marines responsibility and teaching these Marines what they need to know from their job to hygiening out in the field, just mentally dealing with the hardships that they are not use to like not being able to talk to their family members or friends due to cell phone reception. The field teaches the Marines a lot.”

“It was a great opportunity for some of these younger Marines to learn how the battalion functions and learn more about their jobs and start networking with different units out here,” Ramirez added.

The Marines of CLB-7 remained busy and shared late nights in the field with training units, but maintained their hunger for knowledge.

“The thing that stood out to me the most is how much more the Marines enjoy realistic training,” Ramirez said. “We would throw scenarios at the Marines every day, it was pretty legit and the Marines loved it. All the late hours and sacrifices paid off.”

EXFOB, from A1

“Solar panels are coming a long way,” King added. “They have gotten into more flexible designs and lighter packaging. Panels are only so efficient and there has been a lot of work towards getting the individual cells to work better, the solar panels to work better.”

Due to the ExFOB experimentation, multiple systems have been developed and sent to combat with Marines, and others are in the testing process in the Middle East.

“Since ExFOB has started, there has been four systems fielded,” King said. “There have been some

other experimental systems that we found in ExFOB, had them tested and sent them into country to have them tested.”

The Marine Corps is continuously seeking to improve combat readiness, this includes improving the gear and equipment Marines use on the battlefield

“The Commandants vision is 20/25, ‘The only thing on the battlefield I want running on fuel is our vehicles’ and the Expeditionary Energy Office and MCWL are aggressively working toward that goal,” King said.

For photos of the ExFOB event, visit the Combat Center’s Facebook site at <https://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>.

For a few experiments featured at the ExFOB, see page A6 and A7



CHAPLAIN, from A1

ter relief response,” Kibben said. “It was incumbent on us as religious ministry teams to understand our ministry role for HADR’s.

“It’s a different form of ministry,” Kibben said. “For those of you that have been in the Navy prior to 2000, you know that all we talked about was noncombatant evacuation operations, we talked about tsunami relief and we talked about humanitarian assistance. That was our bread and butter. That’s where we find ourselves now.”

3RD LAR, from A1

Co. A, 3rd LAR. “While we were out there we observed fires and facilitated to disrupt the enemy reconnaissance.”

The battalion’s mission during the exercise was unlike their routine training aboard the Combat Center. The coordination between the many units involved in Desert Scimitar presented them with an opportunity to better understand their role in a bigger plan.

“It allows Marines who don’t normally get to see

the big picture and understand what’s going on at the higher level,” Ableson said. “It provides the opportunity to bring in young Marines, who aren’t normally exposed to this level of planning and detail, and shows them what’s going on.”



Afterwards, 3rd LAR continued in their mission to secure various regimental objectives throughout the Combat Center training areas. They supported the various regiments in their mission until the conclusion of the large scale exercise May 5.

Marines with 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion assisted with 1st Marine Division’s Desert Scimitar training exercise from April 30 to May 5.

CPL. ALI AZIMI

RTAMS, from A1

Mark Carrington, officer in command, RTAMS. “The Marines and civilians here work together to do just about everything that is asked of us.”

The unit is made up of eight civilians and anywhere from 30 to 40 Marines at a given time. Marines get transferred through the Fleet Assistance Program and work for approximately six months at RTAMS. The Marines who serve with RTAMS come from all over the Marine Corps.

“We have to sometimes go back into the impact areas that have been shot with over 250 mortar rounds and pull out the materials,” Carrington said. “We also have to reconstruct impact areas for the next unit coming through to train. On top of that, we maintain the roads the units drive on once they go out to train.”

Range Training Area Maintenance Section is responsible for most of the training area aboard the Combat Center. The unit maintains training areas, facilities and ranges and also provides construction and in support of all training. RTAMS also does improvements to new or existing ranges.

Maintaining training areas includes cleaning them and handling everything organic to the desert. The unit also handles taking care of everything not organic to the desert.

“The desert would be annihilated with trash if we didn’t do our jobs,” Carrington said. “We pick up everything from snakes to shells of the rounds the Marines fire. We want the environment to be as safe as possible for the unit maintaining the area and for the units using the area for training.”

According to Carrington, the unit has many missions aboard the Combat Center but accomplishing these missions in a safely manner is very important. RTAMS is the reason Marines safely get around the Combat Center training areas and can safely participate in training. They accept requests from units for specialized training or construction of targets. They also ensure units receive the highest quality training possible.

“We have to make sure these Marines get good training so they can implement it overseas,” Clark said. “Marines are always going to fight and train and we will be here to give them most realistic and challenging experiences. We are here for them.”

EXFOB

THE FUTURE OF THE CORPS

PHOTOS AND STORY BY CPL SARAH DIETZ

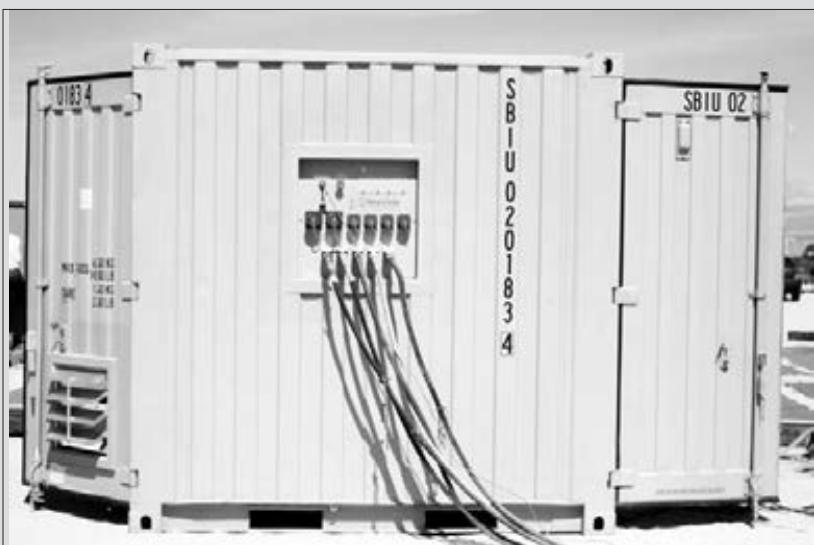
The annual Experimental Forward Operating Base showcases innovative military technologies. These are a few of the featured systems.

MARINE AUSTERE PATROLLING SYSTEM

The Marine Austere Patrolling System, developed by Naval Service Warfare Center Dahlgren Division, Va., Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, DC., and the ExFOB Team, combines two critical capabilities; wearable power generation and individual water purification - in one integrated, wearable solution. This integrated solution reduces the quantity and type of spare batteries that must be carried, and enables Marines to harvest energy and purify water while on the move. MAPS is comprised of the following 4 component systems:

- . Power-management and distribution system
- . Flexible batteries that conform to bodies
- . High efficiency PV solar panels
- . Individual water filtration system

The ExFOB Team recently trained Marines with 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, in preparation for a battalion field exercise in July 2013. 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, will receive training on the system before conducting unit training at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., during 2013.



60 kW MICROGRID SYSTEM

The 60 kW Microgrid System, developed by Princeton Power Systems, is equipped and designed for microgrid applications, supporting the U.S. military's goal of reducing diesel fuel consumption, maintenance costs, and increasing power quality to all loads. The power electronics not only convert direct current from the batteries to alternating current, but do so in a manner that emulates a generator. Using proprietary control algorithms, the output exhibits mechanical inertia when turned on and a frequency drop when presented with an increased load. The system can seamlessly integrate multiple sources of energy, such as multiple generators, solar, wind, and a local grid but also be able to either add power to an established grid or from the grid itself. PPS 60kW Microgrid system is exceptionally suited for military FOBs.



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MCAGCC
facebook page at
<http://www.youtube.com/CombatCenterPAO>



CONTINGENCY BASE-EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Contingency Base-Emergency Management System, produced by Army Logistics Innovation Agency, is a program where servicemembers can manage the energy use and acquire metered data within the base camp. Additionally, operations and maintenance efforts benefit due to reduced equipment run-time, improved asset visibility, and through facilitation of condition-based maintenance. When mature, CB-EMS will provide a flexible, scalable, configurable solution for monitoring, metering and controlling contingency base energy.

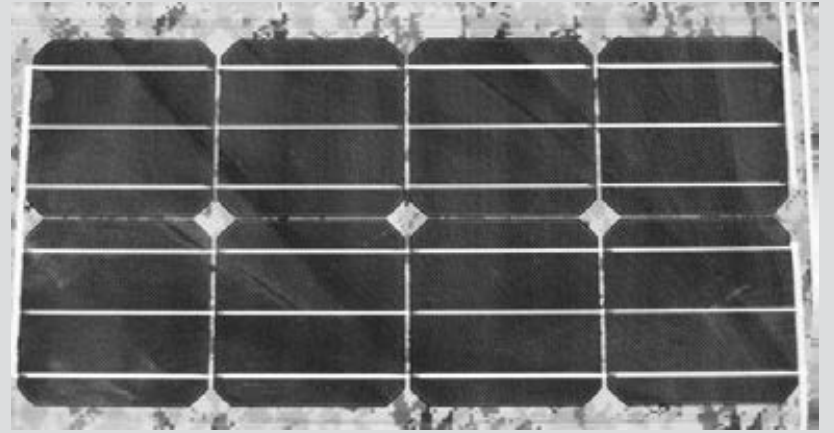
GROUND RENEWABLE EXPEDITIONARY ENERGY NETWORK SYSTEM

The Ground Renewable Expeditionary Energy Network System (GREENS), Solar Portable Alternative Communications Energy System (SPACES), and LED Lights were demonstrated at the first ExFOB in March 2010 and are now in use by service members.

GREENS is a solar power system that provides 300W continuous power for small unit, forward deployed operations. GREENS has enabled Marines to operate austere patrol bases entirely on renewable energy. Marines have also used GREENS with High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, G-Based Operational Surveillance System, and M777 systems to reduce fuel and maintenance requirements. A next generation of GREENS, which integrates a 1 kW back-up generator and reduces solar weight density by 50 percent and solar aerial density by 10 percent, is currently in development.

SPACES is a lightweight, portable, renewable energy system designed to power platoon and squad size units operating in remote locations. Marines use SPACES to recharge batteries that power communications equipment like SATCOM radios, reducing the number of batteries carried on extended patrol.

LED light sets for medium soft shelters and general purpose use are 30 percent more efficient than traditional fluorescent lights. Marines in theater light their tents with these systems to keep power requirements at a minimum. The GREENS, SPACES and LED Lights were developed by the ExFOB Team.



SOLAR STIK TWIN-3kW HYBRID SYSTEM

The Solar Stik twin-3kW Hybrid System, developed by Solar Stik, is a powerful modular power platform that can be rapidly tailored to mission requirements and operational environment. Using twin generators, it is able to provide and ensure uninterrupted power up to 6kW. The system weighs roughly 660 lbs. Additionally, the combined fuel consumption of two-3 kW is the consumption rate of a single 5kW while providing 25 percent more useable power.

This system provides rugged, autonomous power while providing a 'back up source' of power in the eventuality of a failure. The twin-3kW Hybrid System has been deployed in a fully-operational version using alternate solar power generators.



PREHISTORICart

The Combat Center's protected petroglyphs

Story and photos by
Cpl. William J. Jackson

The Combat Center is home to the Foxtrot Petroglyph Preserve, located in the Lava Training Area, is listed on the National Register of Historical Places and is protected from destruction or development. Although the Combat Center houses many prehistoric art panels, the Foxtrot is the best known.

The Foxtrot site contains nearly 2,000 petroglyphs and some depictions are an estimated 10,000 years old. The etchings are created by rubbing or scratching at the surface of a rock with another rock, exposing a lighter surface.

"The Foxtrot Petroglyph Site is perhaps the best-known archeological site aboard the Combat Center, and the most mysterious," said Nick Chamberlain, cultural resource specialist with Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs. "Composed of nearly 500 rock art panels, the site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, America's official list of historic properties most worthy of saving."

In 1973, the Marine Corps recognized the area's rich potential for preserving cultural history and it has been off-limits to live-fire maneuvers ever since.

Today, as with most rock art sites around the world, the greatest threat to this site comes from intentional vandalism, Chamberlain explained.

He also said the Combat Center was home to Native American tribes for nearly 10-thousand years and that based on carbon-dating sites where tools, weapons and fire pits were found, the rock art could very well be from the same era.

The rock art includes bighorn sheep,

people and other designs made by the prehistoric natives. Red pictographs, or paintings, are also found throughout the Combat Center's training areas as well as Foxtrot. The red pigment used was made from a mineral called hematite and images were painted by using fingers or brushes.

"With rock art, like those found at Foxtrot, there's no real way to tell the date, but based on the Carbon-14 dates of, say burn piles or other sites (around the Combat Center), we have an idea," Chamberlain said.

The prehistoric sites are home to images etched and painted onto stone by ancient Native American tribes like the Serrano, Chemehuevi, Cahuilla and Mohave tribes. The highly nomadic groups of people were responsible for the majority of the rock art that depict a unique, abstract and naturalistic portrayal of life, resulting in the images being referred to as rock art.

The natives used the Foxtrot site as a travel site, a site used for camping or hunting during their trips to different parts of the region. Their mobile lifestyle led to a shift in cultural beliefs and traditions and an ever-changing style of art.

While the petroglyphs continue to draw interest for NREA based on the cultural and historical data, they still retain their mystery. Some art is recognizable, like images of animals and stick figures of people, but there are many abstract images, which are simply shapes, unidentifiable even to the professionals.

For more information about the petroglyph sites contact the Archaeology and Paleontology Curation Center at 830-1196.



[Above] Native American tribes such as the Serrano, Chemehuevi, Cahuilla and Mohave were present in the area more than 10,000 years ago and were known for creating petroglyphs of local animals such as the desert tortoise.

[Left] A petroglyph at the Foxtrot Petroglyph Preserve, depicts a pregnant woman and is one of the 2,000 images found at the site. The images are estimated to be 10,000 to 12,000 years old.



4th grade teacher, Kathy Baucus, at Poplar Elementary in Fontana, Calif., instructed her students to create biographies and write poems about who their heroes are. Some wrote of their parents or the people who raised them. Others wrote of celebrities who are living a wealthy and famous life. But most of the children wrote of a Marine who died during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was a friend to the school. He was also Kathy Baucus' husband.

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya

WHAT'S A HERO?

How are they defined?

Does a hero give a person a sense of guidance in life or inspiration like the way a young athlete looks at their favorite player?

How big of an impact do they have to make in the world?

Does the hero have to be the strongest, fastest, or the bravest?

Kathy Baucus asked these questions to her 4th grade class. She asked them to write what defines a hero. She asked them to choose their hero. Kathy chose her father, someone who has always been there for her she said. He was there for her when her husband took her to prom. He was there for her when her husband joined the Marine Corps. He was there for her when her husband deployed to Iraq. He was there for her when her husband died on a mission.

Cpl. Phillip E. Baucus died serving his country while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. Besides being Gung Ho about the Corps, Baucus also enjoyed spending time at Poplar Elementary School. To honor him, they planted a tree. It was something that would grow and sink deep roots into school grounds and always give shade to the children. Something to watch over them. Something like a hero.

The Hero, the Protector, the Defender

Cpl. Phillip E. Baucus was 24 when he joined the Marine Corps in September 2002. He enjoyed his job, he enjoyed being around Marines. His job was a scout for a Light Armored Vehicle. The LAV 25 is a 13 ton, six-wheeled armored vehicle with a M242 Bushmaster 25 mm chain gun. And when the vehicle can't traverse the terrain, the scouts are called.

“Heroes don't have to be Superman, they just have to want to help and change other people.”

— Francisco

Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalions are mobilized units that conduct reconnaissance missions ahead of battalion landing teams or infantry forces. They gather intelligence about the size, location, strengths or any other requested information about the enemy. There are three crewmen aboard LAVs and anywhere from two to four scouts. The crewmen are mainly in charge of the LAV while scouts can dismount the vehicle and do further reconnaissance.

Baucus was attached to 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion aboard the Combat Center. Baucus deployed to Iraq in 2004 and then deployed again in 2006 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In July of 2006, Baucus was manning a roadside checkpoint and stopped a truck that contained an IED. The truck exploded killing Baucus and another Marine manning the checkpoint. It caused a nearby shelter to collapse housing other Marines, but since it was stopped beforehand, it caused less damage and saved many Marine lives.

He received a Bronze Star with a Combat V for valor for his actions.

Some would call that heroic.

Remembering the Fallen

The Marines with 3rd LAR have regularly visited Kathy and the Poplar school children since 2006. The Marines painted murals of an American flag and Poplar kids playing sports on walls around the school. The Marines also participated in community clean up, decorated benches, and even planted a garden.

“It makes me happy to see the Marines and children interacting,” Kathy said. “Nothing is better than seeing a Marine walking on a field with tons of kids behind him waiting to play. Children need a role model in life; they need a person to get them going in the right direction.”



A statue of a Kevlar helmet, boots and a rifle were constructed under a tree that was planted by 3rd LAR in 2010 in honor of Baucus.

“(Baucus) loved coming to the school and taking the kids outside to read or play with them,” Kathy said. “He was very involved in my classroom and now his unit is too. The Marines are family to me and the children love when they come to visit. The fact the Marines come out and speak to children makes a world of difference. The children get bored with seeing teachers and parents all day so when an outside source comes in, they are all about it. Especially when it is someone like a Marine.”

During a rededication for the memorial, Kathy's class read their version of a hero. The ceremony also honored local heroes. The heroes the children chose around the community varied from military veterans and police officers to the parents and teachers who are involved with the school every day. The children sang a song for the heroes and took pictures next to the tree and statue. The children also spent time with the heroes they invited after the ceremony.

“The children don't only need a person to look up to, they are looking for that person,” said Kathy. “When the Marines come, the children follow their every move.”

“Heroes don't have to be Superman,” said

Francisco, one of Kathy's 4th grade students. “They just have to want to help and change other people.”

Kids' Perspective

The school children's assignment for the rededication ceremony was to explain what a hero was to them. They wrote poems about who their heroes are. The following are excerpts from their poems:

A hero to me is some who is brave and bold. They are also nice to everybody. It feels good to talk to Marines. It is awesome when we get to play with them. They helped us do the community clean up. I got to work on the garden with them. The Marines tell us it is hard and complicated to do their job. They always tell us to pay attention in school so we can be good at our jobs like they are. All of the Marines are heroes to us. It doesn't have to be just one. — Francisco, 10

A hero is someone who encourages you to do the right thing. They also are someone who wants to help you with anything you need help with. My hero would be Cpl. Phillip Baucus. He stopped a truck to save all of his friends. It is so much when they visit us. It feels good to spend time with heroic people who help our country. They talk about how it feels to be a Marine. They also tell me stories about when they were in a different country. The Marines tell me their job is complicated but it is a lot of fun at the same time. — Abel, 10

A hero is somebody who helps everybody, not just one person. He also encourages everyone to do the right thing. My dad is my hero because he shows me right from wrong. He is the one who I look up to everyday. I get really happy when Marines come to visit. It makes me very proud. I love painting and I got to paint the walls with some of the countries heroes. — Emily, 10

A hero is someone who inspires you to do what they are doing or to make you better at what you want to

“He wouldn't want the children to look up to him as a hero, he was a very humble guy.”

— Kathy Baucus

do. My hero is my mom. She helps me with everything and inspires me to do better. They save lives here and in other countries. Of course I would be happy when they come play with us. I get to play with them and paint with them. They talk about how they love their families too. All of the Marines are heroes to us. It doesn't have to be just one. — Erika, 9

Her Hero

“A hero to me is somebody who touches a person's life,” said Kathy. “It can be anybody who makes a change directly or indirectly.”

Baucus' parents owned a ranch and when Kathy was in elementary school her class would sometimes take field trips there to see the baby lambs. Kathy never saw Baucus at the ranch, but she knew he lived there. Kathy met Baucus in 6th grade while taking orchestra classes. She played viola and he played violin for a little while and then switched to bass.

Years later, they would go to prom together.

After they got married, she got a job teaching at Poplar Elementary and Baucus would visit the school where he would play and talk with the school children. An avid listener was a quality that attracted Kathy to her husband.

“My husband listened to what people had to say,” said Kathy. “He was the rational one, no matter what was going on, he would sit down and listen. He would love the fact the tree planted in his honor will provide shade for the children. He would always take the children out to a shaded area to read to them or listen to them read.”

Cpl. Phillip E. Baucus didn't set out to be a hero. To his wife, he was her husband. To his friends he was a Marine. To the school children, he was a friend.

“He wouldn't want the children to look up to him as a hero,” said Kathy. “He was a very humble guy.”

Most heroes are.



Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Thursday: Karaoke, 8:30 - 10 p.m.
 Friday: DJ Gjettblaque, 8 - 11 p.m.
 Saturday: DJ Gjettblaque, 8 - 11 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Thursday: Warrior Night, 4:30 - 9 p.m.
 Friday: Karaoke Night, 6 - 9 p.m.

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Monday: Steak night, 4:30 - 8 p.m.
 Wednesday: Wing Special Wednesday, 4:30 - 9 p.m.
 Thursday: Free Happy Hour Food, 5 - 7 p.m.
 Friday: Steak Night, 4:30 - 8 p.m.
 Friday: DJ Gixxa, 8 - 11 p.m.

Combat Center Officers' Club

Thursday: Free Happy Hour Food, 5 - 7 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 to 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.

Ragtime

When: May 3 - June 1
 Where: Theatre 29
 73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
 For more information call 316-4151
 or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

Lower Desert

Huey Lewis and the News

American pop rock band performs
 When: 9:00 p.m., Friday, May 17
 Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
 49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
 For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit
<http://www.morongocasinosort.com>.

Il Divo

Crossover quartet performers
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, May 18
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
 84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio, Calif.
 For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit
<http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Scotty McCreery

Country musician performs
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, June 1
 Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
 46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
 For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit
<http://www.spotlight29.com>

Jewel

Folk singer performs
 When: 9 p.m., June 7
 Where: Agua Caliente Casino, Resort and Spa
 32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage, Calif.
 For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit
<http://hotwatercasino.com>

Sunset Cinema

Friday, May 10

6 p.m. – Tyler Perry's Temptation, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. – The Host, Rated PG-13
 Midnight – Olympus Has Fallen, Rated R

Saturday, May 11

10:30 a.m. – **Free Matinee**, Gnomeo and Juliet, Rated G
 12:30 p.m. – The Croods, Rated PG
 3 p.m. – G.I. Joe Retaliation, 3-D, Rated PG-13
 6 p.m. – Jurassic Park, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. – Olympus Has Fallen, Rated R
 Midnight – Admission, Rated PG-13

Two boys, a boat, a murderer and a terrific tale of bruised, broken love



COURTESY PHOTO

NEIL POND

"Mud"

Starring: Matthew McConaughey, Tye Sheridan & Reese Witherspoon
 Directed by Jeff Nichols
 Rated PG-13, 130 min.

Two adventurous young boys come across a scruffy vagrant living in a boat in a tree, and become involved in a plot involving murder, obsession and revenge.

But this is mainly a story about love. "Mud," a film-fest favorite now going mainstream with a strong cast mixing recognizable stars with fresh faces, is a terrific story oozing Southern pulp and personality, shot on location in Arkansas.

Tye Sheridan, who played one of the young sons in "The Tree of Life" (2011), is Ellis, a 14-year-old river rat who along with his buddy Neckbone (Jacob Lofland) comes upon an amazing find: a flood-stranded wooden boat on an uninhabited island in the middle of the Mississippi River.

Just as they claim it as their own, they're surprised to meet the squatter who's already made it his home. Mud (Matthew McConaughey) has a pack a cigarettes, a pistol tucked into his pants, boots with crosses in their heels, and

wild stories about Mexicans, Indians, wolf's eyes and snakes—and a price on his head for the murder of a man who was abusing the only woman he's ever loved.

That woman, a honky-tonk angel named Juniper (Reese Witherspoon), is supposedly coming to reunite with Mud on the island. Ellis and Neckbone agree to help Mud get his boat, and his plan, afloat before the family of the man he killed can get to him.

"Mud" feels like a movie adapted from a book or a great American short story, but it was actually based on the original screenplay written by its Arkansas-born director, Jeff Nichols, and it marks only his third movie, following his other highly praised film-festival hits, "Shotgun Stories" and "Take Shelter." Judging from these three movies, Nichols looks to be well on his way to becoming a major talent.

For all its sweaty, swamp-adventure overtones, "Mud" is actually a tale of bruised romance filtered through several fractured prisms. The word "love" probably comes up at least two dozen times, especially as Ellis tries to sort out the confusing signals he gets about what it is, how it feels, and how people supposedly in it treat each other.

Ellis' bickering parents (Sarah Paulson and Ray McKinnon, two fine character actors with more than 120 credits between them) are going through a divorce; Neckbone, whose mother and father are both out of the picture, lives with his promiscuous uncle Galen (Michael Shannon; too bad there's not much more of him here); Mud and his childhood crush, Juniper, could be subjects in a textbook on toxic co-dependence.

Jo Don Baker is the patriarch of the death squad hell-bent on finding Mud, and Sam Shepherd plays Ellis' broody across-the-river neighbor, a widower whose past father-figure relationship with Mud is a matter of mystery, if not larger significance.

And all this is woven around Ellis' attempts to woo a crush of his own, an older girl (Bonnie Sturdivant) who's initially impressed with the hot-tempered stand he makes for her honor.

Ellis doesn't have one example anywhere of a positive role model. Like Neckbone's uncle Galen, using a homemade lighted diving helmet to grope through the murky clouds of silt as he works the river for his livelihood of mus-sels, everyone in "Mud" has trouble seeing anything clearly as they stumble around in their own sludge when it comes to matters of the heart.

"The river brings a lot of trash down it," Galen cautions Ellis. "You gotta learn what's worth keepin' and what's worth lettin' go."

This nugget of a film, a modern-day Huck Finn adventure pulled along in the mesmerizing current of a crime yarn and anchored to a teenager's heartbreaking quest for emotional moorings, is definitely worth plucking from the river of summer movies. "Mud" is a keeper.

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50 years later Vietnam vet awarded Bronze Star

By Sgt. Jeffrey Cordero
9th Marine Corps District

Nearly 50 years separate his actions in Vietnam from his award, but the wait was well worth it. Family, friends and dozens more gathered at the 24th Marine Regiment drill hall May 4 to witness the awarding of the Bronze Star Medal to former Pfc. Robert L. Rimpson.

The award was presented for combat actions on Aug. 18, 1965 in support of Operation Starlite in the Republic of Vietnam. Although that day was almost half a century ago, Rimpson, a Kansas City, Mo., native, remembers it like it was yesterday.

"I've seen a lot of misery and pain in my life and that was the most heartache I've ever had; something I put behind me for a while."

- Robert L. Rimpson

"That day makes me cry," Rimpson said. "I've seen a lot of misery and pain in my life and that was the most heartache I've ever had; something I put behind me for a while."

Rimpson, who was 19 at the time, and his fellow squad members advanced on an entrenched enemy near An Cu'ong village when suddenly they received intense small arms fire. He and members of his squad, to include Sgt. Robert O'Malley, his squad leader, advanced in an effort to clear the trench line. Rimpson assaulted the trench line with rifle and grenade fire. O'Malley was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions that day.

After clearing the trench line, the squad moved to assist a nearby unit, Rimpson, who suffered shrapnel wounds from enemy mortar fire, moved forward with fellow squad members to assist in moving wounded personnel to a helicopter landing zone for evacuation, according to the award citation. During

this time, Rimpson delivered accurate suppressive fire from his grenade launcher on the enemy position, which in turn enabled the helicopters to land and evacuate casualties.

"When we hit the trench line, we opened fire to save my brothers from harm," Rimpson modestly recalls of the day-long engagement, which saved several lives.

Rimpson was recommended for an award while he was still on active duty, but once off active duty lost contact with Marine Corps officials and didn't hear much more about his award. He was once again recommended for an award by retired Col. John A. Kelly in May 2010. It was further approved by

Headquarters Marine Corps to be awarded in February. Although more than 40 years after his service, Rimpson is proud to wear the award and be a part of the Marine Corps brotherhood.

"I couldn't believe it," said Rimpson, surprised when he learned of the approval. "I've never been more proud to be a Marine."

According to the Department of Defense Manual, the Bronze Star Medal is awarded to any person who, while serving in the capacity with the U.S. Armed Forces, distinguishes himself or herself by heroic or meritorious achievement or service... while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States. Rimpson is authorized to wear the Combat "V" device, denoting personal hazard during direct participation in combat operations.

Rimpson is currently a resident of Kansas City and also wears a Purple Heart for wounds he sustained during the Vietnam War.

ACROSS THE CORPS



SGT. JEFFREY CORDERO

Col. Charles Sides, commanding officer, 24th Marine Regiment, presents former Pfc. Robert L. Rimpson the Bronze Star with Combat "V" device May 4, during an awards ceremony at the 24th Regiment Drill Hall.



Marines earn increased opportunities, income

Cpl. Daniel Wetzel
Headquarters Marine Corps

The U.S. military relies on linguists for operational missions with most notable being the Navajo Code Talkers during World War II.

Currently, some jobs in the military, like cryptologic linguist and human intelligence collector, require the use of a foreign language.

The military provides foreign language proficiency pay to those that use another language for their work or if they just speak it on occasion. They can be called upon for that ability wherever and whenever their skills are needed.

Marines must first take the Defense Language Proficiency Test to determine if they are qualified to receive foreign language pay. The test is comprised of three parts: reading, comprehending and speaking, and is available at most base education centers. Scoring in each section ranges from 0 to 3. Normally, the speaking portion of the test is omitted as service members only need to pass two portions of the test to be certified.

In preparation for the test, Marines can familiarize themselves with different

language materials.

“One can study a number of ways from visiting the Defense Language Institute site and using their study guides, to using foreign language software provided by the Marine Corps,” said AnneMarie Guthrie, test examiner at Joint Base Fort Myer Henderson Hall, Arlington, Va.

Marines who don't speak a second language can take the Defense Language Aptitude Battery to see how easily he/she can learn another language.

“This test is used to gain admittance to the Defense Language Institute and to see what languages one might be able to learn,” Guthrie said.

The range of Foreign Language Proficiency Pay depends on Marines' test scores. Most foreign languages pay \$200 to \$400, and Marines can receive pay for multiple languages.

“A Marine can speak a million languages, but they can only get up to \$1,000 a month,” said Staff Sgt. Michael Lower, administrative specialist at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.

Qualifying in a language can provide Marines increased opportunities and income as long as they are available wherever and whenever needed.

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