



THE FORGOTTEN BATTALION

STORIES AND PHOTOS BY
Kelly O'Sullivan



"Forgotten Battalion" Marines take a picture under their banner during their 27th annual reunion Sept. 7. See "Banner" below for more information on the banners origin.

WWII MARINES REUNITE AT THE COMBAT CENTER

When the artillerymen of H&S, G, H and I batteries, 3rd Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment sailed from San Diego on July 1, 1942, headed for war in the South Pacific, some figured they'd be home in time to ring in the New Year.

Cpl. Rolland Jay "Pat" Patrick of H Battery, 3/10, was among the believers. The 17-year-old who grew up in Oklahoma and Texas had joined the Marine Corps just 363 days earlier and had been training with the year-and-a-half-old 75mm pack howitzer battalion since leaving boot camp.

"I was still 16 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor" on Dec. 7, 1941, Patrick said Sept. 7 as he took a break from battalion reunion activities in Palm Springs. The following day, at the behest of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the U.S. Congress declared war on Japan. America's involvement

in World War II had officially begun.

Now 88 and retired from the oil industry after selling his company three years ago, the Liberal, Kan., resident shakes his head at the memory of the cocky young boot who was about to get the surprise of his life.

"We thought we'd go over, be there about six months and come back heroes," Patrick said. "We were on ship for 30 days before going ashore on Tulagi. That's when reality set in."

Reality was that 3/10 and its successor, the 2nd 155 Howitzer Battalion, — collectively known by its men as "The Forgotten Battalion" — would spend 34 months in continuous service in the Pacific Theater, racking up six battle stars supporting five

separate Marine divisions and several U.S. Army units during combat landings at Tulagi, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Guam and Iwo Jima.

The battalion wasted no time making history.



Ray Wilburn

See REUNION page A5

The Banner

Thanks to two C-47 Skytrain military transport planes and a train, the 2nd 155mm Howitzer Battalion's trip home from World War II in May 1945 took just fraction of the 3rd Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment's month-long voyage to the South Pacific nearly three years earlier.

Still, the flights from Guam to Hawaii to San Francisco and the train ride to San Diego with a stop in Los Angeles provided ample time for

Cpl. James Francavilla to put pen to canvas and memorialize the battalion's 34 months in the Pacific Theater.

Francavilla had worked as an artist before enlisting, so he had no trouble creating a colorful, well-styled banner to serve as a backdrop for Marine photographers making portraits of the returning warriors. A weathered newspaper clipping and a host of photos in battalion members' memorabilia col-

lections show different groups of smiling Marines seated in neat rows under the banner proclaiming "Forgotten Battalion returns!!"

When Francavilla brought the banner to the battalion's first reunion in 1987, he kicked off a tradition that continues to this day. Every year, battalion members sit together in neat rows beneath the canvas while family members line up like paparazzi hot on the heels of Hollywood stars

to take photographs.

When the original went missing one year, Francavilla created a new one. Since the artistic Marine's death in 2008, the battalion's surviving members keep a watchful eye on the banner.

"It's pretty special to all of us," said Jim Lieberknecht, who had never flown in a plane before hopping aboard that C-47 in Guam 68 years ago.

CG DINES WITH 'FORGOTTEN BATTALION'

STORY BY
Cpl. Ali Azimi

Nearly one dozen World War II veterans sat down to dinner with Maj. Gen. David H. Berger, Commanding General, Combat Center, during "The Forgotten Battalion's" 27th annual reunion dinner, Saturday.

The battalion was deployed to the Pacific during the island-hopping campaign for 34 continuous months. The battalion fired the first offense artillery round in WWII, earned six battle stars, supported five separate Marine division during combat operations and water landings in Tulagi, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Guam and Iwo Jima.

The battalion reunites every year to bring together more than just the Marines of the battalion. Family members of men that served in this unit, living and deceased, attended and were surrounded by the love and a support of The Forgotten Battalion family. This year, the day before the dinner, the Marines toured the Combat Center.

During the dinner, Berger spoke with both unit members and the family members, describing the experience as an honor.

"Joining you this evening is more of an honor, more of a privilege than you can imagine," Berger said. "Watching you all, listening to you all was really rewarding."

Berger went on to thank the families for the sacrifices they've made for the sake of the Marine Corps and how their strength was an invaluable asset.

After the dinner, Marines of The Forgotten Battalion presented Berger with an gift.

"It meant so much to us that the general with his busy (schedule), would take the time to honor us with his presence," said Sgt. Maj. Ray V. Wilburn (retired), a Forgotten Battalion Marine.

The gesture was reciprocated as Berger went around the room shaking the hands of each of the 'Forgotten Battalion' Marines and their families, passing along to them a challenge coin to remember him by.

"Tonight while we're having dinner, there are still about 7,000 Marines in Afghanistan. I remember that every night when I sit down to eat because we are able to enjoy a great meal," Berger said during his final remarks. "To see the shoulders we stand on in front of us is pretty humbling."

At the end of the evening, they bid farewell to each other and headed their separate ways, eagerly awaiting next year's reunion.

For more stories and information on "The Forgotten Battalion" visit the Combat Center homepage at 29palms.marines.mil

1st Female to CONQUER GRUELING course

STORY BY
Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez

History was made in the chilly, mountainous terrain of Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport when the first female Marine completed the Assault Climber's Course.

Cpl. Heather Redenius, combat engineer, 8th Engineer Support Battalion, began the course on August 12, 2013 and pushed through until its conclusion on September 4.

"Assault Climber's Course is a very challenging course that tests Marines mentally as well as physically," said Capt. Hunter Armour, unit training group instructor, MCMWTC. "Of the 36 Marines that started the course, 18 graduated."

According to Armour, the course tested Marines on the tying of knots, rope systems and climbing vertical and near vertical landscapes. During the course, the Marines conducted most of their training at Leavitt Training Area, which consists of multiple rock faces that range from approximately 25 to 50 feet in height.

"After running a physical fitness test, unadjusted for elevation, Marines are run through a series of classes, demonstrations, and periods of practical applications," Armour said. "Assault climbers are trained to be capable of influencing the battlefield in a unique way. They are taught to tie systems to cross gorges, water obstacles, package casualties, raise and lower

casualties over vertical and near vertical obstacles, establish lanes for Marines to overcome similar obstacles, and set retrievable rappels on such objectives."

"I volunteered for the course to branch out and learn something new," said Redenius, who traveled from Camp Lejeune, N.C. "It was very fast-paced, but I enjoyed every part. For me, the most challenging part was the climbs. We learned to use climbing equipment called 'cams' and 'nuts' to scale the sides of very high cliffs."

The practical application of using the climbing equipment culminated in the final events of the training course.

See CLIMBER page A5

PALM VISTA HOLDS PATRIOT'S DAY CEREMONY



STORY AND PHOTO BY
Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez

Marines with 1st Tank Battalion participated in a Patriot's Day memorial ceremony at Palm Vista Elementary School Sept. 11.

The ceremony marks 12 years passing since the fateful World Trade Center attacks in New York City; the Pentagon, Arlington County, Virginia; and United Flight 93 over Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Combat Center Marines, local police and firefighters were present at the ceremony to be thanked and honored for their contributions in keeping the United States safe at

home and abroad.

"I made a promise not to forget the events of September 11," said Cynthia McVay, principal, Palm Vista Elementary School. "My sincere thanks to you who represent their colleagues. You are all heroes."

After McVay's remarks, Sgt. Michael Flavin, tank crewman, 1st Tanks, and Cpl. Phillip Lim, tank crewman, 1st Tanks, made their way to the flagpole to raise the American flag while the National

See CEREMONY page A5

COMBAT CENTER SHOOTERS FACE OFF

The Combat Center is scheduled to host several shooting competitions open to Marines and sailors.

Who: Service members and DoD employees
What: Intramurals (Rifle and Pistol Competition)
When: Sept. 16 - Oct. 4
Where: MCAGCC Marksmanship Training Unit
Why: Enhance combat-marksmanship proficiency aboard the base.

In order to enhance combat-marksmanship proficiency aboard the base, the Combat Center is scheduled to host the Intramurals (Rifle and Pistol Competition) from Sept. 16 to Oct. 4 at the Combat Center's Marksmanship Training Unit. All Marines and sailors will have the opportunity to receive a Combat Marksmanship Course certification and annual rifle and pistol qualification for FY14.

Who: Anyone with base access
What: High Desert Shooting Club NRA High- Power and Long-Range Regional Match
When: Nov. 13 - 17
Where: MCAGCC Rifle Range 1
Why: Inspire interest and desire for self improvement in marksmanship.

In an effort to stimulate interest and desire for self improvement in marksmanship, the Combat Center will be hosting the High Desert Shooting Club, National Rifle Association High-Power and Long-Range Regional Match at the Marksmanship Training Unit. The goal is to enhance the proficiency of Marines in the use of small arms by refining precision marksmanship skills through advanced marksmanship training and competition.

For more information, please contact the Marksmanship Training Unit at 830-6700.

EAGLE EYES

Online reporting program targets suspicious activity

Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez
 Combat Correspondent

In today's world, many threats around us remain at large. However, the Corps is currently promoting a program that can help prevent these offenses. That program is called Eagle Eyes.

Eagle Eyes is a website designed to serve as a terrorism and terrorism-related crime "neighborhood watch" program created to promote community awareness and involvement. It enables service members on and off the Combat Center with the knowledge to identify preliminary indicators of a potential attack and report them.

"The purpose of Eagle Eyes is to ensure the community knows what to look for and how to report suspicious activity," said Michael Burns, Combat Center force protection supervisor, G-7 Mission Assurance. "With a well-informed community, terrorist or criminal acts can be deterred, detected, or defeated."

According to Burns, the Department of Homeland Security created the program to raise public awareness of indicators of terrorism and terrorism-related crimes, and to emphasize the importance of report-

ing suspicious activity to the proper authorities. Both the Marine Corps and Air Force use Eagle Eyes, which is similar to IWatch, a program used by the U.S. Army.

Through an Eagle Eyes report, we can go out and investigate suspicious individuals or activities, said Maj. Kim Keefer, Provost Marshal, Provost Marshal's Office.

For all those aboard the Combat Center, Eagle Eyes aims to enhance security awareness and improve the understanding of terrorist and criminal pre-attack surveillance and intelligence collection operations.

"It's a great tool," Keefer said. "(Eagle Eyes) comes down to someone seeing anything that seems suspicious or out of place, and reporting it."

Burns claims it is essential for everyone to understand that reports made on Eagle Eyes can really help prevent a terrorist or major criminal attack.

"With these additional 'eyes and ears' in and around the Combat Center, it could provide an increased level of situational awareness for our local law enforcement and Mission Assurance personnel," Burns said. "If you have a gut feeling that something seems out of place, click it and report it."



ATTENTION MARINES FROM LOUISIANA AND MISSISSIPPI:

Recruiting Station Baton Rouge is requesting Marines to participate in Recruiter Assistance at the following Recruiting Substations:

Alexandria, La: (318) 443-0408
 Baton Rouge, La: (225) 927-2842
 Gulfport, Miss: (228) 896-1195

Hammond, La: (985) 345-7227
 Hattiesburg, Miss: (601) 261-3488
 Jackson, Miss: (601) 353-2031

Lafayette, La: (337) 233-1454
 Lake Charles, La: (337) 433-9534
 New Orleans, La: (504) 466-1984

Shreveport, La: (318) 688-5893

 For more information call:
 (225) 928-0348



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<http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>



The Combat Center has its own Flickr photo and video streams. Find them at
<http://www.flickr.com/thecombatcenter>

LET'S MAKE A DEAL

- ACROSS**
1. "Wheel of Fortune" host Pat
 6. Fancy parties
 11. ___ Solo ("Star Wars" role)
 14. In unison
 15. Animal of the Andes
 16. Driving force
 17. Sun-Tzu's classic treatise
 19. Prepare to fire
 20. Space Shuttle org
 21. Alfalfa's sweetheart on "The Little Rascals"
 23. Slowpokes
 27. Overly formal
 29. Beatles song from "The White Album"
 30. Some Arabs
 32. Northern European language
 34. Run casually
 35. Lady's secret, perhaps
 38. Lacking life
 39. Word with mirror or graven
 41. Off in the distance
 42. Japanese currency
 43. Petty quarrel
 44. Type of kiss or pie
 46. Rulers of the heavens
 49. Exhausted
 50. Stop sign's shape
 52. Common cuisine
- DOWN**
1. Approached the bench?
 2. Fireplace bit
 3. Average guy
 4. Santa ___, CA
 5. Popcorn-to-be
 6. Like some magazine covers
 7. ___-Romeo (Italian car company)
 8. Alan Dershowitz's field
 9. Simon and Garfunkel's "I ___ Rock"
 10. Canned fish
 11. John Ritter TV show
 12. Good at gymnastics, maybe
 13. Desert wanderer
 18. Road gunk
 22. Will Smith role
 23. Watergate figure G. Gordon ___
 24. Not in the dark
 25. Bar order
 26. Flippant
 27. Big-city blight
 28. Sioux shelter
 31. Send to cloud nine
 33. Conscious of, slangily
 36. Chess and checkers, for two
 37. Wear away, as a coastline
 40. Principal
 41. In the same family tree
 43. Saw
 45. "Shaken, not ___" (James Bond line)
 47. Enjoy eggs
 48. Sportscaster's info
 50. Stout
 51. Comfy shoes
 53. Center
 55. Annoying type
 58. Mined material
 59. Sickly pale
 60. Lyricist Gershwin
 61. Like romantic lights
 62. Beaver Cleaver's exclamation
 63. Curvy letter

See answers on page B6

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

In Oceanside:
 - Angelo's Kars, 222 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054
 - Angelo's Kars, 226 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054

In San Diego:
 - Club Mustang, 2200 University Ave.
 - Club San Diego, 3955 Fourth St.
 - Get It On Shoppe, 3219 Mission Blvd.
 - Main Street Motel, 3494 Main St.
 - Vulcan Baths, 805 W. Cedar St.

In National City:
 - Dream Crystal, 15366 Highland Ave.
 - Sports Auto Sales, 1112 National City Blvd.

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

In Twentynine Palms:
 - Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Rd.
 - STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.
 - 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.
 - Whispering Palms Apts., 449 E. Arenas Road
 - NYPD Pizza, 260-262 N. Palm Canyon Drive

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

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Michael

Pittsburgh, Penn. Platoon Sergeant, 33

LOWE



> **Hockey players are** a special breed. We're a small, close-knit community. Much like the Marine Corps, the camaraderie is there.

> **Being able to find** fellow hockey players out here, little by little, from all over base, both Marine and sailor, has been an awesome opportunity.

> **When we first started recruiting**, we had difficulties finding guys. I sent flyers to a few commands, some people I knew in high places, and they got the word out. We got a few players from that.

> **Driving around base sometimes**, I look for cars with license plates from Minnesota or Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, somewhere I knew was a hockey hot bed. If I see them get out, I'll ask them if they play hockey. If I see some younger Marines with hockey-team shirts on, I'll stop and ask them.

> **It's a good feeling** to drive down the hill and we're all able to meet up and play hockey, laugh, joke and carry on. It's a good time.

> **We're in better shape** than some other teams in the league. We're more aggressive. We're a force to be reckoned with.

> **I would of never had this chance** back home in the reserves.

> **I'm trying to lay a foundation** for the team. I'm only here for a couple more months and I want to see more hockey players on base come together.

> **I've got a couple of guys**, and they would never come out and say it, but I think they aim for my head during practice. They shoot pretty high.

> **Sometimes the guys will** get into a breakaway competition and try out their new moves on me. Sometimes it'll work and sometimes it doesn't. For the most part, we're pretty loose. We just chill out, skate around and wait for the puck to drop.

> **During a game**, I'm always going through angles, where I need to be and squaring my body off to the puck. That way I can plan my move accordingly.

LOWE WILL COMPLETE HIS ACTIVE-DUTY REQUIREMENTS SOON AND RETURNING HOME TO PITTSBURGH WHERE HE WILL CONTINUE SERVING AS A SELECTIVE RESERVIST.

> **There are a lot of things** I yell at my defense but number one is to stop the puck. Sometimes I'm just screaming and yelling out there for them to use their partner.

> **You definitely have to be a little not right in the head** to want to have a puck come at you at a very high rate of speed. It's something I got used to as a youngster. I never really thought twice about it. Just go out, be aggressive and put my body in front of it.

> **I played hockey and football.** I never thought I was going to play football again after high school. I got to relive some of my high school dreams. 14 years out of high school and I'm out there kicking footballs again.

> **I even won a championship** with the Headquarters Battalion team. This is awesome this is the fitting end to my football career. I couldn't ask for a better outcome.

> **When I'm not playing**, I hang out with my wife. She's a good woman. She has supported me through everything I've ever done. She's always there for me, so I enjoy every moment I spend with her.

> **She's one of our biggest fans** and I'm her biggest fan too. She's an athlete. She plays softball in the summer and the roles are reversed. I get to watch her play and cheer her on like she does for me.

> **We do like to play video games** together. We play Call of Duty and she's way better than me. She plays better than 75 percent of the guys I know.

> **She got me a PS3** and Modern Warfare 2. I played it, but in the time I'd be at work, she'd be getting on the sticks too. Eventually we had to accommodate her gaming interest too, so I went out and got another controller.

> **It's a lot of hard work**, working with wounded warriors, but it's very rewarding. Watching these guys empower themselves and become successful. To see them recover and heal, it's a good feeling.

> **I came out here as a boot Staff Sgt.** I got promoted only three or four months before coming out here. I didn't really know a thing about being a staff non-commissioned officer. I learned a lot out here. Personally, it helped me get back on my feet.

Interviewed by Cpl. D. J. Wu
Sept 6, 2013



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STORY AND PHOTO BY
Cpl. D.J. Wu

NHHTP

MARINES, SAILORS JOURNEY TO THE TOP

The Combat Center Intramural Soccer League gives base personnel a chance to live out their soccer dreams by affording them the opportunity to compete against the best Combat Center has to offer. Commands make up numerous teams and strive to fill them with the best players. Not all teams are as lucky and have to make do with what they can pick up. But for one team, this challenge worked in their favor.

The Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital soccer team didn't start off the way they planned, but they finished stronger than the rest.

The Combat Center's Headquarters Battalion didn't have a team for the 2013 Intramural Soccer League, leaving many potential soccer players with no team to call their own. As luck would have it, these two groups would find each other and together, make a winning pair.

Before the season began, HQBN Marines were scrambling to find a team to play on. During the pre-season coaches' meeting, players without a team were given a chance to talk to all base coaches looking to fill positions. The Marines were scattered throughout the league but a handful found their way to the Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms team. This would be the tipping point for the NHHTP team to become a contender.

"After the first few games and practices, I knew our team had a chance to win," said Petty Officer 2nd Class George Mingle, NHHTP team coach. "We had a rough start, but I believed in these guys from the very start."

It wasn't the smoothest beginning for the team. They lost a game early in the season and didn't have a real presence on the pitch. They didn't command the field the way they wanted to,

but as the season moved along, the team came together. They picked up a few extra players along the way, allowing for more rotations and in turn, extending their life on the field.

Their practices became more focused and even the coach saw a difference in how the team was shaping up. They met regularly and established requirements for players to meet in order to suit up on game day.

By the end of the season, the team was in full stride. They were winning consecutive matches, often by large margins. They were consistently outplaying their opponents and built a reputation as the team to beat.

"We just try to take it one game at a time," said Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya, NHHTP forward. "I help out wherever I can and my teammates do as well. Through the season we've become a family."

Every family is bound to have their hardships. The same truth applied with this family of soccer players. Sometimes individual egos get in the way of the true team mission. Some players have personal goals on the field that conflict with the greater goal. But NHHTP worked past it.

"It takes time for players to get used to each other on the team," said Pfc. Thomas Salukombo, NHHTP wing. "It's the most interesting part though, working everything out and seeing how the team works out. It's all about getting used to everyone's style."

NHHTP also fought through tough scheduling conflicts. At times, key players would miss a game and the team would have to elevate their own performance.

"It's tough sometimes, being in the military and playing soccer," Mingle said. "Sometimes we have players in the field or on duty and that makes it harder for us. Then we really have to step up our game to win."

The combination of veteran-soccer leadership and eager young players allowed the team to rise above the rest. Two players from HQBN were the team's high scorers for the season. Bedoya and Salukombo, at forward and wing, consistently lead the scoring charge for NHHTP. Bedoya, nicknamed "Diablo," ended the season as league-high scorer.

Most of the team has a long history in what is known as the beautiful game. Some coming from the East and West Coast and varying countries to include Ghana and Congo have spent their whole lives around the game. While most of the roster is made up of veterans, this didn't discourage those new to the game.

"How I look at it is, we're here to have fun," Bedoya said. "We all just want to play and enjoy the game."



In the championship game, NHHTP faced the 1st Tank Battalion team, the only team who defeated them in the regular season. Players with NHHTP were eager and excited to have the chance to settle the score before their season's end.

The two teams fought diligently as they traded goals in the first half. Tanks started off aggressive and pushed forward through the pitch. They scored their first goal off of a well-placed header from a corner kick. NHHTP charged in with well-timed breakaways to score twice in the first half, going into half time with a 2-1 advantage.

NHHTP would take their momentum from the first half and carry it into the second. Playing from behind, Tanks slowed their attack and focused on countering the hospital forward line. NHHTP didn't let up. They answered Tanks' countermeasures by doubling their margin.

Their relentless effort and perseverance paid off at the end of the match. NHHTP kept up their game with zeal and well-executed plays and finished 6-2. By the end, Marines and sailors from both teams were drenched in sweat. The long, hard-fought match was over and congratulations were in order.

Through their struggles in the league, NHHTP made their way to the top. They pushed their way through with a mismatched group of Marines and sailors from different units and varying skill levels. They combined their skills to make one champion-caliber team.

"I knew they could do it," said Mingle. "I always believed in this group and now we're the champions."

NHHTP wing Pfc. Thomas Salukombo gives his coach, Petty Officer 2nd Class George Mingle, a nice shower after winning the intramural soccer championship at Felix Field Sept. 3.

"After the first few games and practices, I knew our team had a chance to win. We had a rough start, but I believed in these guys from the very start."

- Petty Officer 2nd Class George Mingle

CEREMONY, from A1

Anthem played. It was then lowered to half-mast in observance of those that were lost, the first responders, and the men and women still serving our country today.

"Many of these kids weren't even alive when (Sept. 11) happened," McVay said. "It was a devastating day that turned our nation upside down."

Children from various classrooms stood near the flagpole while waving small American flags as the Marines, police and firefighters stood in clear view to be honored.

"It was a great ceremony," said 1st Sgt. Timothy Hartmann, Company D first sergeant, 1st Tanks. "It's great to take these Marines that have just returned from Afghanistan to this school and help the children understand why we do what we do."

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the children and teachers approached the special guests to personally thank them for what they do.

For some children, standing before a man or woman in uniform was a familiar sight.

"I spoke with a little girl who has a military family," Hartmann said. "Her father is getting ready to deploy. That family has to take that. It's the kind of sacrifice many make now."

The observers of the ceremony were left with the feeling of thanks for those that serve and protect the nation.

"Heroes have many faces," McVay said. "I believe if I can help one person remember why they choose to put their life on the line for everyone else, then I am honoring the promise I made to myself to remember those heroes on Sept. 11, 2001."

CLIMBER, from A1

"Their final exercises involved the climbing of Big Face, which is approximately 150 to 200 feet in height depending on the climb," Armour said. "Then, they ran the battalion staff through multiple fixed lanes at the Asteroid Field, an exposed rock that includes vertical and near vertical terrain."

Despite the challenge set before them, Redenius and 17 of her fellow Marines completed the task.

"At no point did I consider giving up," Redenius said.

With the Marine Corps now offering existing military occupational specialties and training packages to females, Marines like Redenius show that they are ready to tackle the new challenges that lie ahead.

REUNION, from A1

On Aug. 9, 1942, a little more than a month after leaving San Diego, I Battery, 3/10 fired the first field artillery round in a U.S. offensive in World War II — aimed at suspected Japanese snipers hidden in coconut trees near Tulagi in the Solomon Islands. Sgt. Cecil E. Chastain, No. 4 gun chief, who died in 2010, kept the round's brass casing and had it engraved with the date and place. It was donated to the Marine Corps History and Museums Division in 1999.

Hours later, H Battery provided field artillery support for a landing attack for the first time in Marine Corps history, its guns firing on Makambo Island from their position on Tulagi in support of the 2nd Marine Division.

Ultimately, The Forgotten Battalion would fire upwards of 56,000 artillery rounds against the Japanese and bring home three Presidential Unit Citations and two Naval Citations along with its battle stars.

Their second combat landing was on Guadalcanal, with 3/10 staying in the region for six months before setting sail for New Zealand for a little rest and relaxation and a lot of training. When they arrived in Wellington on Feb. 7, 1943, the men collected six months' back pay — at \$79.80 a month for a corporal, that was a nice chunk of change — then spent the next 10 months regrouping and getting to know the locals.

"New Zealand was the highlight of my foreign service," Patrick said. Why? "The money and the ladies."

From New Zealand, they headed for Tarawa, where they would earn their third battle star during four days of intense fighting from Nov. 20-23, 1943. With new, larger 105mm and 155mm guns en route, Tarawa would mark their last days as 3rd Battalion, 10th Marines as well as the last time they

would fire 75mm pack howitzers in battle.

Shortly after wrapping things up at Tarawa, the battalion headed to Hilo, Hawaii, for a five-month stay marked by a series of rapid-fire changes that included the April 1944 redesignation it would keep until the 2nd 155mm Howitzer Battalion deactivated on May 6, 1945, as the war in the Pacific wound down.

"They gave us 155s after Tarawa, with no instructions how to use them," recalled retired Sgt. Maj. Ray V. Wilburn of Twentynine Palms, who joined the Corps on Oct. 19, 1939.

At 94, Wilburn is a legend aboard the Combat Center. In the spring of '44, he was a battle-hardened, 24-year-old gunnery sergeant who'd spent the better part of two long years busting his behind to make sure that he and his men survived to fight another day.

The 2nd 155 earned three more battle stars after Tarawa — at Saipan in June 1944, Guam in July 1944 and Iwo Jima in February 1945. It was the only artillery battalion to see action on both Guam and Saipan.

Sgt. Bill Miller, a combat reporter for Leatherneck magazine, introduced The Forgotten Battalion to the world in a February 1945 cover story, describing the men of 3/10 and the 2nd 155 as "one of the fighting outfits in the Corps."

Wilburn would not make the landing at Iwo Jima with his men; like many of those who served in WWII, malaria got the better of him and a month after the



Arnie Meads



Bill Roberts



Earl Lance



Jim Lieberknecht



Ray Piper



Rolland Patrick

Roll call of the eight men of the hour:

- Earl Lance, 90, H&S Battery wire chief, Hereford, Texas: Retired farmer.
- Jim Lieberknecht, 90, H&S Battery communicator, Newbury Park, Calif.: Retired IBM engineering manager.
- Arnold "Arnie" Meads, 93, H Battery radio operator, Ashland, Ore.: Retired millwright, rental property manager and salvage business owner.
- Rolland "Pat" Patrick, 88, H Battery section/crew chief, Liberal, Kan.: Retired oil company owner.
- Ray Piper, 89, I Battery ammunition handler, Carlsbad, Calif.: Retired office supply store owner.
- Bill Roberts, 91, I Battery crew member, Bismarck, N.D.: Retired vice president of sales for Midwest Motor Express.
- J.V. "Rod" Rodriguez, 92, H Battery truck driver, Henderson, Nev.: Retired Burbank police officer and movie studio security chief.
- Ray V. Wilburn, 94, I Battery gunnery sergeant, Twentynine Palms, Calif.: Retired Force Troops sergeant major and newspaper advertising salesman.

2nd 155 landed on Guam he was sent state-side to recover.

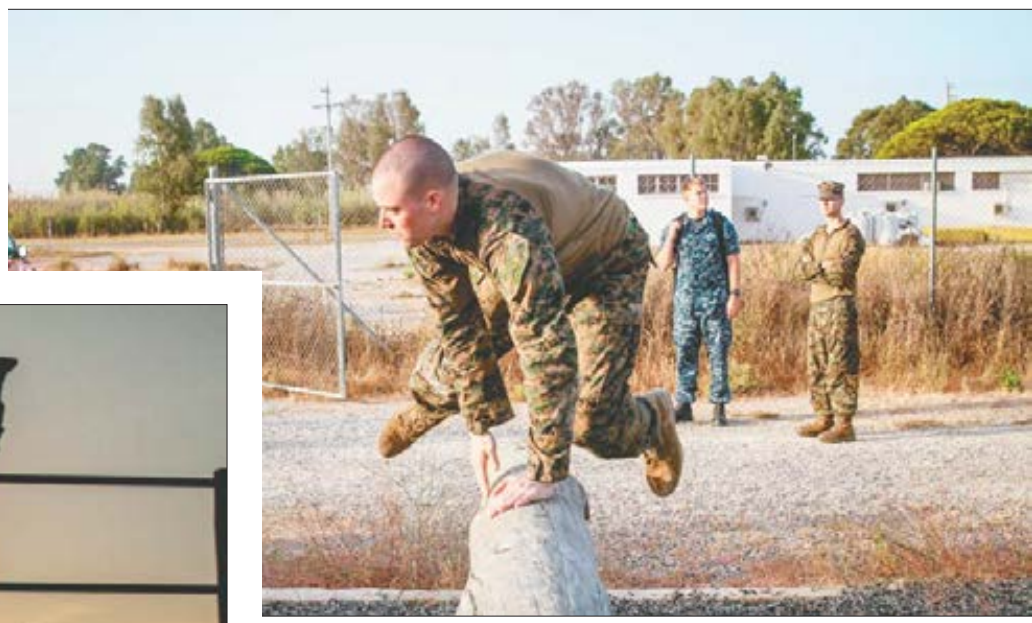
After several months at Quantico, Va., he was headed back to the South Pacific with the 4th Battalion, 13th Marine Regiment when word arrived that President Harry S. Truman's decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had secured the Japanese surrender and the war was over.

Not eligible to return to the states, Wilburn was sent to Sasebo, Japan, then to Nagasaki to join Gen. McArthur's Repatriation Team. He returned home in 1946 and continued his career in the service, retiring in 1971 after 31 years, four months and 15 days on active duty.

"I never had (another) group of Marines that could carry these men's packs," he said of fellow reunion attendees wire chief Earl Lance, communicator Jim Lieberknecht, radio operator Arnie Meads, section chief Rolland Patrick, ammunitions handler Ray Piper, crew member Bill Roberts, truck driver J.V. Rodriguez of Henderson, Nev., and the other men of The Forgotten Battalion lost in the war and in the years since.

WeekINPhotos

Africa Partnership Station 13




[Above] Marines flip over obstacles and climb ropes as the sun peers over the horizon at Naval Station Rota, Spain, Aug. 30. More than 90 Marines and sailors, made up of different military occupational specialties, went through months of various training exercises and courses to ensure the success of Africa Partnership Station 13.

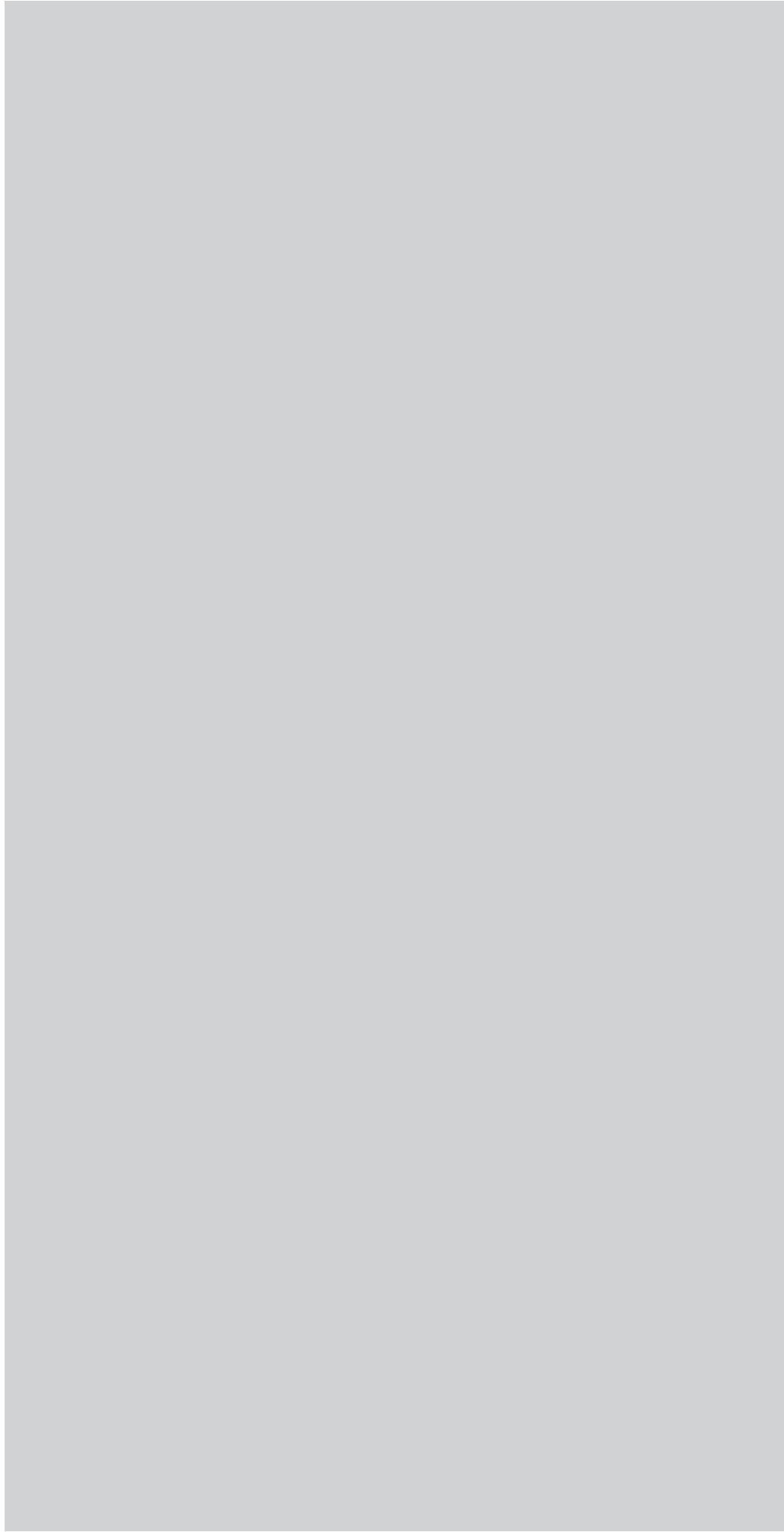
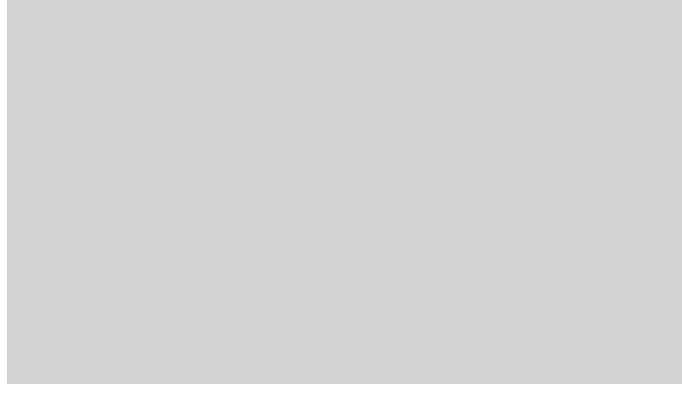
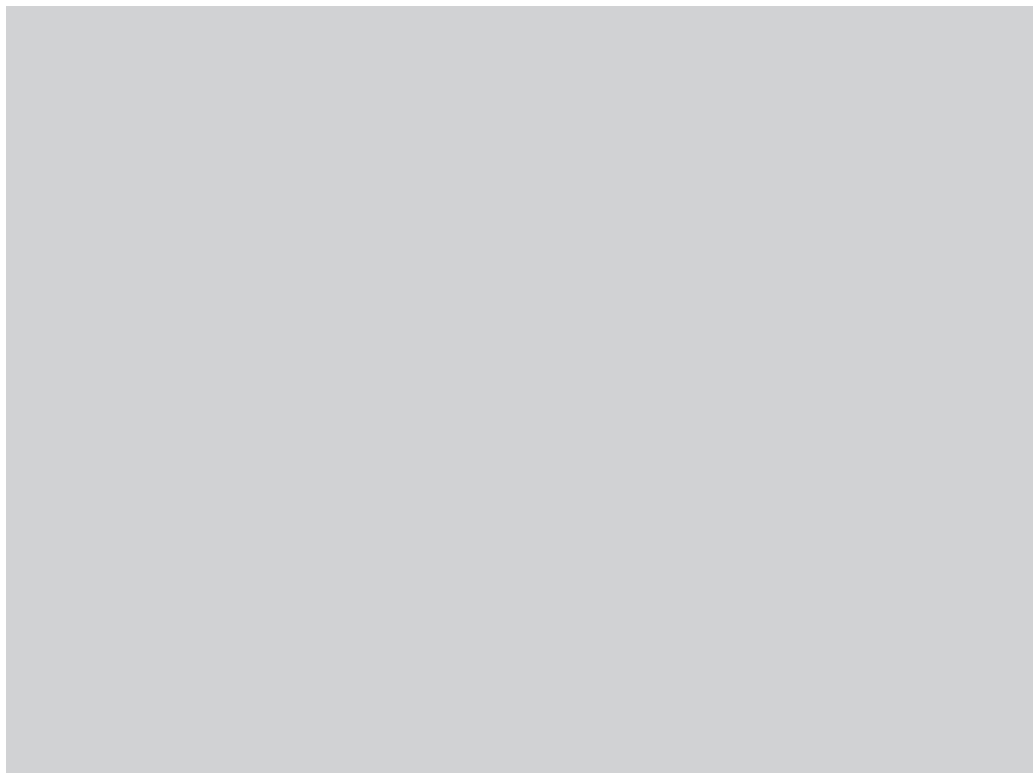
PHOTOS BY SGT. MARCO MANCHA

[Top, Right] Sgt. Weston Revak, New Port Richey, Fla., native, hops over a log while running the O-course at Naval Station Rota, Spain, Aug. 30.

[Right] Marines with Africa Partnership Station 13 executed burpees recently. The training was part of an obstacle course during which Marines obtained team and morale building techniques.

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





Marines got Talent

TALENT SHOW BRINGS MUSIC, STAND-UP, MAGIC

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez

Big speakers and even bigger lights were set on the stage of the Sunset Cinema Theatre. Backstage, participants in this year's Marines Got Talent contest were

adjusting costumes, making notes, and fine-tuning instruments before walking past the giant red curtain to show dozens of spectators what they could do. Marines, sailors and their families enjoyed a night of music, comedic performance and even magic during the Single Marine Program's annual Marines Got Talent contest Sept. 6 at the base theater.

Marines Got Talent is organized by the Single Marine Program, with support from Marine Corps Community Services. This year, 13 Marines and one sailor participated, making 14 acts that ranged from musical performances and dancing routines to comedy and card tricks.

"The mission of this talent show is to build camaraderie and keep (the Marines) active," said Lovetta Scipio, SMP coordinator, Single Marine Program. "They did such a great job."

Judges for this year's show included Sgt. Maj. Scott Cooper, sergeant major, Headquarters Battalion; 1st Sgt. Adam Gharati, first sergeant, Company A, HQBN; and Cpl. Phillip Mitchell, automotive mechanic, HQBN and SMP president.

"I think the show was awesome," Mitchell said. "I would have liked to have seen more performers, but every single one that we had made it a great show."

Despite the pressure someone would normally feel performing in front of not only a large crowd of people, but Marines in their chain of command, every act was extremely well-received.

"It was fabulous to see the Marines get up there, relax, and show off their talents away from the normal routine," Cooper said.

According to Mitchell, Marines Got Talent was started as a way for Marines to get out of the mundane work of the Marine Corps and showcase their talent, whether it be with music, dance, or anything else. The show proved to be very popular with the Combat Center community.

"I'm proud of everyone that went up there," Mitchell said. "I know it takes a lot to get someone to come out of their comfort zone."

The talent show also served as a friendly competition between the participants. Only three participants would leave the show with prizes in hand.

The third-place prize was a \$50 Marine Corps Exchange gift card; second prize was a \$100 MCX gift card and first prize was a whopping \$200 MCX gift card.

Once all acts were complete, the judges came together to decide the winners. Suspense stilled the audience as the contestants anxiously waited on stage. The results for this

"It gives our Marines a setting where they can show some individualism in the right atmosphere."

- Sgt. Maj. Scott Cooper

year's talent show were revealed. Coming in third was Pfc. Kristian Bandeira, administration clerk, HQBN, for his breakdancing routine using a custom music mix.

Second place went to Lance Cpl. Andrew Burch, administration clerk, HQBN, who performed an original song called "Darlin' Please" on guitar.

First place was awarded to Sgt. Brandon Valentine, field-radio operator, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, for his performance of "Simple Man" by Lynyrd Skynyrd on guitar.

With another successful show in the books, many are looking forward to next year's talent show and other events like it.

"I think we should do more events like this," Cooper said. "It gives our Marines a setting where they can show some individualism in the right atmosphere. I hope to be here again next year for the next show."



[Top] Pfc. Kristian Bandeira, admin clerk, headquarters battalion, executes his breakdancing routine using a custom music mix. Bandeira went on to win third place.

[Center, Top] Private David Stubee, student, Marine Corps Communication- Electronics School, performs "Joleen" by the Zac Brown Band on guitar during Marines Got Talent at the Sunset Cinema Theater Sept. 6.

[Center, Bottom] Cpl. Lauren Kurkimilis, combat correspondent, HQBN, performs "Vegas" by Sarah Bareilles on keyboard.

[Bottom] The winners of this year's Marines Got Talent contest, Pfc. Kristian Bandeira, administration clerk, HQBN; Lance Cpl. Andrew Burch, admin clerk, HQBN and Sgt. Brandon Valentine, field-radio operator, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, hold their prizes during Marines Got Talent at the Sunset Cinema Theatre Sept. 6.



Stirring civil rights tale soars across nine decades of American history



COURTESY PHOTO

NEIL POND

“Lee Daniels’ The Butler”

Starring: Forest Whitaker & Oprah Winfrey
Directed by Lee Daniels
PG-13, 132 min.

A sprawling sweep across nine decades of American history, this star-studded, heart-tugging and ultimately soaring tale filters the civil rights movement, Vietnam and other major events through the prism of a White House butler serving a parade of U.S. presidents.

Forest Whitaker is rock-solid as Cecil Gaines, whose improbable trek from Georgia cotton fields to the hallowed hallways of the nation’s highest office is a fictionalized drama loosely based on a real-life story. Screenwriter Danny Strong was inspired after reading a newspaper story about Eugene Allen, a black man who worked for the White House for 34 years before retiring as its head butler in 1986.

The movie is officially titled “Lee Daniels’ The Butler” because of a licensing conflict with another movie studio, which prohibited its intended title of “The Butler.” That’s how the director’s name became hitched to it at the last minute.

Daniels and Strong take a bit of dramatic license with their story as it barrels along across the years, and the miles. Much of it is to tremendous emotional effect, especially as young Cecil (played by Michael Rainey Jr.) watches the abuse of his mother (singer Mariah Carey) and the murder of his father (David Banner) by a loathsome young plantation squire (Alex Pettyfer), and later becomes trained as an indoor servant by the estate’s matriarch (Vanessa Redgrave).

As a teenager, Gaines finds a fancy job at a big-city hotel, then goes to Washington, D.C., for an even fancier job at an even fancier hotel. He marries, starts a family, and ultimately gets cherry-picked for a position on the wait staff for the White House in the late 1950s.

There, observing the mantra from his supervisor that “you see nothing, you hear nothing, you only serve,” he begins his long tenure attending the administrations of Presidents Eisenhower (Robin Williams), Kennedy (James Marsden), Johnson (Liev Schreiber), Nixon (John Cusack) and Reagan (Alan Rickman).

Perhaps Presidents Ford and Carter were skipped because the movie was already running over two hours long without them.

Or maybe there were simply no more actors available because the large cast had already drained Hollywood’s talent pool nearly dry. There’s Oprah Winfrey, doing an outstanding, Oscar-baiting turn as Cecil’s wife, loving but neglected as her husband gives his all to his job. Singer Lenny Kravitz and Cuba Gooding Jr. play fellow Oval Office butlers.

Terrence Howard is slimy-good as a lecherous next-door-neighbor who tries to take advantage of Mrs. Gaines during Cecil’s long absences away from home. Elijah Kelley (“Hairspray,” “Red Tails”) and David Oyelowo (“Lincoln,” “Jack Reacher”) are both strong as Cecil’s teenage sons, one drawn to serve his country in Vietnam, the other to more radical courses of action.

And hey, look — it’s Jane Fonda as Nancy Reagan!

Released to coincide with the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King’s iconic “I Have a Dream” speech, the movie stirring parallels its passionate message about racial harmony with Cecil’s more personal struggles with his own life, job and family.

Some of the scenes are wrenching to watch, like the one that cuts back and forth between a dignified formal White House dinner and a drug-store lunch-counter “sit-in” in the South at which Cecil’s son, and the other protesters, are jeered, spat upon, beaten, burned with steaming coffee and then hauled away to jail.

The intercut newsreel footage reminds us that the scene the movie depicts, and others like it, really happened. And Cecil’s story, in its dramatized arc of one man’s long, arduous but finally glorious and transformative journey across time, reminds us of just how far America has come in seeing what was once a dream becoming a reality.

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.
DJ Gixxa, 8 - 11 p.m.

Combat Center Officers’ Club

Monday: Steak Night, 5 - 7:30 p.m.
Thursday: Free Pub Grub, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
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.

Monty Python’s SPAMALOT

A musical based on the comedy movie
When: 7 p.m., Fridays & Saturdays, Aug. 23 - Sept. 21
Where: Theatre 29
73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
For more information, call 316-4151

Lower Desert

Voz De Mando

Regional Mexican group performs
When: 9 p.m., Friday, Sept. 20
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
For more information, call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinosort.com>

Wynonna and the Big Noise

Country music singer performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 21
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>

O’jays with Gladys Knight

“Living Legends” perform with eight-time grammy winner
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 4.
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>

Women of soul

Hottest R&B singers of the 80s and 90s perform
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 19.
Where: Spotlight 29 Casino
46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
For more information, call 866-377-6829 or visit <http://www.spotlight29.com>

Sunset Cinema

Friday, Sept. 13

6 p.m. – Smurfs 2 3-D, PG
8:30 p.m. – Percy Jackson: Sea Monsters 3-D, PG
11:30 p.m. – We’re the Millers, R

Saturday, Sept. 14

10:40 a.m. – Free Admission Wall-E, G
12:30 p.m. – Planes 3-D, PG
3 p.m. – The Wolverine 3-D, PG-13
6 p.m. – R.I.P.D. 3-D, PG-13
8:30 p.m. – R.E.D. 2, PG-13
11:30 p.m. – 2 Guns, R

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