



September 20, 2013

Vol. 57 Issue 36

3/7 DEPLOYS TO Afghanistan

Story and photo by

LANCE CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ

Three individual contingents with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, staged sea bags and gear in the presence of families and friends at Felix Field before departing for Afghanistan over the course of Sept. 14 through Sept. 17.

The main body, which follows the advanced party that



Lance Cpl. Joshua Haney, infantryman, L Co., 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, sees his wife, Kimberlee, before departing for Afghanistan Sept. 15 at Felix Field.

departed earlier this month, deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and is replacing 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 7th Marine Regiment, as they prepare to return to the Combat Center.

"These Marines have been working hard," said Capt. James Covey, company commander, H & S Co. "The entire battalion did very well during our Integrated Training Exercise."

Company commanders addressed the families and friends of those with 3/7 that would be awaiting their return.

See **DEPLOY** page A5

'America's Squadron'



Lance Cpl. Carlos Millanmunoz, motor transport operator, Motor Transport Company, Marine Wing Support Squadron 171, sits in the machine gunners seat in a Mine-Resistant, Ambush-Protected All-Terrain Vehicle during the unit's Integrated Training Exercise, Sept. 9.

MWSS-171 conducts motorized operations

Story and photos by

CPL. D. J. WU

Marines and sailors with Motor Transport Company, Marine Wing Support Squadron 171, based out of Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, took part in the Motor Operators Convoy Course during the unit's Integrated Training Exercise in the Combat

Center's Delta-Prospect corridor training area, Sept. 11.

MWSS-171 took seven vehicles through the convoy simulation, evaluated by the coyotes of the Tactical Training Exercise Control Group. The service members practiced improvised explosive device detection, ambush reaction and casualty evacuation during the course.

"We practiced a lot of scenarios we would likely see in a combat situation," said Sgt. Yuriy Stepanov, platoon sergeant, Motor Transport Company, MWSS-171. "We practiced our tactics, techniques and procedures to ensure we do what we need to when something like an IED happens."

For many in MWSS-171, this is their first time coming to the Combat Center for ITX. This is the first time that a squadron from Japan has come here for ITX training.

The unit had the assistance of TTECG coyotes during this exercise in their training package. The coyotes help add pressure to the exercise and throw more real-world scenarios into the training.

"This is really a rare opportunity for us," said Lt. Col. Howard Eyth, commanding officer, MWSS-171. "The chance to take an entire squadron from Japan and take them to California to train here is few and far between. We know how fortunate we are and we're taking full advantage of the venue."

MWSS-171 provides aviation-ground support for Marine Aircraft Group 12 and the air-combat element training in ITX. The unit's training here covers a broad spectrum of operations.

They provide ground logistics like motor transport and bulk refueling. They make sure the ACE has every-

See **MWSS** page A5

'THE PROFESSIONALS' take on ITX

Story and photo by

CPL. D.J. WU

Marines with 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., are participating in the Combat Center's Integrated Training Exercise from Aug. 24 to Sept. 25.

They are here working on essential skills they will need for their upcoming deployment with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit later next year.

"We've worked our way up from platoon, company, and now battalion-sized attacks," said Maj. Robert

See **PROFESSIONALS** page A5



A UH-1Y Huey flies by as Marines with 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, prepare for their battalion assault course at the Combat Center's Range 210, Sunday.

VMU-3 celebrates 5 years of service



Lt. Col. John Thurman, commanding officer, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3, awards Sgt. Joseph L. Bellevue, unmanned aerial system avionics technician, VMU-3, a Good Conduct Medal at the squadron's hangar Sept. 12.

Story and photos by

LANCE CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ

Marines with Unmanned Aerial-Vehicle Squadron 3 celebrated their fifth anniversary as a functioning unit at the squadron's hangar Sept. 12.

VMU-3 was activated on September 12, 2008 aboard the Combat Center's Lance Cpl Torrey L. Gray field. They established their force capabilities to be day and night intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and logistics support.

In January 2010, just 16 months after the unit's activation, VMU-3 found themselves deploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. While deployed, VMU-3 provided over 225 hours of

unmanned aircraft support per day - the most in Marine Corps history.

"I'm very proud to be the commanding officer of this squadron," said Lt. Col. John D. Thurman, commanding officer, VMU-3. "I couldn't find better Marines to have."

See **CELEBRATE** page A5



58th OSC Anniversary
 Photos by Lance Cpl. John Tran

Spouses meet to improve quality-of-life

Military spouses and representatives of the Officer-Spouses Club met to discuss quality-of-life improvements and social events for military spouses stationed the aboard Combat Center, Sep. 13. Today marks their 58th anniversary as an organization striving to better the lives of spouses that support the warfighters of our country. The OSC started at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., in 1948 and continues today.

COMBAT CENTER SHOOTERS FACE OFF

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



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.

Is your out-of-state driver's license valid after it expires?

By Lt. Michelle E. Mills
 Traffic Accident Investigation Chief

If you are in the military and carry a driver's license from a state other than California, you need to know if your state license has an automatic extension, is a renewal by mail, or if you have to renew it in person. These are questions you want to answer long before your driver's license expires or you execute a permanent change of station.

If you are married and your spouse has an out-of-state license, you want to know the same thing about their license as well. Do not assume your license is valid as long as you are on active duty.

Many states have an automatic extension, but not all. The worst time to find out is when you get pulled over for a minor traffic infraction and get a ticket for being an unlicensed driver. Depending on the situation, you could be arrested or your vehicle could be towed. These are things you can prevent by knowing your state driver's license laws.

How do you prevent this from

happening? Contact your state's Department of Motor Vehicles either by phone or their internet website before your license expires. Do not trust someone that tells you that your license has an automatic extension. The DMV changes the rules regularly and you don't want to be driving without a license.

If you have looked and can't find the answer at your state's DMV website or operator, you can contact the Traffic Accident Investigations office at 830-4251. If there is no answer, please leave a detailed message with your name, state you are licensed through and a phone number to call you back.

If you are licensed in the state of California and your license has expired, you are driving without a license. Being active-duty military does not exempt you if you are out of the state that issued the driver's license. Don't assume anything; check your license, know when it expires and know the rules for your state.

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

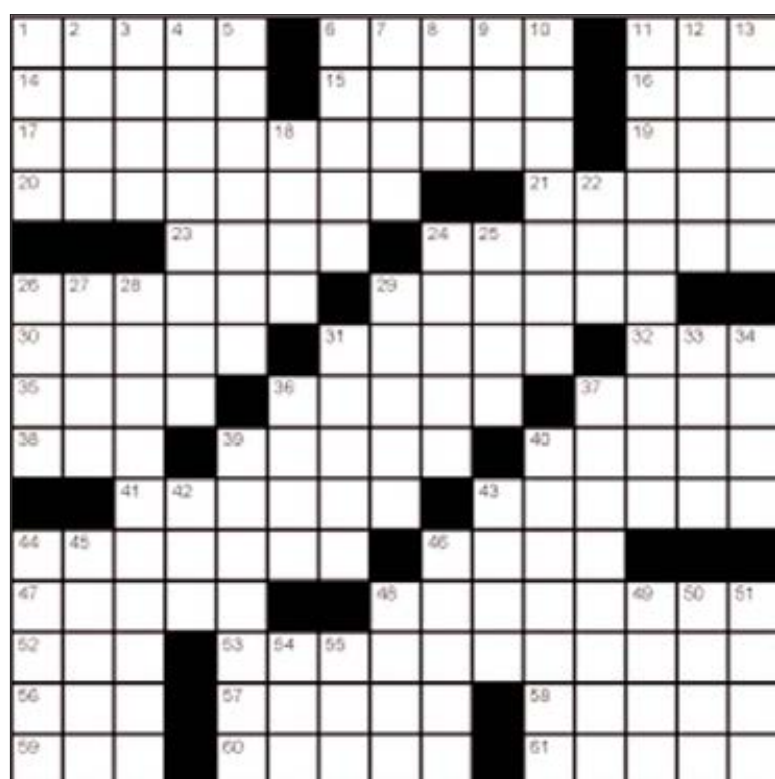
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The Combat Center has its own YouTube channel. Find it at <http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>

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

FLIGHT INFORMATION

- ACROSS**
- Lovers' quarrels
 - Drainage spot
 - That guy
 - To no ___ (without success)
 - Author Norman Vincent ___
 - "Pulp Fiction" actress Thurman
 - Church no-no
 - Calendar abbr.
 - Volleyball player's equipment
 - Emerson's "Circles," for instance
 - Winter Olympics sled
 - Swarms
 - Bacon units
 - Public house
 - Engages in pillaging
 - Turned towards
 - Reporter's query
 - "Dear" woman?
 - Fraternity/sorority gathering
 - Hoax
 - Designer of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame
 - Michelangelo masterpiece
 - Comic Mandel
 - Family tree members
 - Reserved in advance
 - Majestic homes
 - Punching hand
 - Scene of conflict
 - Acorns, someday
 - Bering or Barents
 - Two on a par five
 - Tic-___-toe
 - Stand for Picasso
 - Climb
 - Baseball bat wood
 - Remains
 - Family car
- DOWN**
- What a prankster puts on a chair
 - Lendl of the court
 - Token payment?
 - Faithfulness
 - Goofs
 - Heart companion
 - Slippery swimmers
 - Isn't any more
 - QB Manning
 - Didn't pay up
 - Bruce Willis film
 - Clarifying words
 - New York landmark
 - Henpecks
 - Paul McCartney's title
 - Did up one's shoes
 - Anytime
 - Give a hand?
 - One option for Hamlet
 - He hosted "Lifestyles of the Rich & Famous" for one
 - Bus alternatives
 - Abraham Lincoln's money
 - Dust Bowl denizen
 - Garden worry
 - Medieval weapon
 - Steeplechase,
 - Idaho ___, Idaho
 - Do as told
 - Posh exclamation
 - Singer Fitzgerald
 - Spotted
 - Bit of food for Seattle Slew
 - Springsteen's "Born in the ___"



See answers on page B6

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| 8 | | 5 | 6 | | | | 9 |

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

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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.

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 - Dream Crystal, 15366 Highland Ave.
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 - Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Rd.
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 - 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

Diane

Freemont, Calif. Family Readiness Officer, 48

DURDEN



> **I was a very rebellious** teenager. Nothing criminal. Normal 80's teenage mischief. Staying out late, not being where I was suppose to be.

> **My mom didn't want me** (to join the Marine Corps). The more she didn't want me to, the more I was anxious and eager to do that.

> **At the time, I had met some Marines** that were stationed near my house. I thought what they did was interesting and exciting. Although it really wasn't, because they were gate guards. Now I know!

> **I was bored with school** and felt that I was not going to get anything out of going to college. I didn't want my parents to waste their money by me going to school so having met these Marines and becoming friends with them just gave me a natural interest in that.

> **I run marathons.** I didn't run a marathon 'til I was 40. It was part of my "mid-life crises," ... one of those bucket-list things.

> **When I was in the Marine Corps** I hated running. It was not something I did for enjoyment. I ran, for physical training at lunch time or before work, because I needed to maintain my height and weight standards and of course, I wanted a first-class PFT. That was the extent of my running.

> **Once I started adding that mileage,** going five miles, six miles, 10 miles, I realized that I really enjoy running, just not three miles. I feel like I'm just getting warmed up at that point.

> **I've done nearly 60 marathons** and several ultra-marathons.

> **The first one I ran** was the Marine Corps Marathon and I've run one every year since then, to include running it again this year.

> **A marathon** is 26.2 miles. That's the standard marathon distance. An ultra-marathon is anything beyond that.

> **I've done a 100-mile (marathon),** but it was over several days. It was over last New Year, when I went to Phoenix, Ariz. I signed up for the 72-hour race. The object is to get in as many miles as you can in that time period.

> **I could have done much more** than I did, however, I napped a lot. I went way off my plan. My plan was to do 20 miles, nap for a few hours, nap for another 20 miles and do that throughout the whole weekend. I did the 20 miles and I ended up sleeping all night. I made my camp-site way too comfy.

> **Things you would eat normally** are the best things in the middle of the night after you've done 30 miles.

> **My first ultra that I did** – I do not like canned chicken noodle soup – and I swear they had that at one of the aid stations and that was the best chicken noodle soup I've ever had.

> **I like to push myself** to see what my limits are. I think as a whole, as people, we don't ever really know what our limits are, because we are afraid to push ourselves to what they are or we set what our limit is and realize that's not your limit when you could have gone farther.

> **I was stationed in Ohio,** my last duty-station, and just like every Marine I had to take Separations and Transition Assistance Program and because there wasn't one located right where we were, I chose to come out here.

> **I had already known** that I wanted to do something with public affairs or media related. So I met with (Mr. James Ricker, G-5 Deputy Director) and said "Here are some of my ideas and I'd really like to come work with you when I retire. He was very enthusiastic about that. However, when I retired there was a hiring freeze, but there was a contractor opportunity at the PAO office. I applied for it and fortunately for me they (hired me).

> **I was originally** just supposed to do "admin and assist" stuff in the public affairs office, but they knew what I wanted to do ultimately.

> **The second day** I was there they handed me a camera and said, "Here. Go take pictures of this event." It was a (Single Marine Program) haunted house up at the East Gym.

> **I didn't even know how to** turn the camera on. I had to get the operator's manual out. Some of the Marines were helpful, but some of them were like, "Nobody told us. Here you go."

> **In my time in the Corps,** one of my favorite billets that I held was a platoon commander at the School of Infantry. I worked at medical rehab platoon. So students that got injured or sick in training would come to my platoon and I would monitor them; help keep them motivated, help keep them out of trouble, keep them on track so we can get them healed and back to training.

> **It was one of my favorite** duty stations and one of my most emotionally trying. There were issues with Marines that became emotionally draining sometimes. Marines that you became close to that no matter what you do medically, they still weren't going to be able to go back to training.

> **But I also had** the most fun with that job too. I felt like I had a positive impact on young Marines as they were coming into the Marine Corps.

> **When I went to bootcamp** in 1983, women fired the M16, but did not qualify with it. I did not qualify with the rifle until I was already in the Marine Corps ... almost two years.

> **The biggest change** that I've seen is just the women and our role in the Marine Corps. Many more opportunities have opened up.

> **One of the funniest things I think,** when I was a young lance corporal, we were issued slacks with our uniform, but we weren't allowed to wear them off base. We had to wear skirts with our uniforms.

> **I wanted to be in color guard,** but women didn't learn that in boot camp like male Marines did. I had to take the initiative to learn it on my own.

> **I was a casualty assistance** call officer. That was absolutely, no kidding, the hardest thing I have ever, ever, ever had to do; to notify a mom that her Marine daughter was killed.

> **Going and knocking on that mom's door,** every parent knows what it means to have a Marine come and knock on your door like that. I don't wish that experience on anybody, to have to do that.

Interviewed by Cpl. Ali Azimi
Sept 17, 2013



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DIANE DURDEN SERVED NEARLY 24 YEARS IN THE MARINE CORPS AND CONTINUES TO WORK WITH MARINES AS A FAMILY READINESS OFFICER.

FIESTA DAYS



Marines march in local parade

Story and photo by LANCE CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ

Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 7, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, and 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion participated in the annual Fiesta Days Parade held in Morongo Valley Sept. 14.

The parade, which has been active for more than 60 years, was implemented as a way to celebrate the community. Over the years, it also became an avenue of support for the Morongo Valley Fire Department.

Carnival games, food booths and souvenir vendors occupied space behind the parade, with people actively browsing everything the community organized this year.

The parade was led by a Marine color guard, consisting of Sgt. Equer Fierro, color sergeant, Cpl. Joseph M. Depetre, Lance Cpl. Alex

Roberts and Lance Cpl. Colby Greco, motor transport operators, CLB-7.

Alongside Combat Center Marines, the fire department, sheriff's office, Morongo Valley Antique Car Club and Morongo Basin Search and Rescue Team drove through the parade.

The Marines brought an M777 Howitzer artillery cannon, a light-armored vehicle 25, two humvees and one medium, tactical vehicle replacement to drive through the parade route.

"It's a good experience to have these Marines out here," said 1st Lt. Corey Muma, artillery officer, Battery K, 3/11. "I think it's good for the civilians to see how we as Marines operate."

After the parade, the Marines parked the vehicles in an open field for the community to take a closer look.

"There's at least a couple thousand people here at its

peak," Harris said "I think the Marines are happy to come and hang out with the families."

Members of the Morongo Valley community took the opportunity to ask Marines questions and learn about the various vehicles used for operations.

"This was a wonderful opportunity for the community to talk to Marines and see some Marine Corps vehicles," said Staff Sgt. Brian Parfitt, platoon sergeant, Company C, 3rd LAR.

Those watching the parade felt humbled to see Marines pay them a visit.

"With a population of only about 3,600, we appreciate having these Marines out here because in these times it is uplifting for our small community," Harris said.

The people, activities, events and guests made this year's Fiesta Days Parade a success. The Marines are sure to make their return to Morongo Valley next year.

Sgt. Equer Fierro, color sergeant, Cpl. Joseph M. Depetre, Lance Cpl. Alex Roberts and Lance Cpl. Colby Greco, motor transport operators, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, form the Color Guard during the Fiest Days Parade in Morongo Valley, Saturday.

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DEPLOY, from A1

“Your love and continued support makes a difference,” Covey said. “It will help your Marines and sailors throughout this deployment.”

“These Marines are well-trained, well-equipped, and rest assured that they are well-led by their non-commissioned officers,” said Capt. Doug Ferreria, company commander, L Co., 3/7. “They have the resources they need to make this deployment a success.”

With the buses ready to go, the unit loaded their belongings to begin their journey to Afghanistan. They then took in their last moments with their loved ones.

“I’m feeling sad because this will be his second deployment,” said Alyssa Lynch, spouse of Lance Cpl. Jonathan Lynch, infantryman, H & S Co., 3/7. “I’m going to keep busy with our baby, but (Lynch) is going to miss a lot of things his son will do.”

Gabbi Telles, spouse of Cpl. Aaron Telles, machine gunner, L Co., 3/7, was also seeing her husband depart for the second time.

“The hardest part of a deployment is seeing them go,” Telles said. “We need to stay strong and keep busy until our Marines return.”

Communication will be key for both the Telles and Lynch families, with hopes that letters and Skype messaging will keep them connected to their spouses.

The Marines and sailors are slated to return in April of next year. Over the deployment, they will concentrate on working alongside the Afghan National Security Forces as they prepare them to take the lead in counter-insurgency operations.

“This battalion has been working very hard these past seven months,” Covey said. “There is no battalion more prepared to go to combat and be successful than these Marines right here.”

PROFESSIONALS, from A1

Christafore, operations officer, 2/1. “This kind of training makes us better.”

This ITX is a stepping stone for the unit. They are using the training, typically used as a pre-deployment work-up for Afghanistan, as a building block for the core tactics, techniques and procedures implemented by all infantry units. They will use what they learn at the Combat Center and further refine it in the training they will execute once on the MEU.

“This training is essential for all Marines to know,” said 1st Lt. Francis Coppola, executive officer, Weapons Company, 2/1. “Even

though we’re not deploying to Afghanistan, this training is still fundamental to our success. Everything we learn here is just going to make our MEU training that much better.”

2/1 is making the most out of their training at the Combat Center. They are getting all their Marines and sailors together for large-scale, combined-arms exercises that they wouldn’t be able to achieve anywhere else.

“This is a very unique training venue,” Christafore said. “Here, we have the opportunity to have all our infantry guys together and include tanks, artillery and air assets. We wouldn’t be able to do this anywhere else.”

ITX is just one step in “The Professionals” work up for their MEU deployment. They will build on what they learned and improve upon their return to MCB Camp Pendleton.

“We’re here straightening out our TTPs and standard operation procedures,” Coppola said. “We still have plenty of training to do before our deployment. We’ll be doing more training with Special Operations Training Group to help get us ready for the MEU.”

2/1 only has a couple training exercises left in their ITX evolution. They will soon return home to MCB Camp Pendleton and continue their training as their deployment approaches.

CELEBRATE, from A1

“We take pride in what we do,” said Sgt. Maj. Christopher W. Nagle, sergeant major, VMU-3. “It’s fantastic to be here celebrating five years.”

According to Thurman, what lies ahead for the squadron is a movement to Kaneohe Bay, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, scheduled for July 2014.

Thurman is certain the squadron will continue to be as excellent as they have ever been.

“These Marines are first and foremost, professionals,” Thurman said. “They take their obligations seriously when it comes to a professional aviation mindset, and they do their jobs day-in and day-out to achieve mission accomplishment.”

MWSS, from A1

thing they need for the fight.

MWSS-171’s training at the Combat Center keeps their skills sharp. Although the unit is not scheduled to deploy, it is important for them to always be at the ready.

“They understand just how valuable this training is,” Eyth said. “We would not have been able to do this back in Iwakuni. But this opportunity goes way past just training. It really gives the Marines a chance to get their knowledge and bond as a unit.”

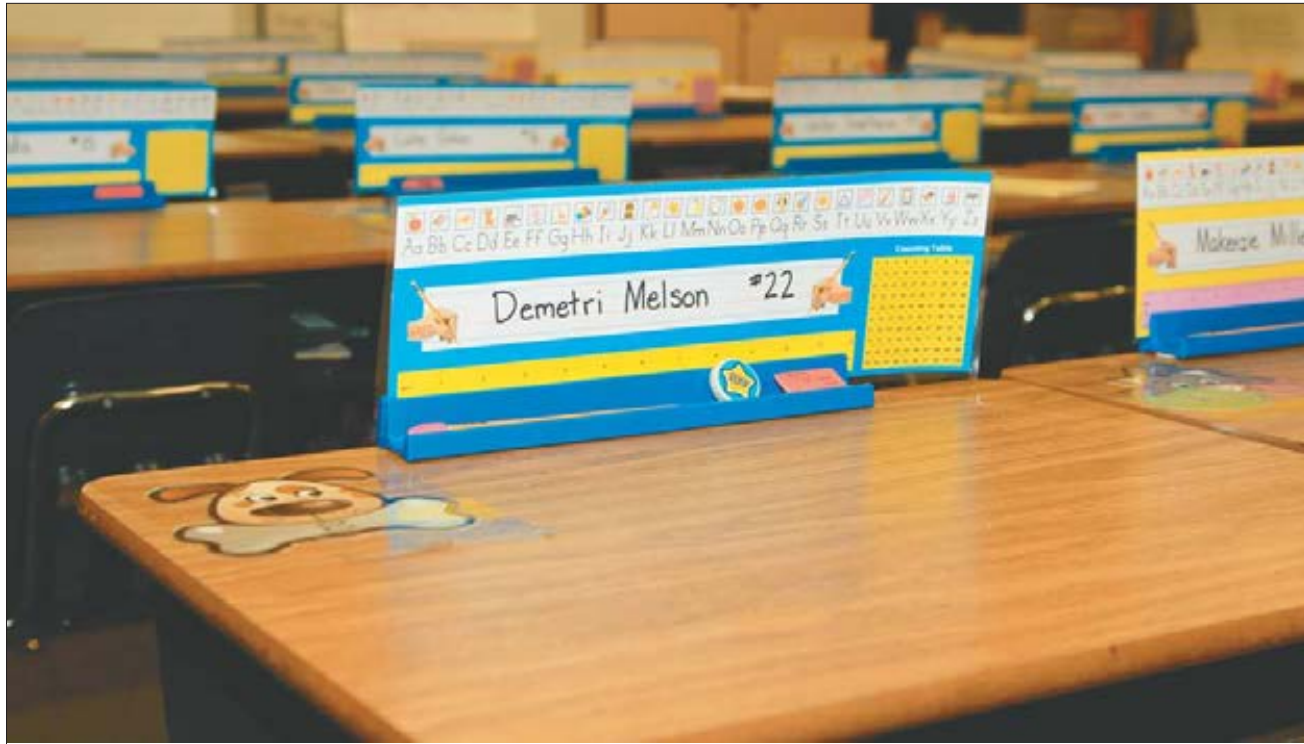
The unit is finishing up their training at the Combat Center. They are scheduled to return home to Japan at the conclusion of their training on Sept. 26.



Back to School NIGHT

Story and photo by LANCE CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ

Condor Elementary teachers greet parents



Parents visited classrooms and met with teachers during Back to School Night at Condor Elementary Sept. 12.

Parents of children attending Condor Elementary met with the teachers and staff of Condor Elementary School during a "Back to School Night" at the campus Sept. 12.

The principal of Condor Elementary, Paul Gattuso, welcomed the parents in the school's multi-purpose room and introduced the teachers for this school year. Then, Stephanie Tate, 5th grade teacher, addressed the parents.

"Our school community has led the obligation to become a culture that promotes collaboration and innovation," Tate said. "This school has the potential to transform into a community of learners with shared values and shared purposes."

The parents turned to visiting the classrooms their children learn in. During their visit, parents were made aware of classroom etiquette, the flow of the academic

curriculum and upcoming projects for the students.

"I like this school because it is very involved with the community," said Faye Gullick, program lead, Leaps and Bounds.

Gullick's son, Keynen, 8, has been enrolled at Condor for two years and recently embarked on his 4th grade year.

"He does very well with his reading," Gullick said. "I hope he keeps excelling with his subjects."

Parents new to Condor Elementary School took the opportunity to become familiar with how teachers will educate their children.

"I am feeling confident about this school year," said Tiffany Velliquette, spouse of Staff Sgt. Brian Velliquette, motor transport maintenance chief, Headquarters Battalion. "This school appears more organized than the one we came from."

The Velliquette family had moved from Pennsylvania, bringing their children, Cailin, 8, and Ameliana, 6, to Condor Elementary School.

"I'm hoping for an easy transition for them," Tiffany said. "I think they can make friends much easier here."

Coincidentally, the teachers at Condor Elementary School have their own aspirations for the school year.

"I'm teaching 1st grade for the first time and having a great time," said Nora Baker, 1st grade teacher. "I aim to make sure my students meet the requirements for advancement to 2nd grade, and I would also like to maintain a good classroom environment for them."

The mutual comprehension Back to School Night brought between parents and teachers have both anticipating another great and fun-filled school year at Condor Elementary.



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REGIMENTAL ATTACK

Hawaii Marines take charge of desert exercise

Story and photos by
CPL. SARAH DIETZ

The 3rd Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, has been performing Integrated Training Exercise operations at the Combat Center.

This is the first time 3rd Marines has been to the Combat Center for this type of exercise and the fourth regiment to conduct an ITX. Their mission is to control the East and West corridors of the training area and the personnel within them.

The regiment has been acting as a regimental combat team to 19 units currently training aboard the Combat Center.

“The only thing better than coming out here as a regimental headquarters is coming out here as a regimental headquarters with one of your own battalions, my (amphibious assault vehicle) platoon and my direct-support artillery battalion,” said Col. Tim Winand, commanding officer, 3rd Marine Regiment and officer conducting the exercise. “I have a pretty big slice of 3rd Marines-proper out here. I also have elements of those units that, should we go to war, will be supporting me directly.”

Maj. Jeff Tennen, operations officer, 3rd Marine Regiment, said even though the units come from all over the world and are accustomed to different training environments. Being a part of 3rd Marine Division brings them all together.

“There is a natural bond between all of us being 3rd Marine Division units, and it’s on display right now,” Tennen said. “We already have a relationship with the Hawaii-units, but it isn’t really that much harder to pull in the Japan-units that are part of 3rd Marine Division to be a part of it.”

The command operations center is currently located at Camp Wilson, but as units move into the training area, a forward command post will be sent into the field to become the main link of communication between the regiment and the battalions training. Throughout the course of the month-long ITX, the regiment has moved their forward-COC multiple times to better equip and support units in the field as they continue their operations.

“I’ve had the ability to watch my COC,” Winand explained. “I’ve had the chance to provide a commander’s intent and watch my staff fight through friction. The training value of something like that is immeasurable, and that’s where we do the most growing. (Watching) small-unit leaders in difficult situations figure out how to get the fire power of their squads



and platoons on objective. I’ve been able

“There is a natural bond between all of us being 3rd Marine Division units, and it’s on display right now.”

-Maj. Jeff Tennen

to watch three company commanders from infantry battalions try to do the same thing, and now we are in the phase of the exercise where I can watch my staff plan with other elements of the (Marine Air-Ground Task Force), brief the plan, and come out here and execute the plan.”

The regimental headquarters training in at the Combat Center gives the staff a different perspective than their home base in Hawaii could offer. Multiple retransmitting sites had to be set up around the Combat Center training areas in order for units to have radio communication with the COC over the desert’s mountainous terrain.

“What Twentynine Palms offers us is the ability to train, practice and execute a set of missions in an environment that we can’t truly get in Hawaii,” Tennen continued. “To come out to this training center

and employ an infantry battalion, artillery battalion and all the assorted attachments in this desert environment (with) the amount of space offered to us and the lack of restrictions on live fire. We really get to see what our abilities are as a regimental headquarters.”

Logistically, creating the COC was difficult. Being a Hawaii-unit, the regiment had to ship most of their gear over the Pacific, using military and commercial shipping as well

“The training value of something like that is immeasurable, and that’s where we do the most growing.”

-Col. Tim Winand

as air freight.

“It’s been really good for the staff to

work through all of these problems,” said Maj. Robert Jones, 3rd Marines logistics officer. “Without problems, we don’t know where we have deficiencies and where things need to be tightened up a bit. It helps the staff as a whole when we have challenges.”

3rd Marine Regiment will finish training at the Combat Center toward the end of September. The staff will take their experiences with ITX and incorporate them into their regimental standard operating procedures.

“It’s testing all of our combat SOPs and tactical SOPs,” said Master Gunnery Sgt. Troy Buss, regimental operations chief. “When we get back we will be able to rewrite those SOPs off of everything we learned from here. It just proves that we are ready to go when we are told

to be a special MAGTF, whatever our assignment is.”

[Top] Marines with Company F, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, load onto a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter, Sept. 11, while conducting the air-assault course as part of the Integrated Training Exercise at the Combat Center.

[Right] A mortarman with Co. F, 2/3, prepares to load an 81mm mortar tube while providing supporting fire for infantry platoons taking out a simulated enemy target, Sept. 11 as part of the air-assault course at the Combat Center. The AAC is part of the month-long Integrated Training Exercise.





Liberty Call

Vin Diesel comes back for another brawny sci-fi survivalist adventure



COURTESY PHOTO

NEIL POND

"Riddick"

Starring: Vin Diesel, Karl Urban & Katee Sackhoff
Directed by David Twohy
R, 119 min.

The latest pulpy sci-fi yarn spun around the super-bad space-survivalist-antihero of the title opens on a bleak desert planet, an inhospitable place no reputable intergalactic travel agent could possibly recommend.

"I don't know how many times I've been crossed off the list and left for dead," says Riddick (Vin Diesel) in a growly opening narration.

Then he grabs a giant vulture by the neck and chokes it, sets his broken leg just in time to fend off a pack of marauding jackals, and gets the upper hand in an encounter with a carnivorous "mud demon," a colossus that looks like a nasty mutation of a dinosaur, tadpole and scorpion.

Riddick is marooned in this desolate, dangerous place, all alone, Robinson Crusoe-style.

But as to whoever he thinks has been crossing him off the list — well, it certainly hasn't been anyone making movies and videogames. "Riddick" follows two previous live-action films, "Pitch Black" (2000) and "The Chronicles of Riddick" (2004), plus an animated feature and two games. And Diesel has played the character in all of them.

So there is a rather detailed mythology to Riddick, his tale, and how he ended up on this desert orb called Furya. You can go back and connect all the dots, if you'd like, but it's unnecessary. (Why do his eyes glow? Not

important — don't worry about it.) This movie can stand pretty much on its own story-wise, and the franchise as a whole isn't trying to be "Star Trek," for goodness sake.

The "Riddick" series isn't a string of polished sci-fi pearls, by any stretch, but it does deliver pretty much what fans expect: slam-bang action, space creatures, decent effects, a good deal of dry, wry humor, and just enough R-rated skin, blood and language to appease grownup tastes.

The plot of the latest "Riddick" is simple enough, with overtones of a vintage Western transplanted a few centuries into the future and several light years out into distant space. When Riddick, a wanted man for murder, among other galactic misdeeds, triggers the signal beacon from an abandoned security outpost, it's answered by two competing teams of bounty hunters anxious to haul him in.

The mercenaries, expecting to make quick work of their task, are unprepared for their quarry's lethal predatory skills—and for Riddick's plan to shanghai one of their two ships to hightail it off his rock. There's also the matter of that big, nasty-looking thunderstorm on the horizon, and the monstrous surprise Riddick knows it will unleash once the rain begins to hit the ground.

Riddick may be a criminal in this Wild West, way-out "frontier," but he's the good guy by comparison — heck, he even raised one of the jackal pups to become his loyal "dog Friday." There's no question about who the audience is rooting for.

And there's also little question, by the end of the movie, about whether or not you can expect to see Riddick again. If you haven't learned already, you should know by now: This is one guy you should never cross off the list.

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.morongocasinoresort.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 80's and 90's 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. 20

6 p.m. — Kick-Ass 2
8:30 p.m. — We're the Millers, R
11:30 p.m. — Elysium, R

Saturday, Sept. 21

No Showings

Sunday, Sept. 22

12 p.m. — Lee Daniel's the Butler, PG-13
3 p.m. — Jobs, PG-13
6 p.m. — Mortal Instruments: City of Bones, PG-13
9 p.m. — You're Next, R

Monday, Sept. 23

7 p.m. — We're the Millers, R

Tuesday, Sept. 24

7 p.m. — The Wolverine 3-D, PG-13

Wednesday, Sept. 25

5 p.m. — Planes, PG
7:30 p.m. — 2 Guns, R

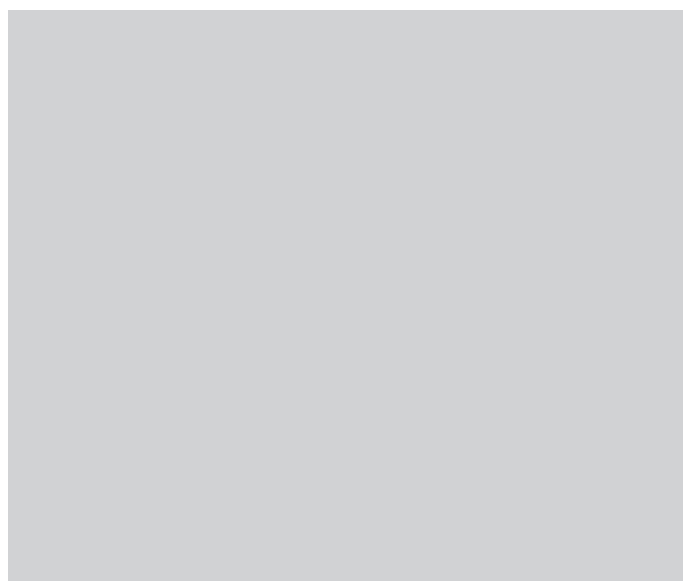
Thursday, Sept. 26

5 p.m. — The Smurfs 2, PG
7:30 p.m. — The Wolverine, PG-13




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