



MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS
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BLACK ALLIGATOR



Royal Marines from 40 Commando Royal Marines commandeer an M1 Abrams tank during an assault on Range 210 as part of Exercise Black Alligator 13 aboard the Combat Center Oct. 20.

Royal Marines assault Range 210

Story and photo by
 Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez

Royal Marines from 40 Commando Royal Marines culminated weeks of training and preparation aboard the Combat Center with an assault on Range 210 as part of Exercise Black Alligator 13, Oct. 20.

The unit arrived to the Combat Center in September and has been training to become the Lead Commando Group; the most deployment-ready commando force within the Royal Marines.

“Black Alligator is the first exercise we are conducting prior to taking over as lead commando group next year,” said Capt. Tristan Stewart, training officer, 40 Commando, Royal Marines. “There’s been a big turnover of new

Marines in the unit, and we are due to take on as the lead commando starting in May 2014.”

The Marines integrated infantry, artillery and armored assets to advance and engage the targets on the range. Ground Marines, equipped with SA80 assault rifles and L7 general-purpose machine guns, tactically cleared buildings. M1 Abrams tanks and artillery crews utilizing L118 light guns engaged targets beyond the buildings.

“We do not have ranges like this back in the United Kingdom,” Stewart said. “The terrain here is challenging, so it makes for an effective teaching tool. It’s great to see the Marines getting the most with this training.”

Throughout Exercise Black

Alligator, the unit had the opportunity to collaborate with Combat Center Marines as well.

“We worked alongside (1st Tank Battalion, 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, and K Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment),” said Lt. Brendan Ford, media officer, 40 Commando, Royal Marine Corps. “Our own Commando Group includes (40 Commando, 24 Commando Regiment Royal Engineers, 79 Commando Battery Royal Artillery), as well as interoperability training with the Dutch Marines of 22 Company, Korps Mariniers, totaling over 830 men.”

Training will continue for 40

See **ALLIGATOR** page A7

Hey Combat Center fans!

Let us know what you think of the Observation Post and what you’d like to see more of with a quick survey at:

surveymonkey.com/s/9CVHK2R

COMMANDANT SPEAKS TO COMBAT CENTER NCOs



CPL. MATTHEW ALLEN

Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps speaks to a crowd of Marines at Sunset Cinema Oct. 17. Amos and Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, visited the Combat Center and gave a class to Non-commissioned Officers as part of their mission to visit every Marine Corps base, state-side and overseas, to speak with the NCOs of the Corps. During the class, all Staff Non-commissioned officers and above were asked to leave the theater as the Commandant and Sergeant Major spoke with the corporals and sergeants about the history and the future of the Corps, as well as the meaning behind their rank and leadership. It reinforced the letter that was sent to every NCO in the the Corps, titled “The Reawakening.” The class ended with the promotion of Cpl. Jessie Claywell to the rank of sergeant. The Amos and Barrett continued their NCO-ship tour with a class Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, San Diego, Calif.

To read the letter, visit page A2 or go to: hqmc.marines.mil/portals/61/CMC_letter_to_NCOs.pdf.

NEO MAWTS-1 PARTICIPATES IN MOCK-EVACUATION OPERATION



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron 1 conducted a non-combatant evacuation operation exercise aboard the Combat Center Oct. 18. The exercise trained MAWTS-1 Marines how to evacuate non-combatants from an unstable environment. It is also conducted semi-annually, adhering to the unit’s training requirements and ensuring its mission readiness. The Marines conducted the exercise from approximately 5 to 10 p.m. utilizing multiple aircraft, to include the MV-22 Ospreys and CH-53 Super Stallions, which were used to transport simulated evacuees from both Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field and Del Valle Track and Field. Additionally, F-18 Hornets provided aerial security for the exercise.

RENFORTH KEEPS ‘SPARK GOING’

Cpl. D.J. Wu
 Combat Correspondent

Col. Austin E. Renforth is known as a charismatic and motivating Marine. He creates an environment where Marines want to do great things and complete the mission.

Prior to his 25-year Marine Corps journey, which eventually led to him assuming command of the 7th Marine Regiment, he grew up in the small, coal-mining and steel-milling community of Wheeling, W. Va. His father was a Marine during World War II and at first, following in his footsteps wasn’t his plan. Renforth, also known as Sparky, never dreamed of being a Marine, but that’s where his path led him. A career which took him out of Wheeling and into the world, helped him achieve dreams he never knew he had.

Growing up, Renforth was an athlete. He played any sport he could sign up for. When he realized his skills on the football field wouldn’t earn him a scholarship, he started looking for other ways out of Wheeling.

“I knew I didn’t want to end up working at a coal mine or a steel mill and I wasn’t as good at football as I thought,” Renforth said. “College just wasn’t there because I couldn’t afford it and I really liked what the Navy had to offer.”

Renforth enlisted in the Navy and made his way out of Wheeling. It didn’t take long for him to advance through the ranks. After two years of service, he seized an opportunity to become an officer. This is where the Sparky who Marines now know was molded and

See **SPARKY** page A7

7TH MARINE REGIMENT WELCOMES NEW COMMANDER

Sgt. Jacob Harrer
 Combat Correspondent

Marines and sailors with 7th Marine Regiment received a new commanding officer during a change of command ceremony here, Oct. 17.

Colonel Austin E. Renforth relinquished command to Col. Jay M. Barger, who previously served as the ground colonels monitor at the Manpower and Reserve Affairs Department, Headquarters Marine Corps, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. Barger deployed to Iraq in 2006 as the executive officer of Regimental Combat Team 5 and again in 2007 as the commanding officer of 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment.

As the new commanding officer of 7th Marines, Barger said combat readiness

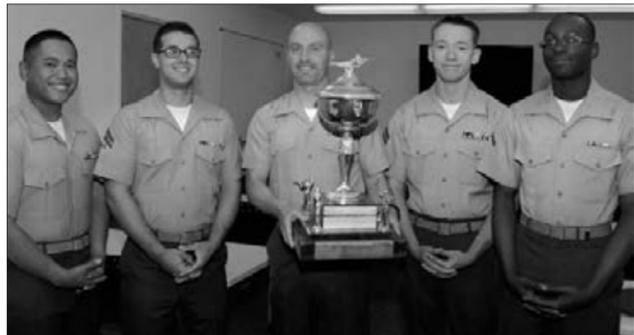
See **COC** page A7



CPL.; ROBERT REEVES

Col. Austin E. Renforth and Col. Jay M. Barger salute during the pass and review portion of a change of command ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Oct. 17.

Marines place first in Intramural Shooting Competition



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

Lt. Col. Michael A. Bowers, commanding officer, Headquarters Battalion, recognized four Marines who represented Headquarters Battalion during the Commanding General's Intramural Shooting Competition and were awarded with a trophy Oct. 18 at the Village Center. The CG's Intramural Shooting Competition is an annual event held aboard the Combat Center. This year, 16 teams of Marines participated. Categories included Rifle Team, Pistol Team, Team Aggregate and Individual Shooting. The Marines, Sgt. Ronald Castillo, Cpl. Justin Brant, Cpl. Roberto Despoiu and Pfc. Dre Gosha, participated in the competition as Team Honey Badger, placing first in the Rifle Team category.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

<p>RYAN JAMES STRONG Born on: Sept. 30, 2013 Born to: Kirsten and Joshua Strong</p> <p>SAWYER LEE TWEED Born on: Oct. 2, 2013 Born to: Jacob and Jeanette Tweed</p> <p>TVA ZYANN LLEVENAS Born on: Oct. 4, 2013 Born to: Deshon and Ariel Llevenas</p> <p>YENNI ENALIVIA TAFOLLA Born on: Oct. 5, 2013 Born to: Luis and Jennica Tafolla</p>	<p>MAKAIHAI ELYSSE GRAY Born on: Sept. 25, 2013 Born to: Edward and Shataeu Gray</p> <p>JAMISON NEAL HOLBROOK Born on: Sept. 26, 2013 Born to: Sherman and Kate Holbrook</p> <p>LANDON PHILIP MARTIN Born on: Sept. 28, 2013 Born to: Jennifer and Kyle Martin</p>
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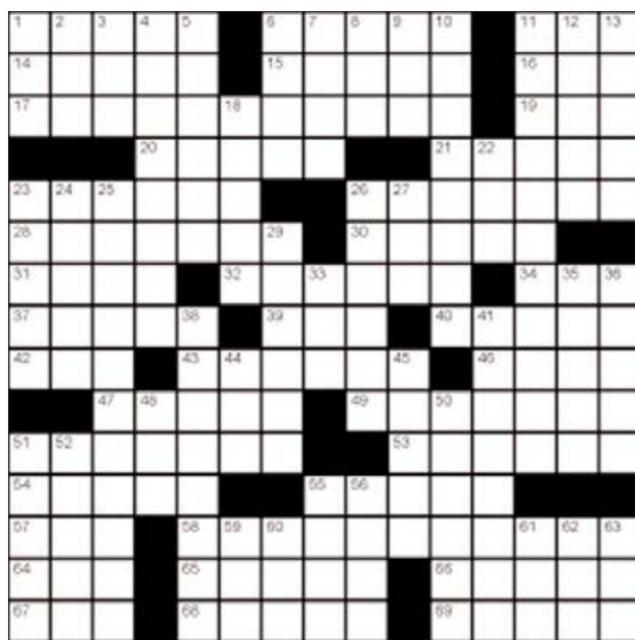
Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Training and Licensing

Bobby Piirainen
Safety Division

In our continuing effort to provide the best quality training for our personnel aboard the Combat Center and in accordance with MCO 5100.19F, all personnel operating an All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV), Light Utility Vehicle (LUV), Gator, Mule, etc., or Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle (ROHV), Razor, Ranger, aboard the installation in performance of their duties are required to receive training and have an OF-346 Operator Endorsement. The training is four to five hours of practical application of various exercises, ranging from basic starting and stopping drills to more complex exercises. The class also includes some classroom exercises that are conducted while at the range, i.e. getting new operators familiar with their vehicle, talking about the environment that we ride in, the different types of terrain we ride on and where it is acceptable to ride. Training is two-part. Part one is the mandatory ROHVA online course, cbt.rohva.org/. Part two is the driving portion. The online course must be accomplished prior to completing the driving portion of the training. Point of contact for these courses is Bobby Piirainen, Combat Center Safety Traffic Manager, bobby.piirainen@usmc.mil, 760-830-6154.

MUSIC TIME

- ACROSS**
- Build up, as a fortune
 - Humphrey's nickname
 - Hoover, notably
 - Erect
 - Naples' country
 - Prenuptial agreement?
 - Ireland's nickname
 - "I ___ Rock"
 - Burger accompaniment
 - Street urchin
 - Goldsmith's units
 - Election day items
 - School
 - Over
 - Morning or night wear
 - Downtown features
 - Two, in Tegucigalpa
 - Secret meeting
 - Chart-topper
 - Buffalo hockey player
 - Match part
 - Watch type
 - Behind
 - America, with "the"
 - Pakistan's largest city
 - European range
 - Figure
 - Party throwers
 - Former South African President P.W.
 - Finale
 - 12/7/41 locale
 - Muckraker Tarbell
 - Like the walls of Harvard Yard
 - "Born on the Fourth of July" director
 - A little sun
 - Jocks' counterparts
 - Put a spell on
- DOWN**
- Goon
 - The word, sometimes
 - Had
 - Comes up for air
 - Powerful ancient city-state
 - Pass, as time
 - Blues singer Redding
 - Service station stuff
 - Suffering
 - Monocle
 - Turtle variety
 - Let in
 - Complains
 - Shopping and laundry
 - Boxing great
 - Breath mint brand
 - Love to pieces
 - Rolling Stones hit
 - Hungarian composer Béla
 - "The ___ of Innocence"
 - Patriot Allen and



- author Canin
- "Texas tea"
- Correct, in combinations
- Greet at the door
- Dramatic downturn
- Pick-and-choose
- Alphabet sequence
- Wayne's "Wayne's World" pal
- Rebellious Turner
- Beat a dead horse
- "A League of ___ Own"
- Ford rival
- Raised
- Former Ford rival
- Jan Brady portrayed ___ Plumb
- Word on many planes
- Moving-day burden
- List starter
- Communist

THE REAWAKENING

16 October 2013

To our Corporals and Sergeants:

We are proud of you! We are privileged to serve alongside you and we are humbled every day by you! Instead of an easy life, you and your families chose a more difficult path – a life of service, challenge, and sacrifice. With few exceptions, every one of you enlisted while we were fighting two major wars. In the last 12 years, you have defeated every enemy on the battlefield, and now Sergeant Major and I need your help to reawaken the soul of our Corps against an enemy emerging within our ranks. By soul, we mean those timeless attributes and habits that have defined our Corps for 238 years: persistent discipline, faithful obedience to orders and instructions, concerned and engaged leadership, (24/7), and strict adherence to standards from fire team leader to General Officer. These habits, these attributes, our undeniable belief in “who we are and what we do,” form the soul of our Corps.

We know that 98% of our Marines are doing the right thing, but we also know there are some who aren't living up to our sacred title. We are returning to CONUS to rearm and refit in order to fight again when our nation least expects it. Those who aren't living up to the title Marine within our midst are disrupting the return to immediate readiness, soiling our honor, and causing the American people to lose trust in us! Disregarding orders and standards, substance abuse, sexual assault, hazing, self-destructive behavior, and failure to maintain personal fitness and appearance standards, weakens our Corps and dishonors all who have endured war's hardships. This insurgency of wrong doing is invading our homes and destroying our credibility.

Sergeant Major Barrett and I are now calling upon the backbone, the main effort of the Marine Corps – our NCOs – to once again advance to the decisive points in battle. Of the 174,046 enlisted Marines on active duty today, 144,570 are Sergeants and below. Fully 83.06% of our enlisted force is led by NCOs. As Non-Commissioned Officers, you have irrefutably proven over the past decade of war that you are the backbone of our Corps. Through your presence, leadership, and conduct we turn the tide of this battle against the insurgency of wrongdoing, restore our integrity with the American people, and keep our honor clean.

We have always known hardship and challenge; we have never known what it is to lose a battle, because we have always prided ourselves on our devotion to self-discipline and combat excellence. This is who we are as Marines and we must never allow it to slide. Discipline today leads to victory tomorrow. You truly are strategic Corporals and Sergeants!

Sergeant Major Barrett and I need every one of you in this fight. No greater compliment can be bestowed to a fellow Marine than to say, I can count on you always! Never forget who we are and what we do for our country. Move to the decisive point in this battle and through your presence, professionalism, and tenacity...turn the tide of this fight for the sake of Corps and country.

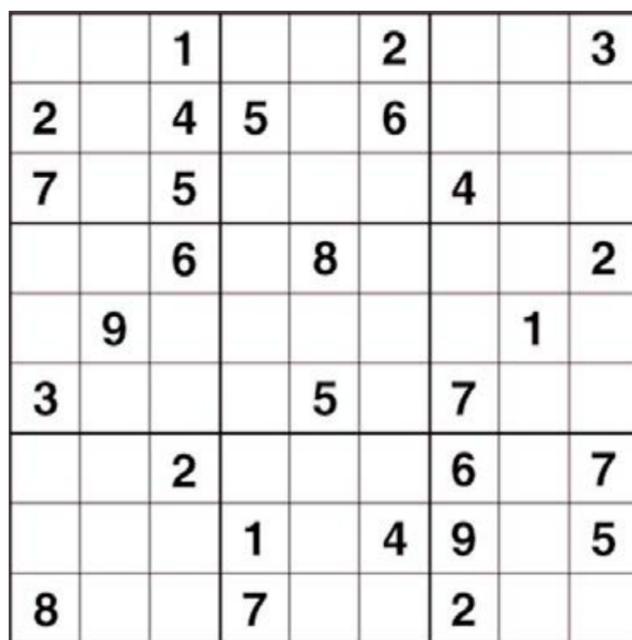
Semper Fidelis!

SgtMaj Micheal P. Barrett
Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps

Gen James F. Amos
Commandant of the Marine Corps

See answers on page A8

SUDOKU 3067D



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

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- Correspondents**
 Cpl. D. J. Wu
 Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
 Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez

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OFF-LIMITS ESTABLISHMENTS

- 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

Austin

Noble, Okla. administration clerk, 24

MCGREGOR



> **In the town that** I grew up in, you could do one of three things; stay there and grow old, play sports, or join the military. I tried my hand at baseball.

> **I started playing baseball** in third grade when two neighborhood kids asked me to come to practice with them.

> **I think one of the most** exciting things a kid could do is hit the ball. I picked up a bat and it came natural to me.

> **My mom gave me** a choice to play soccer or baseball due to what we could afford. I stuck with baseball.

> **Life wasn't easy** growing up. My mom was raising three of us and trying to go to school. But she always made sure I had cleats and a glove. I didn't always know what was going on, but I knew enough to know it wasn't good.

> **Nonetheless, I could** go to a diamond and leave the hardships behind.

> **For the two or three hours** of a baseball game, I could escape that reality and feel like a kid is supposed to feel. I could get away from what was going on with my mom or my dad.

> **It was also a way** to stay out of trouble. Baseball kept my nose clean so I didn't follow any paths with the wrong crowd.

> **I felt at home on** the baseball field. It gave me the opportunity to play with great coaches who really tried for me. They were patient. Looking back now, I'm glad they were that way.

> **The opportunities I have been given** because of baseball have been outstanding. I have been able to travel the country.

> **Being able to go out** of state and play, we had proved ourselves by beating the number one team in the state numerous times and were dubbed the number one team in Oklahoma.

> **We felt good being** able to defeat every team that came across us, and being able to go on and represent your state is a great feeling.

> **We played teams from all over** the United States. That was the first time we got to see our skill level nationally.

Before, we would go in and just end a team as fast as possible. When we got to Texas, it really turned into a dogfight. We were constantly on our toes. I enjoyed going against such a challenging team.

> **That first year we** got to nationals and felt really confident about it, but finally lost and placed fourth.

The year after that, we came back feeling stronger and went to Memphis, Tenn., but we downright got our butts kicked. It was a week-long tournament and we only lasted about two days.

> **It was still fun** to see the caliber of players all over the country come together to compete in this large-scale tournament. Trying to put your best guys against their best guys, it was different being on the other end of the whooping stick.

> **My big shoulder injury** happened during the start of football season. We had a new coach that thought it would be fun to see where the team was at with hitting. It's not something we should have done after a summer break.

> **We were running 20 yards** at each other diagonally. I was defending, and the other guy had the ball. I hit him pretty well the first time, but the second time the collision was worse.

> **Instantly, I knew** something was wrong. I got very light-headed and they say that's a sign you've torn something.

The arm I hurt was my throwing arm. We didn't have health insurance so I couldn't get surgery.

> **Luckily, the shoulder** healed on its own. I went back out to baseball. It still hurt, but I rehabilitated it myself.

> **To this day, I'm still** upset over the situation. I was going to try out for the Rangers team. Their Triple A team was in Oklahoma City, known as the Oklahoma City Red Hawks. My coaches were getting me ready for it.

> **Although baseball was still** a way for me to escape reality, I lost the joy of it due to my confidence going down from that injury. I was so nervous about hurting myself again. I liked being on the field but I felt like I wasn't contributing anymore. I had a love-hate relationship with the sport from then on.

> **Thinking about that injury** takes me back to the instant when it was all taken away from me.

> **After that league,** I stepped away from baseball. I felt I needed to do it.

> **Much later, upon arriving** at Twentynine Palms, I decided to take up softball.

> **I now feel like there's no** pressure to the sport. I'm back to knowing what it's like to have fun playing the sport, just like when I was a kid.

> **Although it's softball,** I can still run, catch, hit and just have fun while getting dirty. That's what baseball has always been for me.

MCGREGOR GREW UP PLAYING BASEBALL AND LATER REPRESENTED HIS STATE IN NATION-WIDE TOURNAMENTS. HE CONTINUES HIS LOVE FOR THE SPORT BY PLAYING SOFTBALL ABOARD THE COMBAT CENTER.

Interviewed by Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martínez
Oct. 21, 2013

FEDERAL IMPACT AID PROGRAM

Funds disbursed to school district

Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez
Combat Correspondent

Many school districts across the country contain land within their boundaries that is owned by the Federal Government, or that has been removed from the local tax rolls by the Federal Government, including Native American lands. These school districts face the challenge of providing a quality education to children while sometimes operating with less revenue than other school districts because the federal property is exempt from local property taxes. The Federal Impact Aid Program can disburse payment to these areas.

“The mission of the Impact Aid Program is to disburse impact aid payments to local educational agencies that are financially burdened by federal activities,” said Thomas Cruz, school liaison, Marine Corps Family Services. “It is also able to provide technical assistance and support services to staff and other interested parties.”

According to Cruz, Congress has provided financial assistance to these local school districts through the Impact Aid Program since 1950. Impact Aid was designed to assist local school districts that have lost property tax revenue due to tax-exempt federal property, or that have experienced increased expenditures due to the enrollment of federally-connected children, such as those living on Native American lands.

“The Impact Aid law provides assistance to local school districts with concentrations of children residing on Native American lands, military bases, low-rent housing proper-

ties, or other federal properties,” Cruz said.

Aboard the Combat Center, the Federal Impact Aid Program applies to Condor Elementary School. Students receive a federal survey card every year requesting information regarding their federal connection. To receive basic support payments, the school district must have at least 400 of their students, or three percent of their enrollment federally connected.

“These surveys are completed annually, and result in

// **The Impact Aid law provides assistance to local school districts with concentrations of children residing on Native American lands, military bases, low-rent housing properties, or other federal properties.**

// - THOMAS CRUZ

the federal government making payments to school districts such as the Morongo Unified School District,” said Paul Gattuso, principal, Condor Elementary School.

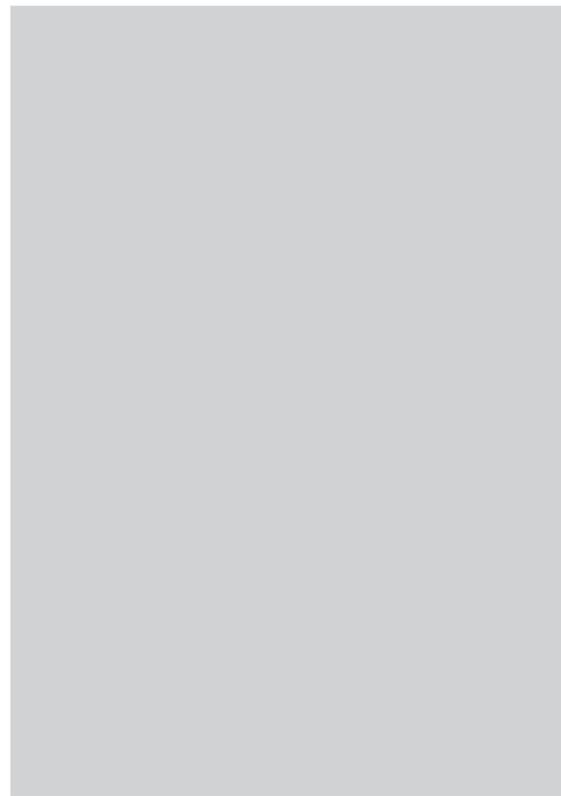
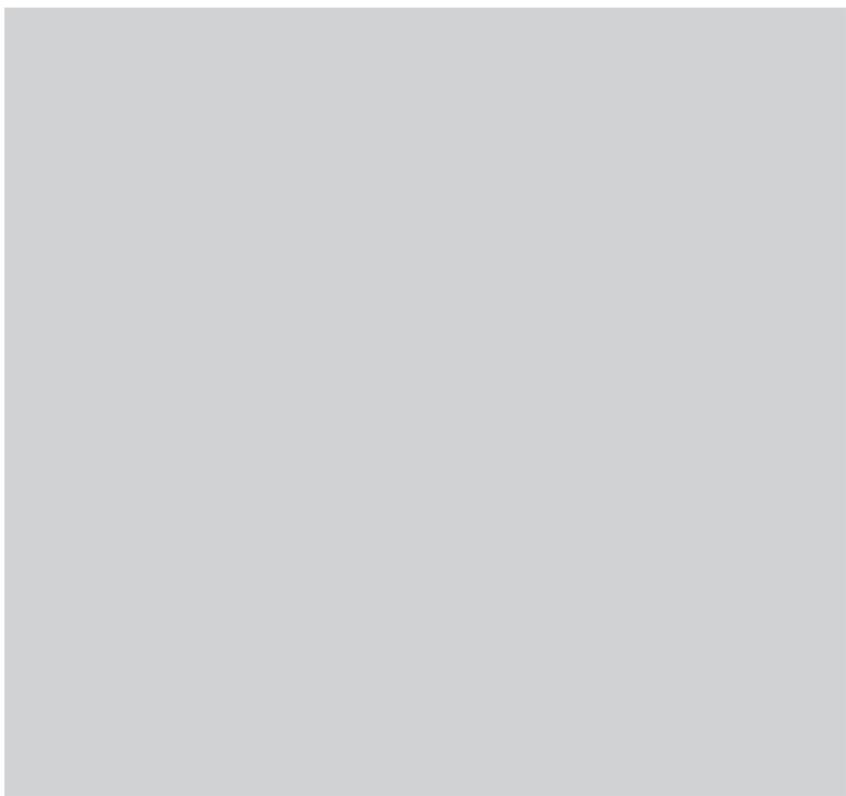
To receive the supplemental funding from the Department of Defense, the district must have 20 percent of their student population federally connected. The school district will only receive funding for completed surveys.

“With the distributed funding, schools are able to receive aid, furnishings, or even new classrooms,” Gattuso said. “The cooperation of parents in completing these surveys leads to a great financial assistance to the school district.”

For more information on the program, visit www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/impactaid/index.html



Visit the official Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>





Fire-Control

Story and photos by:
LANCE CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ

Large metal containers were used to ignite controlled fires with the intent of having firefighters recognize and properly react to them during a fire-control exercise conducted by firefighters from Morongo Valley Fire Department and two units from California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection at the Fire Department Training Area Oct. 22.



[Top,right]
Members with the MVFD and two units from CalFire work together during a fire-control exercise at the Combat Center Fire Department Training Area Oct. 22.



[Bottom,right]
A firefighter exits a structure containing a live, controlled fire during a fire-control exercise aboard the Combat Center Oct. 22.

Firefighters hone skills and knowledge with training

Firefighters with the Morongo Valley Fire Department and two units from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection conducted a fire-control exercise aboard the Combat Center Oct. 22.

The training accommodated a collaboration between the firefighting agencies and Chief Sam Moore, training chief, Combat Center Fire Department, being unique due to its mix of both new and seasoned firefighters.

"We were approached by the Morongo Valley Fire Department," said Dave Morgan, primary instructor, CalFire San Bernardino Unit. "Due to their small size, they don't have instructors to put on this training so they reached out and asked CalFire units for help. I was able to get firefighters from Riverside to conduct this training."

The firefighters received several classes on conditions and occurrences during a fire, and proceeded

to the Fire Department Training Area to execute three major components that consisted of fire behavior, fire attack, and ventilation.

"This kind of fire control class allows the (firefighters) to enter a fire environment and practice nozzle techniques and read smoke conditions," Morgan said. "When they get to the field, they'll be more aware of what's going on and be able to identify signs and trigger points of actual fires."

The first training tool was the fire-behavior prop. Students entered a metal structure and watched as a controlled fire was ignited. The aim was to recognize the expansion of fire, remain calm and practice breathing techniques.

"After lighting the fire, we

explained the phases of fire from the beginning phase through its growth, until it is fully developed and going to the infamous flash-over phase, which is quick ignition of directly exposed, combustible material in an enclosed area," said Scott Lewis, primary instructor, CalFire Riverside. "The students were able to recognize it and see it in real-life."

Firefighters moved on to the fire-attack station, a similar set-up with the purpose of actively engaging a fire. Firefighters practiced how to apply water through a standard nozzle.

"Here, (firefighters) were learning how to use the nozzle properly," Lewis said. "It gives them a sense of nozzle control and how to be diligent with the water without causing additional damage."

"This kind of fire control class allows the individuals to enter a fire environment and practice nozzle techniques and read smoke conditions."

-Dave Morgan

The final exercise, called the ventilation station, focused on the importance of sawing holes on the roofs of structures when possible. Firefighters utilized a chainsaw to practice their sawing skills.

"We utilize this one to get them comfortable and used to working with a chainsaw," Lewis said. "We do a technique called rowing the rafter, cutting in a straight, rectangular motion but avoiding the support frame, only cutting the roof. We cut holes to help release smoke and high gases from inside. It helps increase the survivability of victims in there and gives the firefighters better conditions when they go in."

According to Morgan, modern chemicals and structures often result in fires burning stronger and hotter, prompting firefighters to adapt to the heightened danger. This training session contributed to hands-on preparation for when crisis strikes.

"Training effectively will keep our firefighters safe and capable," Lewis said. "We want to do things

H & W

HEALTH AND WELLNESS FAIR

Semper Fit hosts event for healthier living



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

A Corpsman takes blood from a patron of the event to analyze their blood sugar at the Health and Wellness Fair Oct. 21.

Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya Combat Correspondent

Combat Center patrons attended the first, base-wide Health and Wellness Fair held at the West Gym Oct. 21. The fair was hosted by Marine Corps Community Services' Semper Fit in support of Operation Live Well.

"This fair' purpose is to try and reach out to the community and assist them in living a healthier life," said Davina Lira, admin specialist, Semper Fit. "We have many different people here who can provide a lot of information in almost every aspect when it comes to being healthy."

The fair was hosted by Semper Fit but many volunteers from the local community offered their time to set up a table with information about their specialty. The fair included optometrists, food experts, physical trainers, representatives from educational facilities and others who have a mission to promote healthy behavior. Promoting healthy behavior is one of the main mis-

sions of Operation Live Well.

According to their website, the Operation Live Well team has compiled a set of tools and resources that can be tailored to each individual's needs and preferences. Good health and vitality are based on a foundation of proper nutrition, physical activity, sleep, avoidance of risky behaviors, and emotional well-being. Operation Live Well aids in making healthy living an easier choice and the social norm for people everywhere. The operation looks to guide, motivate, and encourage people to obtain and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The fair also played a role in the on-going Combat Center challenge. Marines competing could attend the Health and Wellness Fair to earn points for their team.

"The fair supported a lot of different events taking place on the Combat Center but I am amazed at how many people came out to just get information on how to live a more healthy life," Lira said. "It is things like this fair that will help a healthy lifestyle and healthy behaviors become an easier way to live."

"This fair's purpose is to try and reach out to the community and assist them in living a healthier life."

- Davina Lira

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with the Hi-Desert Star

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SPARKY, from A1

developed into a Marine officer.

"Something people may not know about Sparky is, he took the SAT seven times," said Col. Jay Bargeron, commanding officer, 7th Marine Regiment. "He was determined to get a high enough score to get into the Naval Academy, and he did."

Renforth knew Bargeron, the Marine who replaced him at the head of the regiment, since they were both second lieutenants. They've kept a close relationship since then and Bargeron is even the godfather of Renforth's oldest son.

While at the Naval Academy, Renforth wasn't sure about continuing a career with the Navy or choosing the Marine Corps route until he met then Maj. Jim Mattis, who last served as the 11th commander of U.S. Central Command. It was this chance meeting and the allure of the Marine Corps that set Renforth on his path. He saw the Corps as something he was already familiar with, a team. Growing up playing sports, he knew there were roles to be played and he fit into the Marine Corps mentality.

"I tried to be different from my dad, but I just couldn't help myself," Renforth said. "It wasn't just (Mattis). I just related to the Marines more."

More importantly, Renforth views the Marine Corps as a family. The Marine Corps is his family, according to Renforth. He has treated all his Marines with the utmost dignity and respect because he knows in doing so, he will receive the same in return.

"I don't think there's a difference. The Marine Corps is my family," Renforth said. "I treat all these guys like brothers. I just want the Marines to know that we're all in this together."

As a leader, Renforth made time to talk to his Marines. Even from his first day on the job, Renforth couldn't say enough positive things about the "Magnificent 7th." Renforth took every opportunity to connect with his Marines, whether it was during a ceremony, training exercise or forward

deployed. He created an environment where the Marines were happy to be a part of the team. They understood the mission and because of his committed and unwavering leadership, they weren't going to let the mission fail.

"Sparky is a unique character in the Marine Corps," Bargeron said. "He's a great leader and a 'what you see is what you get' kind of guy. You don't have to read between the lines with him."

In his two and a half years at the Combat Center, Renforth accomplished many things. Upon his arrival, Renforth oversaw Exercise Urban Thunder, a large, combined-arms exercise using much of the assets from 1st Marine Division. He ensured all of the battalions under the 7th Regiment umbrella had everything they needed for their consecutive deployments. The year prior to his departure from the Combat Center, Renforth was deployed for a year as a regimental combat team commander in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He overaw them as the last infantry regiment in charge of their area of operation before handing over responsibility to Regional Command Southwest after they redeployed.

"I just want to thank everybody for their support since we've been on this journey," Renforth said. "I'm sad to say that time's up, but I'm also proud that I got to be a part of this. If my Marine Corps career ended tomorrow, I'd be very satisfied."

The crowd was still as Renforth relinquished command of "The Magnificent 7th" by symbolically handing over the regiment's colors to Bargeron. With the closing of this chapter begins the next.

Renforth is moving on to be the director at the Marine Corps Command and Staff College in Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.

"It's good to be able to go back to the school house," Renforth said. "I'm glad I get to be a part of the officers' academic education, being able to mentor a generation of majors, and try to put an indelible stamp on them."

COC, from A1

is his top priority. During the past decade of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, Marine battalions deployed regularly and on a schedule. He said as new threats emerge, Marines must be prepared for any type of mission.

"The future is going to be a lot less certain," said Bargeron, a native of Valdosta, Ga. "When we get asked to go somewhere, it will be a surprise as to when and where. My priority is getting ready for a broad range of missions."

Bargeron said combat readiness encompasses people, equipment, training and families, and his primary focus is on the people and families to be ready to go at a moment's notice.

During his tenure as commanding officer, Renforth led Regimental Combat Team 7 in Afghanistan from October 2012 to August 2013 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. During the deployment, the RCT served as a ground combat element for Marines deployed throughout Helmand Province.

Renforth said the Marines with the regiment were extremely dedicated and talented, and they require little guidance to accomplish the mission. He was proud of their accomplishments as they supported numerous exercises including Dawn Blitz, Urban Thunder and Spartan Resolve.

"We had such a good team, and such quality guys came together," said Renforth, a native of Wheeling, W. Va. "There were a couple times in the field when I saw things clicking without anything I was doing. There's not a weak person in this regiment. It's the strongest unit I've seen."

Renforth is currently slated for duty as the director of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, Quantico, Va.

ALLIGATOR, from A1

Commando following their departure from the Combat Center, including jungle warfare, mountain and cold weather training prior to next year's commitments.

"The lead commando group will be going on Exercise Cougar, an amphibious deployment traveling through the Mediterranean," Stewart said. "We'll be pushing out next year."

The unit is slated to return to the United Kingdom next month.



LANCE CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ

[Above] Royal Marines from 40 Commando Royal Marines participate in an assault on Range 210 as part of Exercise Black Alligator 13 aboard the Combat enter Oct. 20

[Left] A Royal Marine from 40 Commando Royal Marines operates a machinegun during an assault on Range 210 Oct. 20.



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COMBAT CENTER LEADERS, MARINES PARTICIPATE IN PIONEER DAYS PARADE



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

Marines with 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion drive down Adobe Road in a Light Armored Vehicle during the Pioneer Days Parade Oct.19.

Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
 Combat Correspondent

Combat Center leadership and Marines with various units aboard the base participated in the 77th Annual Pioneer Days Parade in Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 19. They represented not only the Combat Center as a whole, but the various ranks of Marines who support the local community.

“It is always nice to see the Marines get involved,” said Sam Moore, assistant fire chief, Combat Center Fire Department. “This parade brings the base and local community together to have a good time.”

Pioneer Days celebration began Oct. 17 and lasted until Sunday. The multi-day event consisted of a parade, carnival, pancake breakfast hosted by the Twentynine Palms Fire Department, chili dinner, K-9 demonstration by the Combat Center’s military police dog handlers and a static display by the Explosive Ordinance Disposal unit.

“We had a lot of different things to show the community that many people don’t get to see every day,” said Sgt. Jesse Stuteville, EOD technician. “Pioneer Days has been going on for a while and

it’s an amazing opportunity to play a part in such a big tradition.”

Pioneer Days commemorates the history of Twentynine Palms with events held in honor of the Native Americans, miners, cattleman, and homesteaders who came before the modern community and the Combat Center.

Maj. Gen. David H. Berger, Combat Center commanding general, Col. James Hanlon, Combat Center chief of staff, and Sgt. Maj. Karl Villalino, Combat Center sergeant major, participated in the parade while greeting all of the people attending. Other Marines rode in tactical vehicles and marched throughout the parade.

“It is very motivating to march in front of people while wearing the United States Marine Corps uniform,” said Cpl. Derek Bamba, Combat Center color guard. “Being surrounded by people who support what you do and the uniform you wear gives you a sense of belonging.”

After the parade, Marines and the people of the community had a day and a half to enjoy the rest of the festivities brought to them by the Pioneer Days celebration. The Marines look forward to participating again in next year’s festivities.

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

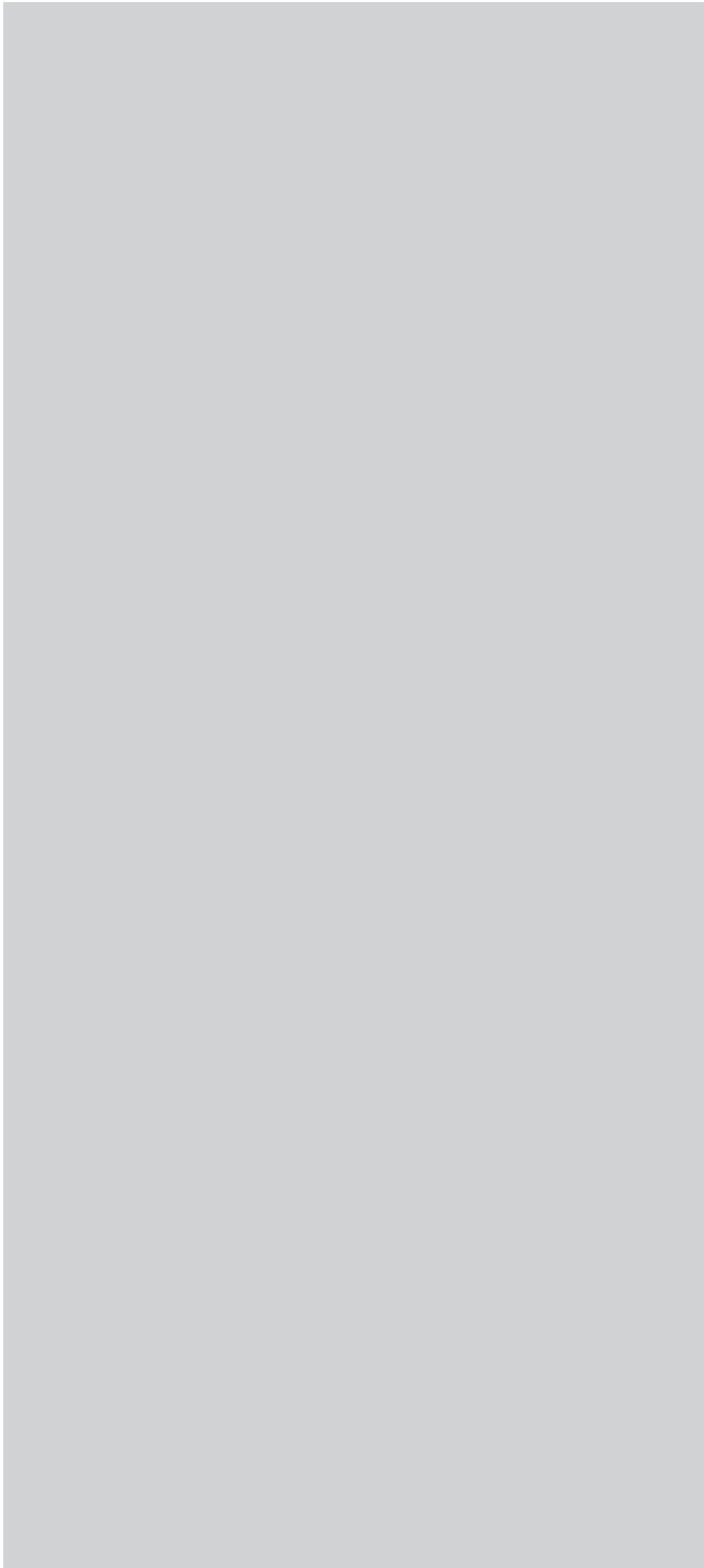
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SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

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1	5	2	8	3	9	6	4	7
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Halloween

FUN & SAFETY

Halloween is a time for scary fun and includes activities such as trick-or-treating, attending costume parties, carving pumpkins into jack-o-lanterns and telling scary stories to name a few. Check out these safety tips to assist you in keeping your ghosts, ghouls and goblins safe during their Halloween.

GENERAL RULES

- The major dangers aboard the Combat Center are not from witches or spirits but rather from falls, dehydration and pedestrian/car crashes.
- Make sure that an adult or an older, responsible youth will be supervising the outing for children under age 12.
- Plan and discuss the route trick-or-treaters intend to follow. Know the names of older children's companions.

COSTUMES

- Pin a slip of paper with the child's name, address and phone number inside a pocket in case the youngster gets separated from the group.
- Only use fire-retardant materials for costumes.
- Wear costumes loose so warm clothes can fit underneath.
- Costumes that are too long can pose a trip hazard. (Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injuries on Halloween).
- If children are allowed out after dark, use outfits made of light-colored materials. Strips of retro-reflective tape will make the children more visible.
- Masks can obstruct a child's vision. Use facial make-up instead.
- If masks are worn, they should have nose and mouth openings and large eye holes.
- Make knives, swords and other accessories out of cardboard or flexible materials. Do not allow children to carry sharp objects.
- Make sure bags or sacks carried by youngsters are light-colored or trimmed with retro-reflective tape if children are allowed out after dark.
- Carrying flashlights will help children see better and make them more visible.

TALKING TO YOUR KIDS

- Instruct your children to travel only in familiar areas and along an established route.
- Establish a return time.
- Teach your children to stop only at houses or apartment buildings that a front light is on, is well-lit and never to enter a stranger's home.
- Tell your youngsters not to eat any treat until they return home.
- Review all appropriate trick-or-treat safety precautions, including pedestrian/traffic-safety rules.

Children should understand and follow these rules:

- Do not enter homes or apartments without adult supervision.
- Walk, do not run, from house to house. Do not cross yards and lawns where unseen objects or the uneven terrain can present tripping hazards.
- Walk on sidewalks, not in the street.
- Walk on the left side of the road, facing traffic if there are no sidewalks.

TREATS

- Give children an early meal before going out.
- Insist that treats are brought home for inspection before anything is eaten.
- Wash fruit and slice into small pieces.
- When in doubt, throw it out.

PHONE NUMBERS TO HAVE

- Non-Emergency 830-6800
 - Emergency (On-Base landline) 911
 - Emergency Cell phone 760-830-3333
- (If you call 911 from off base or on a cell phone, San Bernardino's Emergency 911 number will be accessed.)



Liberty Call

Tom Hanks is riveting in real-life high-seas drama



COURTESY PHOTO

NEIL POND

"Captain Phillips"

Starring: Tom Hanks
 Directed by: Paul Greengrass
 PG-13, 134 min.

First of all, finally — a movie about pirates that doesn't have anything to do with Johnny Depp.

The rascally, comically rakish Capt. Jack Sparrow in five Disney "Pirates of the Caribbean" flicks, Depp is nowhere to be found in this pulse-pounding drama based on the real-life 2009 pirate hijacking of an American cargo ship off the coast of Africa.

And these pirates are a world away from Disneyland, in every way. A desperate bunch of gun-toting coastal villagers from chaotic, war-torn Somalia who attack the massive Maersk Alabama in their small fishing boat, they light the fuse on an international drama that ultimately draws the explosive deadly force of the U.S. Navy and its elite special-ops SEAL team.

Director Paul Greengrass, who previously steered two "Bourne" spy thrillers and the nail-biting, real-time "United 93," starts the story as the commercial captain of the title (Tom Hanks) departs his Vermont home for Africa, where he'll meet his ship, his crew and his fate.

In the first scene, we eavesdrop on the conversation between Phillips and his wife (Catherine Keener) on the way to the airport about how their kids should study harder in school to keep up with the big, changing world in which they'll soon become adults — a foreshadowing of the grueling tuto-

rial on the imbalance of global economics Phillips will soon get first-hand on the other side of the globe.

Working from a taut screenplay by Billy Ray (based on Phillips' book, "A Captain's Duty," about the incident), Greengrass shifts his cinematic canvas from the vastness of the open ocean to the stifling confines of a claustrophobic closed lifeboat in which the final high-wire act plays out.

In the title role, Hanks reminds us why he's one of the most versatile actors in all of modern movies, capable of just about anything. As Capt. Phillips' situation moves from bad to worse, his performance intensifies to a rawness that will leave a lot of viewers gasping — if not weeping — along with him at the end.

A movie "based on real events" can often be at a bit of a dramatic disadvantage in that audiences know everything that happened. But even if that's the case here, it doesn't matter: Greengrass draws out the tension, the suspense, and the sense that anything can happen into the very final moments.

(A new chapter emerged recently, however, as some of the real crew members involved in the incident brought a \$50 million lawsuit against their employers, claiming that Phillips and the Maersk shipping line put their lives in danger by taking unnecessary risks — and that the real-life Capt. Phillips wasn't quite the hero the movie makes him out to be.)

But if the story unfolded anywhere close to the way it's depicted on the screen, it's impossible not to come away from it somewhat moved, if not shaken, after watching this high-seas, high-stakes saga that didn't spring from someone's imagination, from a comic book, or from an amusement park ride — but from the real world in which we live, and one that really happened, to real people, not so long ago.

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.

Nightmares Halloween Haunt

A play that dwells into the nightmare of a little girl
 When: 7 p.m., Fridays & Saturdays, Oct. 18 - Oct. 31
 Where: Theatre 29
 73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
 For more information, call 316-4151

Low Desert

Lewis Black

Comedian Performs
 When: 9 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 25
 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>

Pitbull

Rapper performs
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 28
 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>

Craig Ferguson

Comedian performs
 When: 9 p.m., Friday, Nov. 8
 Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
 49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
 For more information, call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinosort.com>

Moonwalker

The ultimate Michael Jackson Experience
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 9
 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, Oct. 25

6 p.m. — Insidious Chapter 2, PG-13
 8:30 p.m. — Riddick, R
 11:30 p.m. — Rush, R

Saturday, Oct. 26

10:30 a.m. — Free Admission ParaNorman, PG
 12:30 p.m. — Hotel Transylvania 3-D, PG
 3 p.m. — Prisoners, R
 6:30 p.m. — The Family, R
 9 p.m. — The World's End, R
 11:30 p.m. — Insidious Chapter 2, R

Sunday, Oct. 27

12:30 p.m. — Hotel Transylvania 3-D, PG
 3 p.m. — Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 3-D, PG
 5:30 p.m. — Parkland, PG-13
 8 p.m. — Don Jon, R

Monday, Oct. 28

5 p.m. — Free Admission World War Z, PG-13
 7:30 p.m. — The World's End, R

Tuesday, Oct. 22

5 p.m. — Free Admission The Conjuring, R
 7:30 p.m. — Riddick, R

Wednesday, Oct. 30

7 p.m. — Prisoners, R

Thursday, Oct. 31

5 p.m. — Free Admission Sinister, R
 7:30 p.m. — Insidious Chapter 2, PG-13

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8-4-6 RUN

3-PART SERIES CONCLUDES WITH 6-MILE RACE

Story and photos by:
Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez



Runners make their way through the course during the 8-4-6 Race Series six-mile race at the Desert Winds Golf Course Oct. 23.

Dozens of runners aboard the Combat Center concluded the 8-4-6 Race Series with a six-mile race taking them through the Desert Winds Golf Course Oct. 23.

Semper Fit and Marine Corps Community Services have hosted the three-part race series for the past three years. The conclusion of this 6-mile race marks the end of this year's series.

"These races are something we want to continue every fall," said George Schadegg, race coordinator, Semper Fit, MCCS. "They bring back a cross-country feel for the runners."

The course took participants through residential streets, onto a sandy trail, and back to the grass grounds of the golf course.

"We usually use the physical-fitness-test track and the obstacle course," Schadegg said. "We want to see about having the races here next year. The runners really like the grass terrain since it's hard to find elsewhere."

Some participants were only expecting competition, but were pleasantly surprised to find camaraderie within the race as well.

"I thought this would be a really good opportunity for unit cohesion and physical training," said Sgt. Katherine Guillory, Electronic Key Management System custodian, Combat Logistics Company 13, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group. "It was good to see them running and putting forth effort together. I'm glad we did a run that was a little bit different."

According to Schadegg, this race had the smallest turnout with only 35 participants. However, it didn't stop each runner from taking every stride necessary to get to the finish line.

Coming in first place for males was Staff Sgt. Arthur Schocken, unmanned aerial-vehicle operator, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1. The first-place female competitor was Marlow Besey, wife of Pfc.

Austin Besey, infantryman, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. The first place team, judged through a combination of all race times, was Lance Cpl. Tim Mejia, administration clerk, VMU-1, and Cpl. Antonio Mondragon, administration chief, VMU-1.

Although the race series is over, Semper Fit will still be kicking off other athletic activities in the coming months.

With the race series done, we'll be turning our attention to flag football and co-ed softball, Schadegg said.

For more information on Semper Fit and upcoming sporting events and activities, visit www.mccs29palms.com.



Jillian Stoker, wife of Sgt. Justin Stoker, infantryman, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, holds a plaque commending her as the second place female finisher of the 8-4-6 Race Series six-mile race at the Desert Winds Golf Course Oct. 23.



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