



SGT. TIMOTHY LENZO

[Above] Ryan Forbes, 13-year-old native of San Diego, pulls a lanyard firing an M777 Howitzer with Marines of Lima Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, aboard the Combat Center, May 13.

Foundation, Marines team up to grant San Diego native's wish

Sgt. Timothy Lenzo
 Combat Correspondent

He stood noticeably smaller than the Marines to his left and right. Their frames filled out their camouflage utilities and flak jackets, while his looked a couple sizes too large.

Despite the noticeable size difference, Ryan Forbes, a 13-year-old native of San Diego, held his own with the Marines of Lima Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment. His grin from ear to ear could be seen as they joked during lunch and when describing the lifestyle of the Marines in the field.

Forbes experienced a small taste of that lifestyle when he was made a "Marine for a day" with the battery. 1st Marine Division coordinated with the Make-A-Wish Foundation to grant Forbes wish May 13. Forbes was diagnosed with medulloblastoma, a form of brain cancer, in January,

but he hasn't let his current treatment hinder his enthusiasm for the military.

Forbes arrived with his parents and brother in the morning, but after a short meeting and a long drive to the field, he was seen in flak jacket and Kevlar. He talked to Marines about various weapon systems, had his first Meal Ready-to-Eat with artillery Marines, called orders through the radio and participated in a fire mission at the gunline.

It was an eventful day that culminated with him fulfilling one of his dreams.

"I came out and fired a Howitzer," said Forbes, with a grin. "It shook me."

Forbes has wanted to join the military for several years. He spends time learning about the different branches, what it takes to complete recruit training and the

See WISH, A6

Postal Exercise 2014 challenges Combat Center responders

Story by **Cpl. Ali Azimi**

It was a normal day. Marines at the Combat Center's post office were lugging through and sorting the heaps of mail delivered to them that morning. A Marine picked up a package to read its destination. It was addressed to the commanding general, sent from the President of the United States. However, the package didn't look very official. It was poorly packaged, with spelling mistakes in the address and excessive postage stamps. Parts of it were oily and upon closer inspection, a white powder was seen coming out of the corners. The Marine immediately put down the package and stepped away.

Combat Center Marines and first responders conducted a hazardous material scenario at the post office, Wednesday, as part of Postal Exercise 2014.

"We need to make sure the instructions and guidelines are strong, properly practiced and are being constantly checked," said Luis Sanchez, exercise planner, Exercise Team West, Headquarters Marine Corps. "One thing we've learned is that any type of situation can occur anywhere at random times. It's not a matter of what if this happens, it's when."



CPL. ALI AZIMI

A Combat Center Fire Department's hazmat team tests an unknown powder during Postal Exercise 2014 at the post office, Wednesday. The exercise tested the training of Marines and responders aboard the Combat Center.

The exercise was coordinated by Exercise Team West and supported by the Combat Center Fire Department, post office, Provost Marshal's Office and Force Protection. Leaders from each section were present to evaluate the performance of the responders.

"If there are any short falls or strengths, we want to be sure to identify those and include them in the after action report," Sanchez said. "So if it's something we need to fix, we can go back and do that just to make their program stronger. If it's a strength, it can be shared with other bases."

The exercise began in the morning once mail clerks noticed the package. They followed the protocol they have been trained in and notified emergency services. Two Marines, considered to have already been "contaminated," stayed behind as the rest of the building was ordered to evacuate.

The first to arrive were the PMO officers. The officers quarantined the two contaminated Marines outside and questioned them about the package, their contamination and what they did to prevent further contamination. The two Marines explained the situation and reported that they had a slight headache and some stomach problems.

"Just because there is a powder doesn't mean a whole lot," Sanchez said. "Now, if someone started to show symptoms that are tied to certain types of agents, that's one more clue."

The situation was deemed hazardous and the area was cordoned by PMO. They rerouted traffic and prevented anyone from entering the area until the Combat Center Fire Department arrived.

The information collected was passed off to the fire captain, who arranged for his men to enter the building.

Six firemen geared up into hazmat suits and split into three even teams.

The firefighters were outfitted with masks in place, hooked up to a clean

See SCENARIO, A6

1st MarDiv Assc. hosts lunch for spouses



Story and photo by **Cpl. Ali Azimi**

Col. Matthew Jones, commanding officer, Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group, sits down to lunch during a luncheon at The Classic Club in Palm Desert, Calif., May 15. The 1st Marine Division Association held a spousal appreciation luncheon at the club. The association is made up of members of 1st Marine Division, past and present. They invited the spouses of 1st Marine Division Marines to thank them for their unyielding support and strength of character through their many years as part of the family. Each spouse was acknowledged by name and asked to stand as they were individually recognized and applauded.

DESERT SCIMITAR

See A4, A5 for story and photos



This Week in Combat Center History



Reprinted from the Observation Post dated
May 26, 1978

Vol. 22, Issue No. 20

Palm Tree exercise not just assault on rocks

Story by 1st Lt. Nora Taseff

A successful Palm Tree exercise involves much more than a bunch of 'grunts' assaulting rocks in the middle of the Mojave Desert.

It's the result of well-coordinated efforts by infantry, artillery, aviation and logistic support Marines. This is what the Marines of Battalion Landing Team 2-8, Logistics Support Element-34 and the Air Support Element learned during their three-and-a-half-day fire support coordination exercise at the conclusion of Palm Tree 6-78.

Approximately 1,600 East Coast Marines took part in the exercise May 6 through 22. They came here to train in a realistic combat environment using live-fire and mechanized, motorized and helicopter-horne forces supported by artillery, naval gunfire and air support.

"This is the only place in the Marine Corps where we can train with live-fire and close air support as we did these last two weeks," said Lt. Col. Philip J. Fehlen, battalion commander, 2/8. "The training we accomplished here was good preparation for the battalion's upcoming six-month deployment to the Mediterranean this fall."

Fehlen's battalion underwent six days of small unit training to include firing of machine guns and crew-served weapons, mechanized armor tactics and night firing before the actual exercise. For many of the Marines, this was their first chance to work in a desert environment, battling the elements as well as the training objectives. It was also the first time many have seen Marine aircraft drop live ordnance.

"It was really something else," said Pfc. Robert Riossi, a member of Co. F, 2/8. "This was the first time I've ever seen napalm dropped or a 300 pound bomb. It's probably the closest thing to actual combat."

Unique to the Palms Tree exercise was the amount of air support pro-

vided by the Air Support Element.

"For this battalion-sized exercise, we had 22 fixed wing and 13 helicopters dedicated for use by the battalion during the FSCEX," said Maj. Joe Underwood, commanding officer, ASE. "For the first time, we had Navy A-7E Corsairs from Light Attack Squadron-25 from the Lemoor, Calif. Naval Air Station participate on a Marine Palm Tree exercise. They acted as "carrier aircraft" operating from the USS Lemoore. This added a new dimension to the exercise scenario and gave the Navy pilots the opportunity to work with us in providing close air support."

While operating in the Delta Corridor, the battalion was supported by Marines from Logistic Support Element-34.

"We were able to respond to the needs of the ground forces during the exercise to the point there were never any critical shortages of any class supply for the Marines in the field," said Capt. James A. Kuch, commanding officer, LSE-34.

Motor transport support during the exercise set a record for Palm Trees.

"To our knowledge, this is the first BLT-sized exercise in which there were no combat deadlines of vehicles," explained 1st. Lt. Craig Patranc, motor transport officer, 2/8. "No vehicle that broke down during the exercise was deadlined for more than six hours. Everything ran when we got here and everything's running well now that it's time to go back."

Coordination was the key to the successful completion of the training conducted during the Palm Tree exercise. The Marines returned to their home bases this week, many with a deeper appreciation and understanding of the Marine air-ground team... much more than a bunch of 'grunts' assaulting rocks.

Martial Arts Instructors Course

July 7 - July 25

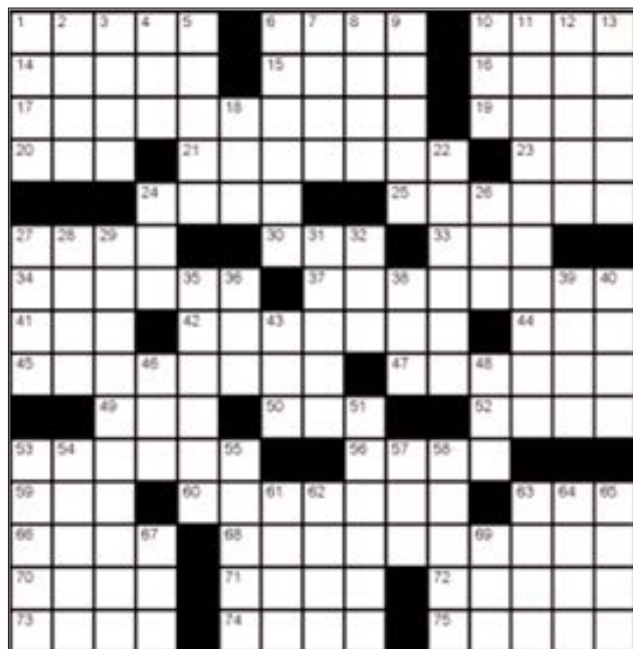
Students who complete the course will be a minimum of a green belt instructor. Students must be a corporal or above with a grey belt.

Location: Martial Arts Facility, Building 1652
For more information, contact Staff Sgt Fulgencio at 830-0290

"P.R. CAMPAIGN

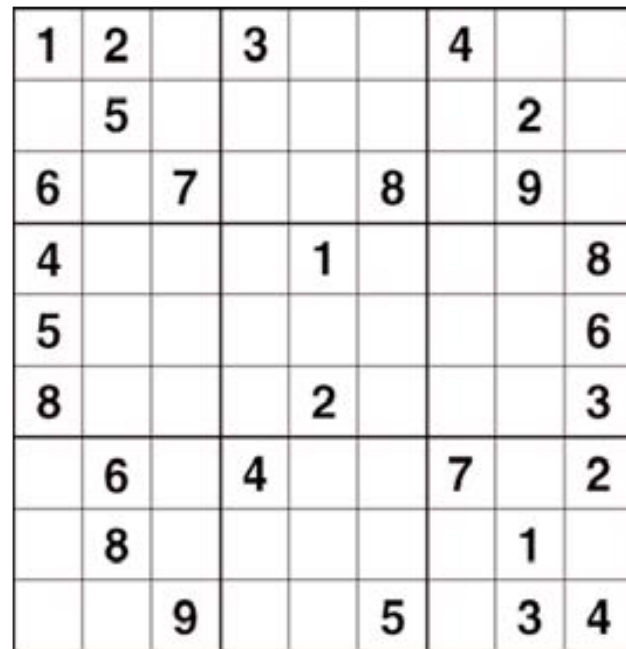
- Across**
- 1 In the midst of
 - 6 High tennis shots
 - 10 Copy a baseball player, at times (ick!)
 - 14 Brown shade
 - 15 Freshly
 - 16 Song
 - 17 Patriot who went on a "Midnight Ride"
 - 19 Time ___ half
 - 20 Matthew and John: abbr.
 - 21 Toothbrush part
 - 23 One of the Kardashians
 - 24 Enemies
 - 25 Some astrological signs
 - 27 Dog food brand
 - 30 Possesses
 - 33 Day-___ paint
 - 34 Rough
 - 37 Last drink of the evening
 - 41 Toy that spins
 - 42 Person who never throws anything away
 - 44 First aid ___
 - 45 Very thin
 - 47 Singer Easton
 - 49 Kind of bread
 - 50 Director Craven
 - 52 ___ and crafts
 - 53 Be in charge of a movie
 - 56 Burn
 - 59 Yoko ___
 - 60 Whaler's weapon
 - 63 Cat's place
 - 66 Easy victory
 - 68 Caribbean island owned by the U.S.
 - 70 Tiny bit
 - 71 "What ___ is new?"
 - 72 Running on ___ (almost out of fuel)
 - 73 Wintertime fun
 - 74 Tennis match parts
 - 75 Grand banquet

- Down**
- 1 Scary snakes
 - 2 Beef or turkey, e.g.
 - 3 Masterwork
 - 4 Zero, in soccer
 - 5 Gorgeous Greta
 - 6 Sparing no expense
 - 7 Dollar bills
 - 8 Ernie's pal, on "Sesame Street"
 - 9 Just fine and dandy
 - 10 Train stop: abbr.
 - 11 Musician with a mohawk, maybe
 - 12 Country whose capital is New Delhi
 - 13 Cowboys, Broncos, Seahawks, etc.
 - 18 Before, in poems
 - 22 Between seventh and ninth
 - 24 In favor of
 - 26 Three-letter sandwich
 - 27 Hits the stage
 - 28 "Check it out!"
 - 29 One way for a kid to earn money
 - 31 Foot joint
 - 32 Gentleman
 - 35 Politician's words
 - 36 Devour
 - 38 Fuel
 - 39 "___ Misbehavin'"
 - 40 School orgs.
 - 43 Crow's sound
 - 46 Soap ingredient
 - 48 One of two on your head
 - 51 Makes a goal
 - 53 College dwellings
 - 54 One way to saute
 - 55 Scotch and masking
 - 57 Burning
 - 58 Have ___ day
 - 61 Law
 - 62 Irritating person
 - 63 ___ beans
 - 64 Four in a deck of cards
 - 65 Blog item
 - 67 Baseball great Williams
 - 69 Wish you hadn't



See answers on page A3

SUDOKU 3270 D



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



OBSERVATION POST

- Commanding General** - Maj. Gen. David H. Berger
- Base Sgt. Maj.** - Sgt. Maj. Karl Villalino
- Public Affairs Officer** - Capt. Justin Smith
- Public Affairs Chief** - Staff Sgt. Dorian Gardner
- Media NCOIC** - Cpl. Lauren A. Kurkimilis
- Layout/Design** - Lance Cpl. Paul S. Martinez
- Press Chief** - Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
- Correspondents**
- Cpl. Al Azimi
- Cpl. Charles J. Santamaria
- Lance Cpl. Kasey Peacock

The Observation Post is published by Hi-Desert Publishing, a private firm in no way connected with the Department of Defense or the United States Marine Corps, under exclusive written contract with the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. This commercial enterprise newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the military services. Contents of the Observation Post are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the United States government, the DOD, or the United States Marine Corps. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts and supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the DOD or Hi-Desert Publishing of the services advertised.

Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation, or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. Editorial content is prepared by the Public Affairs Office, MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif. 92278. All photos, unless otherwise indicated are Official USMC Photos. Questions can be directed to the Public Affairs Office, located in building 1417, during normal working hours at 830-6213 or FAX 830-5474. The Observation Post is made with 60 percent recycled paper.

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.
 - 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

John HALE

Ann Arbor, Mich. archaeologist, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Division, 48



>Growing up, I was always fascinated with everything about the military. I originally intended to join the Navy, but in high school, my mindset changed and I wanted more of a challenge. In 1984, 10 days after I graduated high school, I was at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

>I signed up open contract in combat arms, and ended up getting artillery meteorologist.

>The job ended up being a lot of fun for me. I had never done anything even remotely similar to that. I enjoyed it so much that after I got off active duty and joined the reserves, I remained in weather occupational specialties for 16 years.

>I began going to school at Eastern Michigan University. My bachelor's is in English and after I received it, I soon began working as a technical writer.

>It was something that I was good at, but something I thought was incredibly boring. After a few years in the Marine Corps reserves, I transferred over to the Navy reserves, and continued working in weather.

>I spent four years in the Navy reserves with the same unit until it got deactivated. At that point I transferred again, this time to the Air National Guard. I was looking for something more exciting because I was bored out of my skull in my civilian job, so I joined the 107th Combat Weather Flight unit, which supported 12th Special Forces Group.

>It was great for me at the time. I got to participate in a lot more field work, which is what I was looking for. I also decided to quit my job and go back to school full time for my master's degree in archeology.

>I went to Ball State University where our only famous alumni was David Letterman.

>I pursued Archeology because they accepted my bachelor's degree in English into their program. They told me it was easier to turn a writer into an archeologist than it was to turn an archeologist into a writer.

>Upon completion of my degree, I became a historian in the Air Force and have been doing it ever since. Our job is to document the history involved with the unit.

>Being a historian and an archeologist is pretty overlapping. Each includes a lot of writing and each compliment my passion for history.

>I found my first job as an archeologist in Pittsburgh, Pa. I attached to a new Air National Guard unit there, and volunteered for an overseas deployment. I ended up deploying to Saudi Arabia for about four months working as a historian.

>When I came back, I began looking at other archeologist jobs across the U.S. I eventually applied for the position at the Combat Center, and was able to get it in June 2003. I have been here ever since.

>It was a natural transition for me coming back to a Marine base. I knew all the lingo and it worked out great for me.

>We have 2,200 recorded sites across MCAGCC that we have documented. It is our job to protect all of the natural resources on those sites, and make sure we are not damaging any history.

>The thing I learned early on in the military was find something you like to do, and stick with it. It was a long process for me to determine what I wanted to do with my life, but I decided to end up doing something I love. I'll never get rich being an archeologist, but I will enjoy myself every day.

>I was so happy being in the field of archeology that I decided to pursue my PhD so that I could teach it. I have been working at Copper Mountain College and on base, teaching both history and archeology.

>It is hard sometimes, maintaining two jobs and my commitment to the reserves. I look at it like I can sacrifice some personal time now, to get to where I want to be in the future.

>Eventually I would like to focus more on being a teacher, and one day do just that.

>When I came into the Marine Corps right out of high school, I think it was exactly what I needed. Because of that, I believe it is a great thing for young kids struggling with what they want to do.

>I see a lot of young Marines today and I see myself at that age. I see these Marines and sailors taking these college courses on top of their work commitments and I really admire that. It is special to me because I love to teach, and I hope I'm getting across to the Marines the importance of education and pursuing your dreams.

Interviewed and photographed by Lance Cpl. Kasey Peacock May 15, 2014

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

A	M	O	N	G		L	O	B	S		S	P	I	T
S	E	P	I	A		A	N	E	W		T	U	N	E
P	A	U	L	R	E	V	E	R	E		A	N	D	A
S	T	S		B	R	I	S	T	L	E		K	I	M
			F	O	E	S			L	I	B	R	A	S
A	L	P	O			H	A	S		G	L	O		
C	O	A	R	S	E		N	I	G	H	T	C	A	P
T	O	P		P	A	C	K	R	A	T		K	I	T
S	K	E	L	E	T	A	L		S	H	E	E	N	A
		R	Y	E		W	E	S			A	R	T	S
D	I	R	E	C	T			C	H	A	R			
O	N	O		H	A	R	P	O	O	N		L	A	P
R	O	U	T		P	U	E	R	T	O	R	I	C	O
M	I	T	E		E	L	S	E		F	U	M	E	S
S	L	E	D		S	E	T	S		F	E	A	S	T

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

1	2	8	3	7	9	4	6	5
9	5	3	1	6	4	8	2	7
6	4	7	2	5	8	3	9	1
4	3	6	9	1	7	2	5	8
5	9	2	8	4	3	1	7	6
8	7	1	5	2	6	9	4	3
3	6	5	4	9	1	7	8	2
7	8	4	6	3	2	5	1	9
2	1	9	7	8	5	6	3	4

**LOOKING
for local
entertainment?**

See page B2 for our
LIBERTY CALL
section

DESERT SCIMITAR

Security platoon stands up during annual exercise

Story and photos by **Sgt. Timothy Lenzo**



[Above] Sgt. Joseph Hoffmann, musician, Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division, prepares for a security patrol during Exercise Desert Scimitar aboard the Combat Center, May 12.

[Below] Marines with HQBN, 1st MarDiv, conduct a security patrol during Exercise Desert Scimitar aboard the Combat Center, May 12. The battalion came together to provide security for 1st Marine Division during the exercise, maintaining an entry control point and conducting patrols around the camp.



Some of them work behind desks with computers, others in a warehouse surrounded by boxes of equipment, or on a stage with instruments, but for one week, they replaced their familiar surroundings with sand and 50-mph winds.

The security platoon for Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division, was tasked with base security during Exercise Desert Scimitar, May 12 - 17. The unit was comprised of Marines from varying jobs when not in the field. Some of the Marines are from the 1st Marine Division Band, supply warehouses and administrative offices. They all came from different shops with different backgrounds.

Despite their diverse job descriptions, they had one thing bringing them together and this bond allowed them to trust one another while maintaining security.

"Every Marine is a rifleman," said Staff Sgt. Marcus Bailey, security platoon staff noncommissioned officer in charge.

This old adage is proven every day during Desert Scimitar. During the exercise, 1st Marine Division acted as the headquarters element of I Marine Expeditionary Force. This allowed the division to test and refine its capabilities while operating in a realistic field environment.

The platoon maintained proper procedures at entry control points, security posts and conducted daily patrols. They ensure only authorized individuals are allowed into the facility and have a section designated as a quick-reaction force, standing by to support the primary security element if needed.

"When Marines come to security platoon, they do the fundamental things of Marines," said Marcus, a native of Panama City, Fla. "It's about how we train. We are capable of utilizing any Marine at any level."

Having a blend of so many different jobs presented unique challenges to the Marines. For many of them, this was their first time working with the majority of their squad.

"We don't know how we work with one another," said Cpl. Ian Moore, a Marine musician with the battalion. "We don't know how some people will respond to being put on the spot or being a leader."

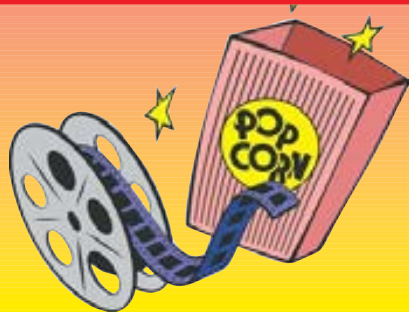
Moore, a native of Roseburg, Ore., made an effort to learn and get to know his Marines to offset this issue. He wanted to be effective, regardless if he's blowing a trumpet or posting security. He understood the need for the Marines to his left and right to be successful at both.

Moore's role as a member of the band requires him to be more on the ceremonial side of the Marine Corps, so he enjoyed the opportunity to get out in the field and put his flak jacket and Kevlar on.

"We are always in dress blues or service uniforms," Moore said. "Now we are in (camouflaged utilities) and getting dirty. It's completely different."

The security platoon Marines maintained security for the duration of the exercise. They will be ready to answer the call whenever and wherever the Marine Corps needs them.

**See page B2 for
Sunset Cinema
movie
schedule**



**Visit the official MCAGCC
facebook page at
[http://www.facebook.com/
thecombatcenter](http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter)**

In the FIELD



LANCE CPL. LEAH AGLER

[Left] Marines with 2nd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, demonstrate the set-up of an M777 155mm Lightweight Howitzer aboard the Combat Center during Exercise Desert Scimitar, May 14. 1st Marine Division acted as the headquarters element for a forward-deployed Marine Expeditionary Force in this evolution.

[Right] Marines with, Co. B, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, board a CH-53E Super Stallion after conducting a Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel mission during Exercise Desert Scimitar aboard the Combat Center, May 12.



CWO2 JORGE A. DIMMER

[Below] Marines with, Co. B, 1/1, taxi on a CH-53E Super Stallion at the strategic expeditionary landing field after conducting a TRAP mission during Exercise Desert Scimitar aboard the Combat Center, May 12.



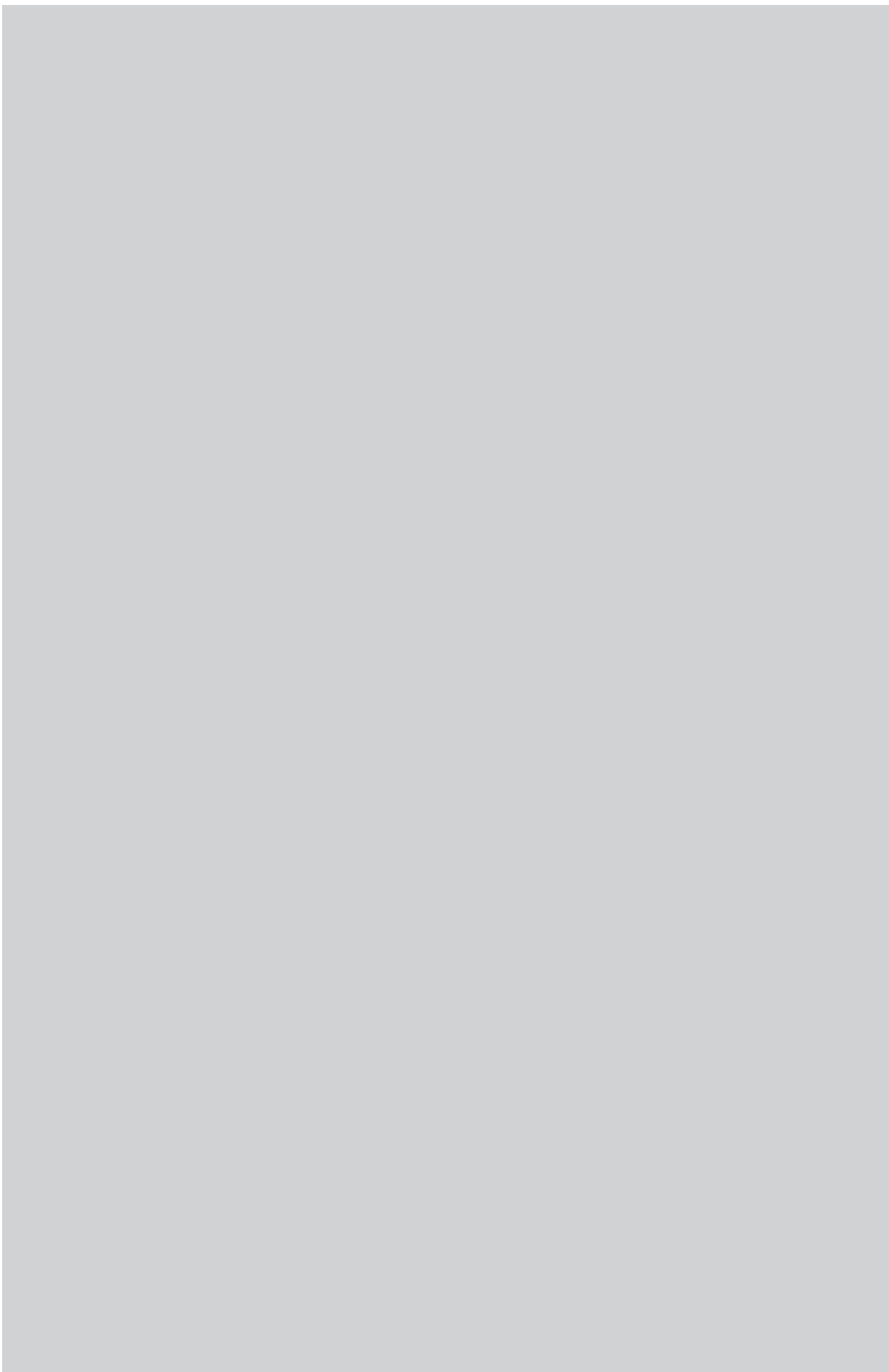
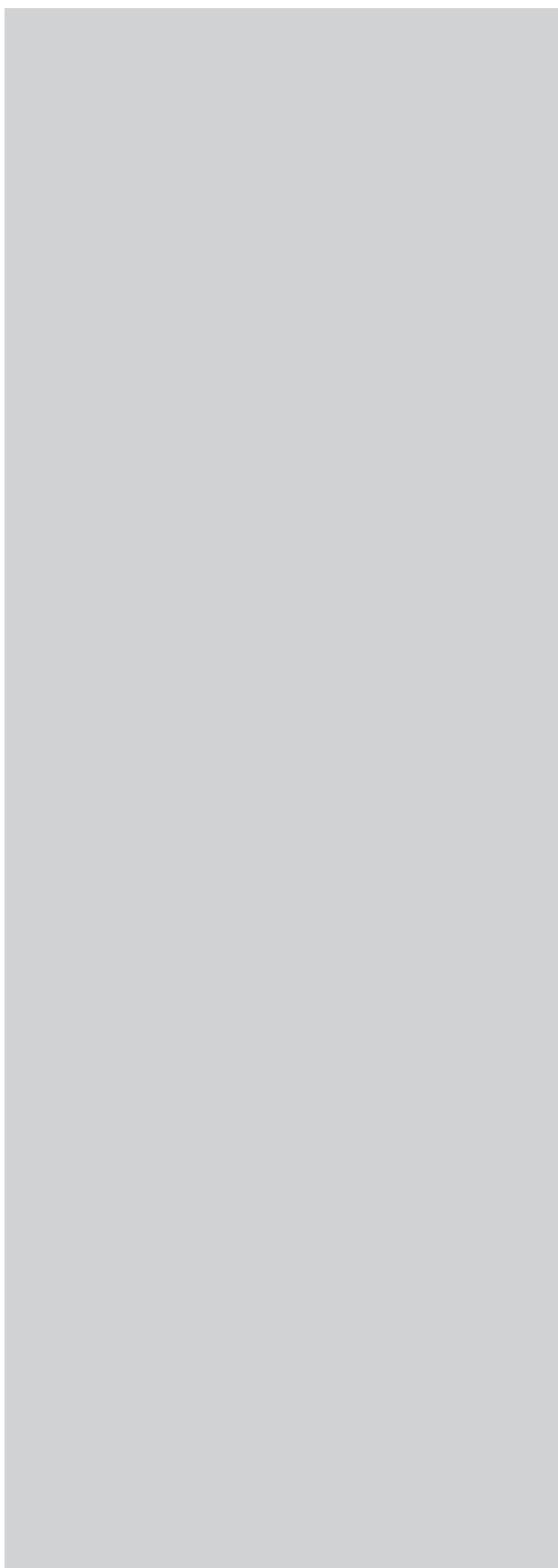
CWO2 JORGE A. DIMMER



CPL. ROBERT J. REEVES

[Above] Marines with 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion detonate an improvised, directional flame thrower during Exercise Desert Scimitar aboard the Combat Center, May 13.

Whatever you're looking for, you can find it in the [Observation Post Classified section](#)



WISH, from A1



SGT. TIMOTHY LENZO

Marines with Lima Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, explain the set up of an M777 Howitzer during a partnership with the Make-A-Wish Foundation aboard the Combat Center, May 13. Forbes was made an honorary "Marine for a day."

various weapon systems. He saw some of the same weapon systems that day. "I learned a lot about different guns like the 240B (machine gun) and the SAW (squad automatic weapon), and how a M777 Howitzer works," Forbes said.

With the smell of artillery fire still in the air, Forbes relaxed with his section during lunch. Forbes and his brother Jason seemed right at home with the Marines. With an M777 Howitzer sitting in their backdrop, they talked and laughed like old friends.

"Guys just never change," said Navy Lt. Katrina Landa, battalion surgeon. "He just sat down with the Marines and joked and told stories."

While Forbes enjoyed the visit, many felt the Marines got just as much, if not more, from their guest of honor.

"I think the Marines got a really good sense of helping other people," Landa said. "They are usually so focused on the mission, but here they got to see the human side. They saw how they inspire a young child."

Forbes returned home with a handful of gifts and souvenirs from the Marines. While they gave him shirts, plaques and trinkets, Forbes gave the Marines something more. His grin was transferred to the Marines in attendance who couldn't help but enjoy his youthful enthusiasm. They won't forget Forbes soon as they honored him with his name taped on their Howitzer.



SGT. TIMOTHY LENZO

Ryan Forbes, third from left, talks with Marines about various weapon systems aboard the Combat Center, May 13.

SCENARIO, from A1



CPL. ALI AZIMI

A firefighter with the Combat Center Fire Department's hazmat team is scrubbed down after leaving a notionally contaminated area of the post office during Postal Exercise 2014 Wednesday. The scenario was conducted by Exercise Team West and Combat Center units.

air supply carried on their backs. Their breathing was audible in the silent building, only challenged by the crackling of the devices they held in their hands. The first team entered the building, guided to the package by the directions passed to them by PMO and their fire captain.

They always conduct a radiological detection, said Grove Crank, fire captain, Combat Center Fire Department. The team didn't know what they were walking into, just like a real scenario.

"I don't like to pre-plan these because you don't get to test yourself as much," Crank said. "We're always given a time table [for these exercises], but I like to hold it back [from the firefighters] as much as possible. I like to be thrown into it to test our true capabilities."

The suspicious package was isolated in the center of the floor. The hazmat team stepped up to it slowly, surveying the area around them for any spills of the reported white powder. They carefully opened the box and broke out a sampling kit to begin the process of identifying the powder and any other questionable material found inside the package.

"The first team went in to get a good eye at what we're looking at and started some quick sampling," Crank said. "Then we sent another team in to try to identify [the substances]. Then we sent the third team in to package up the product."

The powder was notionally confirmed as the hazardous material, Ricin. The last team exited the building and was scrubbed clean, just like the teams before them. The area was sealed off and the exercise ended.

Exercise Team West conducts multiple emergency scenarios throughout the year at different bases on the West Coast. Postal Exercise 2014 tested the training and reactions to the scenario. The exercise helped prepare service members for possible emergencies in the future.

ROSIE the RIVETER

[Right] Sarah Sargent, wife of Lance Cpl. Clayton Sargent, returns fire against simulated targets on a screen of the Combat Convoy Simulator during the Rosie the Riveter vs. The Simulator event hosted at Camp Wilson, May 15. The participants used modified M 16 A4 rifles which simulate the recoil and feel of an actual rifle.



CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

Spouses take charge in convoy simulator

Cpl. Charles Santamaria
Combat Correspondent

The High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle engine roars as it begins moving the fire team through a middle-eastern town. The sound of stray bullets echo through the streets as enemy fire impacts the armor of the vehicle. Equipped with their kevlar helmet, flak jacket, and M-16 A4 rifles, the team navigates through hostile city receiving a barrage of enemy fire. The convoy's lead vehicle explodes. Frantically, the team leader shouts commands signaling the team to dismount and return fire. The simulator screens shine bright into the stationary vehicle, as the program generates a city populated by digital buildings, insurgents and other potential threats.



CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

Jennifer Madden, wife of Master Sgt. Travis Madden, Tactical Training Exercise Control Group, keeps communication up while in a stationary High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle during the Rosie the Riveter Vs. The Simulator event hosted at Camp Wilson, May 15.

Family readiness officers and spouses participated in the Rosie the Riveter vs. The Simulator event hosted at the Combat Convoy Simulator at Camp Wilson, May 15. The event is the first of its kind to incorporate several units' spouses into one convoy simulator event.

Armed with modified M-16 A4 rifles, spouses went on simulated convoys through foreign combat zones like Fallujah, to reach objectives and respond to enemy fire and civilian populace.

"The goal of this machine is to create the most realistic environment for Marines to experience and train in," said Ryan Brown, field service representative, CCS. "The 360-degree panoramic screen surrounds the team which immerses them in the training environment. The training with spouses had to be adjusted so they could see a little more action but the simulator helps give insight into what some of their husbands do when on deployment."

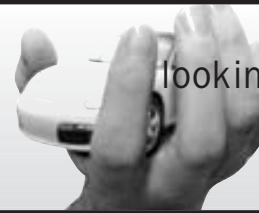
Checkpoints throughout each convoy scenario had the spouses and FROs dismounting their vehicles and posting security, anticipating simulated enemy fire. As a fire team, the group had to communicate with each other and the other teams immersed to the same simulation.

"We are so appreciative that they gave us the opportunity to come and participate in the simulator today," said Erika Capistran, family readiness officer, 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion. "It helps build an appreciation for what our spouses do for training and while deployed."

At the beginning of every simulated scenario, the fire teams went over their plans and the checkpoints for the mission. When a vehicle in the convoy was immobilized, the team had to go outside of the simulation and carry a life-sized, 150-pound dummy and transport it back to their vehicle before continuing their mission.

The simulator built a sense of understanding within the teams similar to how a deployment can build the brotherhood of Marines through a common goal. Spending time together and facing the simulator as a team built a stronger connection between them.

"Spending time together as spouses from several units strengthens bonds between us," Capistran said. "Our husbands and loved ones serve together, so bringing units together for events like this between the FROs builds us as a community."



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



ROCK the HOUSE

Country music stars salute Combat Center with concert

STORY BY **Cpl. Charles Santamaria**



CPL. ALI AZIMI

The stage shook with the sound of drums and electric guitars as the speakers rang out with every note played. Each song weaved through the sea of service members and their families during the We Salute You celebration hosted at Lance Corporal Torrey L. Gray Field, Saturday.



CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

[Top, right] Brett Eldredge, country music artist, performs for an audience of service members and their families during the We Salute You celebration hosted at Lance Corporal Torrey L. Gray Field, Saturday. Eldredge headlined the event alongside his band and other country artists.

[Above] The Shuggah Pies, a country music group, open the concert with one of their hits during the We Salute You celebration hosted at Lance Corporal Torrey L. Gray Field, Saturday. The band opened for the festival which was free to Marines, sailors and their families.

bring even more to the celebration," said Eldredge. "The service members here are always great to entertain because the energy they bring makes them one of the best crowds I have had the pleasure to perform for."

The annual event is free and keeps the roster of acts interesting by having new upcoming artists as well as more veteran popular artists to provide the best show. "If I can get up on that stage and play music as my way of saying 'thank you' to the military in my own way I'm happy to do so," Eldredge said. "I had a roommate when I lived in Nashville, who served in Iraq, who I was with before I went to begin my music career. He said one of his favorite things while deployed was when artists would come and play for the troops. It always stuck with me because I realized we can help out by breaking up their normal

"It's a pleasure for us to be here and we have always been supporters of the armed forces."

-Dwain O'Drien

work day and playing music for them."

Bringing the spirit of country to service members was the goal and the energy of the concert came from not only the country stars performing, but also from the electric crowd of Combat Center fans.



CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

The event was free for service members and families to attend and included performances by the Shuggah Pies, Little Texas, and Brett Eldredge.

"It's always an honor for me to perform for service members," Eldredge said. "If I can make their day of hard work just a little better through performing music for them, I'm very proud to do so."

The Shuggah Pies, an all-female group based out of Nashville, Tenn., opened the venue with some of their popular songs.

Leading up to the concert, the celebration included family events during a small carnival-like festival. It included an inflatable obstacle course, a cart derby, and a wrecking ball inflatable event which had children knocking each other off inflatable platforms and onto an inflatable bed. Concession stands for food and refreshments also

"It's always an honor for me to perform for service members."

-Brett Eldredge

lined the streets surrounding the field.

Country music fans had a treat as an older country music band, Little Texas, rocked the stage for the second set of songs. Little Texas is a country music band who was founded in 1988 in Nashville Tenn. The group was disbanded but in 2004 came back together to begin making music again. Little Texas agreed to perform at the Combat Center with only two days' notice to play for the Combat Center.

"We were more than happy to come out and perform for the Marines even with short notice," said Dwain O'Brien, rhythm guitarist, Little Texas. "It's a pleasure for us to be here and we have always been supporters of the armed forces."

Eldredge returned to the Combat Center for a second time to perform at the celebration. This year, he participated in the concert as the headliner for the crowd of service members.

"I opened for the event last year and now as the main act, I'm ready to



CPL. ALI AZIMI

[Above] Hundreds of service members and their families cheer for music being played during the We Salute You celebration hosted at Lance Corporal Torrey L. Gray Field, Saturday. "The service members here are always great to entertain because the energy they bring makes them one of the best crowds I have had the pleasure to perform for," said Brett Eldredge, country music artist and the headliner of the show.

[Left] Brett Eldredge's band performs for Combat Center fans alongside Eldredge and his band during the We Salute You celebration hosted at Lance Corporal Torrey L. Gray Field, Saturday. Some on-lookers dressed for the occasion donning cowboy hats, boots and even blue overalls to really look the part.

Liberty Call



Combat Center Events

Intramural Golf Competition

Teams may have up to six players in this 72-hole Stroke Play Tournament. Entry deadline is Friday, June 6.

When: June 9 - 12, 8 a.m.

Where: Desert Winds Golf Course

For more information, call 830-4092

Summer Flight Night V

Kick off the summer by watching live mixed martial arts fights for free. Food and drinks will be available for purchase. Due the event's violent nature, parental guidance is highly suggested.

When: June 20, 7 p.m.

Where: Del Valle Field

For more information, call 830-5086

Devil Dogs of Comedy

Form a group and enter a video submission for a chance to win an amazing prize for each team member.

Where: Visit www.leatherneck.com for official rules

When: May 19 - June 27

For more information, contact DevilDogsComedy@usmc-mccs.org

For more events, visit <http://www.mccs29palms.com>

Sunset Cinema

Friday, May 23

4 p.m. - Free Admission 21 Jump Street, R

6:30 p.m. - Captain America: The Winter Soldier 3-D, PG-13

9:30 p.m. - A Haunted House 2, R

11:30 p.m. - Transcendence, PG-13

Saturday, May 24

10 a.m. - Free Admission The LEGO Movie, PG

12:30 p.m. - Rio 2 3-D, G

3 p.m. - Captain America: The Winter Soldier, PG-13

6 p.m. - Heaven is for Real, PG

8:30 p.m. - Transcendence, PG-13

11:30 p.m. - Oculus, R

Sunday, May 25

10:30 a.m. - Free Admission The Nut Job, PG

12 p.m. - Free Admission Black Hawk Down, R

2:30 p.m. - Free Admission Lone Survivor, R

5 p.m. - Captain America: The Winter Soldier 3-D, PG-13

8 p.m. - Transcendence, PG-13

Monday, May 26

2 p.m. - The Other Woman, PG-13

4:30 p.m. - Brick Mansions, R

Tuesday, May 27

5 p.m. - Rio 2 3-D, G

7:30 p.m. - A Haunted House 2, R

Wednesday, May 28

5 p.m. - The Grand Budapest Hotel, R

7:30 p.m. - Oculus, R

Thursday, May 29

6 p.m. - Captain America: The Winter Soldier, PG-13

High Desert

Nunset Boulevard

The Little Sisters of Hoboken return in a brand new show.

When: 7 p.m., April 25 through May 24

Where: Theatre 29

73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.

For more information, call (760) 316-4151



The stars in 'The Other Woman' deserve better than this revenge-comedy mess

NEIL POND

"The Other Woman"

Starring Leslie Mann, Cameron Diaz and Nikolaj Coster-Waldau

Directed by Nick Cassavettes

PG-13, 109 min.

If "The Other Woman" didn't have such a recognizable cast, it might be just plain forgettable. Instead, high-profile stars and a major chick-flick marketing push almost guarantee it will make an even bigger, messier splash as it goes down.

Leslie Mann ("This Is 40," "The 40-Year Old Virgin") plays Kate, a whiny, neurotic housewife who discovers her cad husband, Mark (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau from TV's "Game of Thrones"), is having an affair with a sexy Manhattan lawyer, Carly (Cameron Diaz).

So what does Kate do? Why, she befriends her husband's mistress, naturally!

Then Kate and Carly find out Mark is cheating on them both (gasp!) with another woman, portrayed by former "Sports Illustrated" model Kate Upton, whose role here (if not her acting career in general) seems to be limited to what can be done in a teeny bikini, in slow motion.

The next step in the mind-bogglingly implausible plot is all three women becoming BFFs and plotting their revenge on the man who can't be faithful to any of them. Their plan includes

spiking his breakfast smoothie with estrogen, swishing his toothbrush in the toilet, replacing his shampoo with hair-removal cream, and putting laxatives in his liquor.

In 2011, the hit comedy "Bridesmaids" introduced mainstream audiences to the idea that an ensemble cast of gals could be just as raunchily funny as a bunch of guys. But "The Other Woman" has none of that movie's masterful mojo, which begins with a great script and extends through the director.

In this case, director Nick Cassavettes ("The Notebook") bears much of the blame, lacking the deft touch to bring off the right blend of humor and humanity needed for a "revenge comedy" that ventures into the tricky trifecta of love, marriage and serial adultery. Screenwriter Melissa Stack, a former lawyer herself, supposedly based the Diaz character somewhat on her own experiences as an attorney, but somehow her tale is lacking almost anything any modern female would ever think, say or do.

And poor Coster-Waldau, who as the ever-ward husband has to suffer for his other-womanizing in so, so many painfully slapstick-ish, potty-humored ways, including enduring an explosive bout of diarrhea, walking through a pane of glass and sprouting a pair of hormonally enhanced man-nipples.

As an actor, he deserves better — and so does everyone else in "The Other Woman," and anyone who buys a ticket expecting to see something funnier, something smarter and something better.

Whatever you're looking for, you can find it in the

[Observation Post Classified section](#)

STEEL SHARPENING STEEL

Photos by Cpl. Charles Santamaria

Corporals practice guidon manual



[Top, left] Cpl. Edgar P. Guzman, crash fire rescue, Marine Wing Air Support Squadron 374, executes a guidon salute during a guidon manual class held at the 1st Tank Battalion Ramp, May 16. **[Top, right]** Cpl. Ryan Eccles, drafter and surveyor, MWSS 374, presents the guidon during a guidon and sword manual class held at the 1st Tanks classroom lot, Tuesday. The Marines in Coporal's Course practiced movements several times to achieve a new level of efficiency. **[Bottom, right]** Sgt. Troy Boyd, heavy equipment operator, MWSS 374, instructs students on the intensity and speed needed to properly present the guidon from the carry position during a class held at the 1st Tanks classroom lot, Tuesday. **[Bottom, left]** Marines practice commands and execution of guidon manual movements as a squad during a guidon manual class held at the 1st Tanks Ramp, Tuesday. The Marines took turns lining up and critiquing each other to improve their guidon movements.



Hey Combat Center fans – Spread the word! The Combat Center has its own Flickr photo and video streams. Find them at <http://www.flickr.com/thecombatcenter>.



Visit the official MCAGCC facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>



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

