

# ACTIVE SHOOTER EXERCISE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA



Cpl. Andrew Eljin, military policeman, Provost Marshal's Office, searches a hallway while Cpl. Tyler Little, military policeman, PMO, provides security during an active shooter exercise at Condor Elementary School, Tuesday.

## First responders secure Condor

An announcement was heard through the halls of Condor Elementary School, but it was not the usual morning announcement. It was the voice of a staff member urging teachers to secure their classrooms due to an active shooter being present in the building.

The Combat Center's Force Protection Office, along with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, Combat Center Fire Department, Provost Marshal's Office, Morongo Basin Ambulance, and several other local first responders, conducted an active shooter exercise at Condor Elementary School, Tuesday.

The exercise brought several departments together to enhance collaborative emergency

response and recovery efforts by applying them in a school scenario.

"It makes me feel a little more safe knowing first responders train to react to scenarios of this scale," Pfc. Bandi Ellenwood, volunteer role player, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School.

Approximately 350 Marines participated as volunteers for the exercise. Each Marine filled roles such as teachers, parents, bystanders, students and casualties. As the announcement echoed through the building, role players called 911 to alert authorities and first responders participating in the event.

*One of the main things I learned from this experience is how important it is to stay calm and let the first responders work."*

- Pfc. Bandi Ellenwood

See **SHOOTER** page A7

## Combat Center participates in FEDS Feed Families

**Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya**  
 Combat Correspondent

"I donate to this cause every single year," said Mira Kozell, quality assurance, Combat Center commissary. "If each person could just donate one item each time they come to the commissary, it would be a lot of help. This program is helping feed Marine Corps families."

FEDS Feed Families is program run by the United States Department of Agriculture. The program assists federal employees, in times of need, by offering free groceries. The groceries are donated by anyone who is willing and are free of charge for others to pick up.

"We get donations throughout the year," said Dawn Clark, business manager, Armed Services YMCA. "This gives the families living paycheck to paycheck, or have something

*The look on their faces, the gratitude and the overwhelming feeling that someone does care is why we are here. The service members give so much, this is what we are doing to try and give back.*

- Samuel Smith

come up, an opportunity to start filling the gaps. That is the whole basis of this program."

According to Clark, the program has been active aboard the Combat Center for approximately 8 years under different names.

The program originally was known as Free Bread Fridays aboard the Combat Center. At that time, people donated bread and pastries. It then was opened up to where they were able to accept all groceries. FFF also accepts hygiene gear, baby clothes or any other items people are willing to donate.

"I had a couple of families come in that were facing some challenges," said Samuel Smith, associate director, ASYMCA. "I gave them the opportunity to go through and grab what they needed. The look on their faces, the gratitude and the overwhelming feeling that someone does care is why we are here. The service members give so much, this is what we are doing to try and give back."

For more information on FFF or for questions concerning donating or receiving donations contact the ASYMCA at (760) 830-7481.

## Marine Corps' Top Shot

Every week, thousands of fans vote for the best photograph, posted on the Corps' facebook page.

This week's top shot comes from Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C.



CPL SARAH CHERRY

Marines with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 115, Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C., prepare to deploy to the Western Pacific as part of the Unit Deployment Program, July 9. Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 115, also known as the "Silver Eagles," will support multinational exercises improving American forces' ability to work well with allies while exposing the Marines to various training elements. The UDP is designed to balance strategic capabilities in the Pacific theater to train with allies, respond to crises and promote security cooperation across the region.

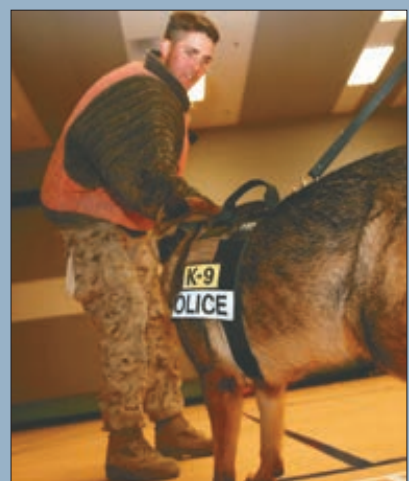
## BUILDING SEARCH

PHOTOS BY CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA



[Above] Cpl. Joshua Tavares, military working dog handler, Provost Marshal's Office, and Bo, military working dog, search for narcotics and other suspicious material during a building search exercise at the community center July 21. The training also included aggression and biting exercises.

[Right] Baby, military working dog, attacks Lance Cpl. Anthony Cicchino, military working dog handler, PMO, during a building search exercise at the Community Center July 21. The dog handlers utilized protective bite suits to prevent injuries during the exercises.



For more photos see A7

# This Week in Combat Center History



Reprinted from the Observation Post  
Vol. 23, Issue 28  
July 20, 1979

## New laser system in Corps' future

Story by Sgt. Charles Luedke

For those who remember Flash Gordon and for the Star Trek fans of today, the "laser" has become well known in science fiction writing.

The Marine Corps is now looking at the reality side of that fiction, in the form of a Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES).

Produced by Xerox Electro-Optical Systems, MILES is a family of safe, low-powered lasers which can simulate range and casualty capabilities for many of the Corps' inventory of weapons.

For Marine infantrymen, the system consists of a detector band for the helmet, detectors built into the suspender straps for a cartridge belt, and a signaling device which emits an intermittent beep for a "near miss" and constant high-pitched shrill of a "kill." The final piece of equipment is a transmitter mounted on the barrel of an M-16 rifle, which is activated every time the Marine fires a blank. It then sends out a laser beam corresponding to the range of the weapon.

The transmitter on the weapon has deactivating key which, if the Marine is "hit," must be used to shut off the high-pitched shrill of the detectors. Once the key is pulled from the transmitter, to shut off the detector, it also deactivates the transmitter on the weapon and renders the

Marine out of action.

The cost for outfitting one Marine infantryman with transmitter, detectors and signaling device will be approximately \$700.

The transmitter will weigh only slightly more than the bayonet presently used on the M16 rifle. The weight of the entire package of detectors, transmitters and signaling device will be less than five pounds.

The Combat Center will be the first command to receive MILES, due for delivery during Fiscal Year 1981.

Similar systems are also being developed for the M60 machinegun, TOW anti-tank weapon, M60 tanks and the Dragon and new viper weapons. These systems will also correspond to the effective range of the weapons.

The days of "bang, bang, you're dead," will soon be over for Marines using MILES. The new system will give unit commanders a more realistic casualty assessment and, possibly allows the "aggressors" to win for the first time in the history of military war games.



FLASH GORDON? — Private First Class A.E. Williams, Company B, 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, displays the detectors on the helmet band and suspender straps, and the transmitter mounted on the barrel of his M-16 rifle which sends out a safe, low-powered laser beam. The demonstration took place on The Combat Center's parade deck. (Photo by MSgt R.F. Mescall Jr.)

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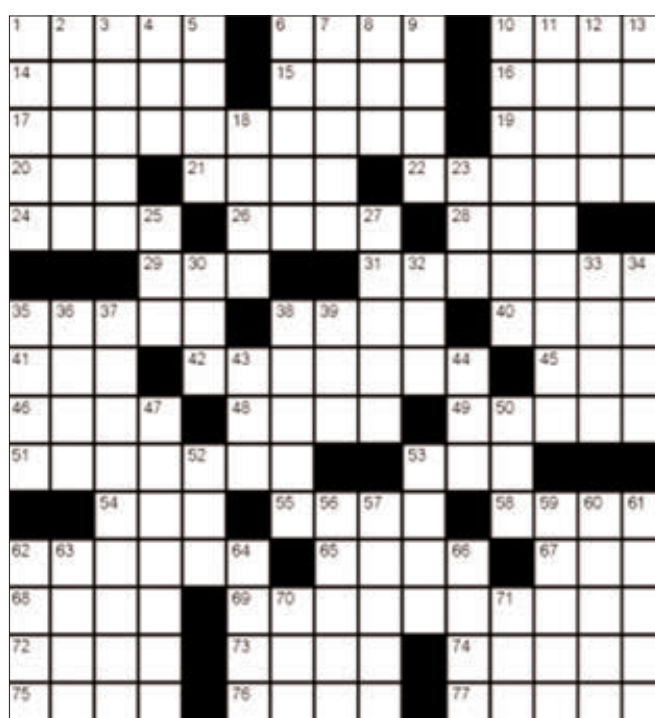
The Combat Center has its own YouTube channel. Find it at <http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>

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

### "LIKE TWO P'S IN A POD"

See answers on page A6

- Across**
- 1 Sherlock Holmes smoked them
  - 6 "Beware the \_\_\_ of March!"
  - 10 Not much
  - 14 Delete
  - 15 "Finding \_\_\_"
  - 16 Japanese soup
  - 17 Place to eat dinner
  - 19 Got along in years
  - 20 "Excellent job!"
  - 21 Sulk
  - 22 Laid down the lawn?
  - 24 Medieval worker
  - 26 Snare
  - 28 Hawaiian necklace
  - 29 "\_\_\_ My Party"
  - 31 Total
  - 35 Bart Simpson's mom
  - 38 "Absolutely!"
  - 40 Practice boxing
  - 41 Ginger \_\_\_
  - 42 Taking a snooze
  - 45 Before, in poetry
  - 46 Coke or Pepsi
  - 48 Former presidential candidate Perot
  - 49 Sections
  - 51 Pearly Gates guy
  - 53 Outlaw
  - 54 Time of history
  - 55 "Gone With the Wind" plantation
  - 58 Little green guy of movies
  - 62 "Boardwalk \_\_\_"
  - 65 \_\_\_ Xtra (soft drink)
  - 67 Fellows
  - 68 California valley
  - 69 Scary snake
  - 72 One way to settle an argument
  - 73 One of 18 on a golf course
  - 74 Bird that may be "bald"
  - 75 Not madams
  - 76 Sign on a store door
  - 77 "\_\_\_ so funny?"
- Down**
- 1 Money in Mexico
  - 2 "Yay me!"
  - 3 Assignment for class
  - 4 Spooky claim
  - 5 Ooze
  - 6 Run up, as debts
  - 7 Greek letter that's also an airline
  - 8 Big bird
  - 9 Cries loudly
  - 10 Movie about Mozart
  - 11 Constellation with seven stars
  - 12 "Understood"
  - 13 Mary \_\_\_ Lincoln
  - 18 Becomes inedible
  - 23 Ancient
  - 25 \_\_\_ newton (cookie)



- 27 France's capital
- 30 Number of toes or Fingers
- 32 Lion's home
- 33 Pastry shop purchase
- 34 Valuable rocks
- 35 Catholic service
- 36 Plenty
- 37 Food that may be stuffed
- 38 Hockey or badminton
- 39 Delivery company
- 43 "\_\_\_ you serious?"
- 44 4.0 in high school, e.g.
- 47 Photographs from above
- 50 Whatever number
- 52 Road stuff
- 53 Movie about a pig
- 56 Computer company
- 57 Get ready to eat, like fruit
- 59 Last Greek letter
- 60 Gave cards out
- 61 South American mountain range
- 62 Finishes up
- 63 Hawaiian island
- 64 Reverberating sound
- 66 Make, as beer
- 70 Alley-\_\_\_ (basketball play)
- 71 Sarcastic laugh

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- 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.

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- In Twentynine Palms:**
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- In Yucca Valley:**
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- 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

# D'Anne ALBERS

Tulsa, Okla., cultural resources specialist, 63



> **I grew up in an oil town** so there was a lot of money because of people in the oil business. I grew up going to a public high school that was fabulous. I had a fabulous education.

> **I also went through** a lot of tornados but it was a very good experience growing up there.

> **I have always liked** to read and I have always been into cars. My dad gave me a car when I was 16. It was a red Fiat convertible and then I got an MGA convertible. After that, I got into sports car racing. I didn't actually do the racing but I went along. I went to a lot of races.

> **I would say my dad is** the one who got me into cars. He loved buying and selling cars. He would buy a car, fix it up, and then sell it.

> **I really miss it.** I am no longer involved but it was very exciting.

> **When I was learning to drive** stick shift, I was with my younger brother and I ended up stalling the car in the middle of an intersection while making a left turn. I couldn't get it started and my brother got so upset that he got out of the car and walked home.

> **I ended up attending** the University of Tulsa and I worked in retail. I managed a small women's store. My major was liberal arts. I really didn't know what I wanted to do back then.

> **I got married and was moving around** with my husband so I didn't really choose a career until I was about 26. I really loved the fashion world; it was really exciting to me. It started me on a route to good customer service and good communication.

> **It really taught me that** you never know, by looking at someone, who or what they are and that you should treat everyone the same.

> **I started working with animals** once I moved to Monterey, Calif. It all started

because I started volunteering. A position opened up and it kind of all went from there. I wrote some volunteer manuals and worked with wild life.

> **I have always had animals.** I currently have three dogs and five cats and most of them are rescues. All but one, I found on my own when I was out and about.

> **I started working for** environmental organizations. I had the opportunity to work in the Clinton Campaign and other local political campaigns. I really enjoyed it and it made me realize the political system.

> **I continued volunteering until** about 2003. I then became the director of a program to raise money for education and scientific research for sea otters. I loved it and continued doing it for about four years.

> **In 2007,** I got a job with Defenders of Wildlife and moved here. My job was to raise awareness of the desert tortoise. Once my contract ended, I got my job here aboard the base.

> **I was very excited coming into my job** with Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs. It was similar but different to my other jobs. It gave me a chance to see a different side of archaeology.

> **We started the gardens out here,** which I always enjoyed gardening. I was still able to talk to people about wildlife. I can do this for fun. To me, this job is very fun.

> **If anybody has a problem** getting a job, volunteering is a perfect way to get involved and to get experience. If you are in a group of people, you'll be amazed at how much you can accomplish compared to working by yourself. Much like the Marines.

> **I was amazed coming out here.** I knew nothing about the military but the Marines do so much for the preservation of the land, animals, and other treasures out here. It really educated me about the background of the military. This is a dream job.

> **It is amazing to think that we are walking around** the same place as people did 2000 years ago. What they did for their time, I feel, is just as advanced as the things we are doing now. I have gone to places where I can touch the wall and almost feel those people from many years ago. It is pretty amazing.

> **One of my biggest goals** for my job out here is to show the Marines and their families that the desert is not that bad. The desert has some very unique things about it. There is so much history here and I hope they can learn to appreciate it.

> **It is very important** to try and do something that you love doing because, at that point, it's not really a job.

Interviewed by Cpl. Charles Santamaria, July 16, 2014 (Photography by Kelly O'Sullivan)



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# MIDSHIPMEN

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## ascend to

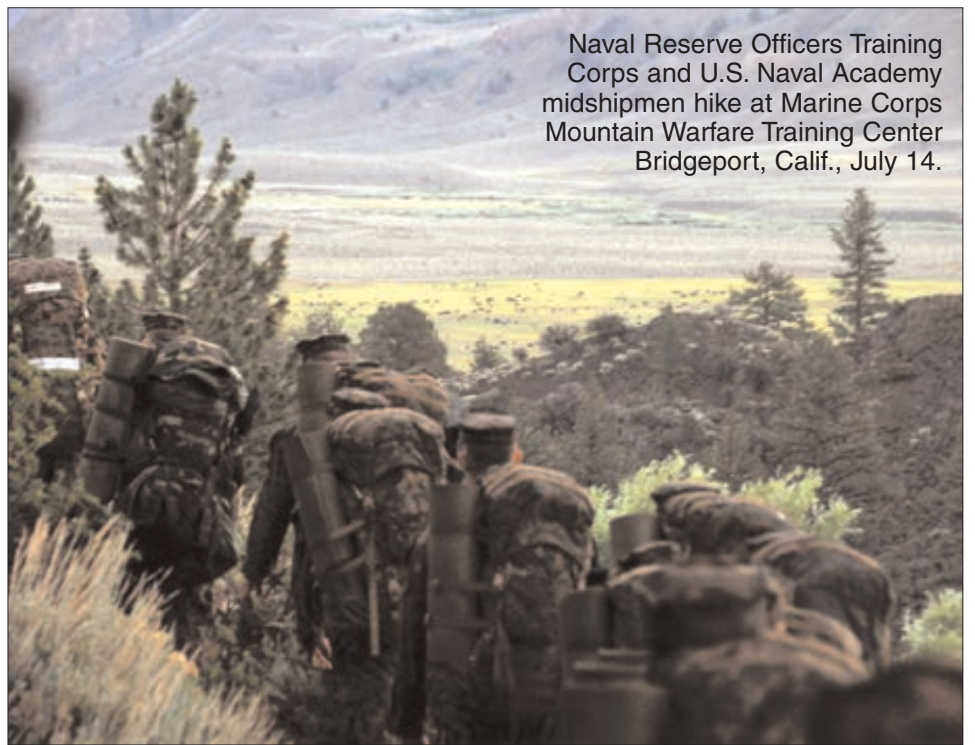
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# NEW

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## heights

Story and photos by Navy Lt. Matthew Comer



Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps and U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen hike at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., July 14.

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### BRIDGEPORT, Calif. - Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Marine-option and U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen began summer training at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., July 12.

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The 155 NROTC midshipmen from 62 colleges and universities and 23 Naval Academy midshipmen were scheduled to train for 10 days in the Sierra Nevada mountain range gaining exposure and learning to operate in a mountainous environment.

The midshipmen began their training with an address by the Commanding Officer of MCMWTC, Col. Scott D. Leonard.

"This summer is your exposure to the Marine Corps, next summer at Officer Candidate School is your test," said Leonard. "Enjoy your time here. What you do up here throughout the next 10 days is going to be very important in establishing connections, and building confidence to get you through OCS. The Marines here are the subject matter

experts. There is no one more qualified to teach you. Ask questions, be safe and enjoy yourselves."

The first day of training contained briefs that covered topics from range safety and communications procedures to mountain safety and mountain health.

"Keep me wild, that is our motto," said Andrew Irvin, natural/cultural resources manager. "This is one of the most natural and realistic training environments in the Marine Corps. Our goal is to cause as small of an impact on this pristine environment as possible. Pack in. Pack out."


The training area at MCMWTC is headquartered at approximately 6,700 feet above sea level and rises to 11,100 feet. MCMWTC was established in 1951, originally opened as

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

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a cold-weather training center. The MCMWTC operating area is 64,000 acres. The majority of the operating area is owned by the U.S. Forrest Service as part of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, oversees the daily operations of MCMWTC.

“Plan, be prepared and know your group’s ability,” said Sgt. Edward Pricola, instructor, Mountain Leadership Course. “The weather in the mountains shifts rapidly. Maintain proper clothing and equipment for drastic weather and temperature changes.”

More than 24 percent of Earth’s land mass is mountainous terrain. MCMWTC is the sole Department of Defense mountain training

facility to prepare service members.

Throughout their training the midshipmen were scheduled to learn skills including rappelling, mountain safety, stream and rope bridge crossing, land navigation, survival and Marine tactics in a mountain environment.

“Take this opportunity to get to know each other,” said Lt. Col. Mark Shellabarger, OIC, NROTC Mountain Warfare Training and North Carolina Piedmont NROTC Consortium executive officer. “This environment, this terrain, is going to test you; it is going to exhaust you. The midshipmen sitting next to you will get you through this.”

Midshipmen attending the summer training were recommended to achieve a minimum of 250 on their Physical Fitness Test to meet the physical requirements of the training. The test is comprised of a three-mile run, sit-ups and pull-ups.

“I have been doing weight-resistance training and hiking to prepare for this week’s evolutions,” said Midshipman 2nd Class Alex Vrancic, Florida State University NROTC unit.

The NROTC program is currently overseen by Rear Adm. Rich Brown and his Naval Service Training Command staff, headquartered at Naval Station Great Lakes, Ill. More than 150 colleges and universities either host NROTC units or have cross-town enrollment agreements with a host university.



**This environment, this terrain, is going to test you; it is going to exhaust you.**

-Lt. Col. Mark Shellabarger

**[Top]** A Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps midshipman 2nd class builds a survival shelter. The midshipman trained at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif., and was taught survival and tactical skills in a mountainous environment, July 15.

**[Center]** Ohio State University Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Midshipman 2nd Class Kyle Maurpin climbs up a rock face at MCMWTC, July 14.

**[Bottom]** Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps and U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen race towards a simulated casualty to practice mountain casualty evacuation at MCMWTC, July 14.

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

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# WeekINPhotos

Marine Corps Recruit Depot Sand Diego



**[Top, left]** Drill instructors watch over recruits of India Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, as the Confidence Chamber fills with Chlorobenzylidene Malonitrile gas. The recruits were required to conduct exercises in the chamber at Edison Range, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., July 14.  
**[Top, right]** Recruits with India Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, undertake the Confidence Chamber as it fills with CS gas. The recruits were required to conduct exercises in the chamber at Edison Range, MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., July 14.  
**[Bottom, left]** Recruits of India Company, 3rd Battalion, give the "gas, gas, gas" signal signifying a chemical environment, while conducting a Confidence Chamber exercise at Edison Range on MCB Camp Pendleton, July 14.  
**[Bottom, right]** Chlorobenzylidene malonitrile, or CS gas, can be found as a solid compound at room temperature, and is heated to release the gas and create a chemical environment.

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

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**SHOOTER, from A1**

"The exercise [displays] how several different departments interact together with a mass casualty scenario, like an active shooter, while also ensuring all parties are familiar with the national incident management system," said Randy Leazer, fire chief, Combat Center Fire Department.

The role players filled several rooms throughout the building, practicing different reactions to the active shooter announcement. These responses included barricading the room, turning off all lights, or evading and escaping. Participants were not allowed to fight back or use force to escape during the exercise. Along with different acts to play, some role players also had injuries that first responders had to document and treat.

"Medically, it tests the fire department's mass casualty collection injury and treatment procedures," Leazer said. "Exercises like this also teach rapid triage of various degrees of injuries for transportation sorting based on severity of said injuries."

After one hour, all three active shooters were detained and first responders went through the process of evacuating rooms while still maintaining control and safety of all the 'students.'

"One of the main things I learned from this experience is how important it is to stay calm and let the first responders work," Ellenwood said. "I think practicing with all these factors helps them go through the different possibilities that could happen if an active shooter was present in this setting."



CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

Cpl. Tyler Little, military policeman, Provost Marshal's Office, cuffs one of three active shooters during an active shooter exercise at Condor Elementary School, Tuesday.

**BUILDING, from A1**



PHOTOS BY CPL. CHARLES SANTAMARIA

Cpl. Paul Kelley, working dog handler, Provost Marshal's Office, and Lance Cpl. Anthony Cicchino, military working dog handler, PMO, test Baby, military working dog, on her ability to switch between multiple targets during a building search at the Community Center July 21.



Baby, military working dog, finds Lance Cpl. Anthony Cicchino, military working dog handler, Provost Marshal's Office, hiding in an equipment cage in the dark during a building search exercise at the Community Center July 21.

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

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**TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM**  
 by Lou Gerhardt

My friend Claudia of Reno suffered the physical death of her beloved and beautiful dog Lucy after 13 years of an extremely warm comradeship, July 14. Our hearts are with her during these difficult days.

I really have no idea of what lies beyond this life. I simply live in trust. I strongly believe that the Creator of all things has given meaning and dignity to every aspect of his creation and that his purpose will never be defeated by the very creatures he creates.

I believe that in time we will all delight in the Creator's design and it will be "marvelous to our eyes." May I remind you of the words of the Holy Scripture, "Eye has not seen nor ear heard what the Creator has prepared..."

Some time ago one of you telephoned me and asked if our pets are with us in the afterlife. I once again replied that I don't know. I simply believe that my concept of life beyond this life continues a relationship with all I have known and loved in this life. And, of course, that includes our beloved Black, Cinderella and Bella. (We believe our precious Cookie, Saydes and Mona Lisa are eagerly awaiting our arrival.)

To paraphrase the late great scientist Werner Von Braun "All I have seen in this life encourages me to trust all that I have not seen."

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# MEETING LS3

Written by Sgt. Sarah Dietz



PHOTOS BY SGT. SARAH DIETZ

Lance Cpl. Brandon Dieckmann, infantryman, Company I, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, and Las Vegas native, leads the Legged Squad Support System through an open field at Kahuku Training Area July 10. The LS3 is experimental technology being tested by the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab as part of the Advanced Warfighting Experiment during Rim of the Pacific 2014. There are multiple technologies being tested during RIMPAC, the largest maritime exercise in the Pacific region. This year's RIMPAC features 22 countries and around 25,000 people.

## Marines experiment with military robotics

**KAHUKU TRAINING AREA, Hawaii** — The Legged Squad Support System has taken five years in concept developed by Boston Dynamics and \$2 million to create. It is now being thrown into the heart of Kahuku Training Area — completely controlled and field tested by five young Marines with India Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment.

The LS3 is a robotic mule, capable of traversing rugged terrain with Marines while carrying much of their load. It is programmed to follow an operator and detect large terrain objects to maneuver around.

The testing for the LS3 is being observed by the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab during the Advanced Warfighting Experiment as part of Rim of the Pacific 2014, a military multilateral training event featuring 22 nations and roughly 25,000 people.

Lance Cpl. Brandon Dieckmann, a native of Las Vegas, remembers watching clips of the LS3 on Youtube before he joined the infantry. He said he never would have guessed he would be chosen to operate the machine, which has been affectionately nicknamed "Cujo" by his company.

"The reality (is that it's) a walking robot and quadrupedal robotic legs are something that can be done (stood out to me)," Dieckmann said.

"They randomly chose us to operate it, probably because I wear glasses."

The Marines used "Cujo" to conduct resupply missions to the various platoons around the training area. The LS3 brought water to service members in terrain difficult to reach by all-terrain vehicles.

"I was surprised how well it works," Dieckmann said. "I thought it was going to be stumbling around and lose its footing, but it's actually proven to be pretty reliable and pretty rugged. It has a bit of a problem negotiating obliques and contours of hills."

The LS3 is being used as a logistical tool during RIMPAC as opposed to a tactical tool, due to its loud noise during movement and problems traversing certain terrain.

"I'd say 70 to 80 percent of the terrain we go through, it can go through," Dieckmann said. "There are times when it is going to fall over, but most of the time it can self-right and get back up on its own. Even if it doesn't, it can take one person to roll it back over. The way it is designed is that you can easily roll it

back over."

However, the robotic mule is still in development. Dieckmann said creating more space within the LS3 for equipment, like heavy weapons systems, would be beneficial for quicker movement in a field or combat environment.

Some of the Marines have grown attached to Cujo. In particular, Pfc. Huberth Duarte, infantryman, India Co., 3/3, and an operator for the LS3, says the robotic mule has become like a dog to him. He also mentioned the controls are simple to learn and have joy sticks. He said, "it feels like playing Call of Duty."

Putting the LS3 in the hands of young Marines is vital to the development of the

program, according to Ben Spies, contractor, Boston Dynamics observing the AWE.

"We give the military hands-on [time] so we can see what they will use it for instead of putting it in a parking lot," Spies said. "This is the first time we put the LS3 in a training environment like this. They push it to the max. It helps us develop it more, because right now, only the engineers have it."

Dieckmann also said he looks forward to seeing future developments of the program.

"It would be pretty crazy to see a later version of it 15-20 years down the line and be able to say I was one of the first groups that tested it and brought it to the field on one of the bigger training exercises," Dieckmann said. "It's pretty surreal."



Lance Cpl. Brandon Dieckmann, infantryman, Company I, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, and native of Las Vegas, leads the Legged Squad Support System through a grassy area at Kahuku Training Area, July 12.

# Liberty Call



## Combat Center Events

### Sesame Street Tour

USO and the Sesame Street Workshop are bringing the Sesame Street/USO Experience for military families.  
 When: Aug. 9 and Aug. 10  
 Location and time to be determined.  
 For more information, call 830-5086

### Back to School Week

Back to school week offers a week of activities including the Education Fair, Pool Party, Fashion show and Back to school Brigade.  
 When: Aug. 12 to Aug. 15  
 Where: Community Center  
 For more information, call 830-5086

## Sunset Cinema

### Friday, July 25

6 p.m. – The Fault in Our Stars, PG-13  
 9 p.m. – Edge of Tomorrow 3-D, PG-13  
 11:30 p.m. – Think Like a Man Too, PG-13

### Saturday, July 26

10 a.m. – **Free Admission** The Pirate Fairy, G  
 12:30 p.m. – How to train your Dragon 2 3-D, PG  
 3 p.m. – 22 Jump Street, R  
 5:30 p.m. – Edge of Tomorrow, PG-13  
 8: 30 p.m. – Think Like a Man Too, PG-13  
 11 p.m. – Jersey Boys, R

### Sunday, July 27

12 p.m. – **Free Admission** Superman: The Movie, PG  
 3 p.m. – How to train your Dragon 2, PG  
 5:30 p.m. – Deliver us from Evil, R  
 8: 30 p.m. – Tammy, R

### Monday, July 28

4 p.m. – **Free Admission** Spiderman, PG-13  
 6: 30 p.m. – Think Like a Man Too, PG-13

### Tuesday, July 29

4 p.m. – **Free Admission** X-Men 2, PG-13  
 7 p.m. – Tammy, R

### Wednesday, July 30

4 p.m. – **Free Admission** Batman Begins, PG-13  
 7 p.m. – Edge of Tomorrow, PG-13

### Thursday, July 31

4 p.m. – **Free Admission** Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer, PG  
 6 p.m. – How to train your Dragon 2, PG  
 8:30 p.m. – 22 Jump Street, R

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# Tale of little crash-landed space alien has familiar extra-terrestrial ring

**NEIL POND**  
*"Earth to Echo"*

Starring Teo Halm, Astro & Reese Hartwig  
 Directed by Dave Green  
 PG, 89 min.

E.T., phone home — your cell number's been hacked. And your identity's been stolen. But most of the audience for this adolescent sci-fi adventure yarn, about a crash-landed space critter and the kids who discover and assist him, won't remember the 1982 Steven Spielberg classic to which it obviously owes its inspiration.

Originally made by Disney then sold off to another company for distribution, Earth to Echo features a cast of unknown young actors in a storyline setup that will feel familiar to anyone who's seen E.T. — or many other movies, for that matter: Three "misfit" best friends (a nerd, a foster child, and one's who's practically "invisible" to his parents and older brother) are about to be split apart by a massive freeway construction project that's going to pave over much of their suburban neighborhood.

When cell phones in the subdivision begin freaking out ("barfing" on their display screens, the kids call it), the trio discerns something that looks like a map in the digital patterns. They follow the signals one night, on their bikes, to a deserted field, where they find a crusty canister containing the little owl-like, beep-beeping robotic alien creature they name Echo.

Then come the mysterious white-jump-suited grownups with clipboards and flashlights, a cute female classmate who wants in on the action, and lots of things younger viewers will find funny, heart-

warming and exciting as the kids learn about Echo's plight and band together to help him "go home."

Making his big-screen debut, director Dave Green keeps things light and basic, setting up most of the action around the search for parts Echo needs to facilitate his journey. The kids and their little outer-space friend — who already, conveniently, looks like a toy in a fast-food kids' meal — have a series of close calls in a pawnshop, a game arcade and a biker bar, always one step ahead of the men in white.

The young, mostly inexperienced cast is convincing as friends who've discovered something crazy-cool, and they also work well — and naturally — with the movie's contemporary format. The entire story unfolds as a movie-within-a-movie, a back story the trio of boys made about their out-of-this-world experience. So we see the 'tweens as they document each other, fiddling constantly with their equipment, their camera phones, cameras mounted on the handlebars of their bikes, spy cams in their eyeglasses — it's a movie for today's tech-saturated, digital doo-dad, reality-TV times.

Grownups and geeks may fixate on how much the movie borrows — there's also more than one nod to Spielberg's Close Encounter of the Third Kind, and a significant parallel to Super 8, which he produced but didn't direct, and it will likely make anyone who's seen Stand By Me recall the potent nostalgia in its tale of childhood pals on a thrilling mission one life-changing summer that bonded them forever.

But kids likely won't catch any of that — and likely won't care. Instead, they'll see a movie that entertains them, makes them laugh, makes them think a bit about friendship and belonging, and makes them root for a little waylaid spacebot just trying to make his way home.

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