



Lt. Gen. David H. Berger, commanding general, I Marine Expeditionary Force listens as Lt. Col. Matt Good, commanding officer, 3rd LAR explains some of the capabilities of the Light Armored Vehicle during his visit to the Combat Center, Feb. 5.

I MEF CG visits Combat Center

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LANCE CPL. MEDINA
AYALA-LO

With its unforgiving climate and rugged terrain extending more than 1,100 miles into the Mojave desert, the Combat Center is the premier training facility of the Marine Corps. It is the largest live-fire combined arms training installation the Marine Corps has to offer to ensure our forces maintain the highest levels of proficiency and readiness for worldwide deployment.

The Combat Center's former commanding general and his wife, Donna, landed at the Expeditionary Landing Field where he was greeted by his successor Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Craparotta's wife, and leaders of Marine Wing Support Squadron 374.

While aboard the Combat Center, Berger spoke with Marines from I MEF units to include 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, MWSS-374, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, Marine Aircraft Group 11, Marine Light Attack Helicopter



Lt. Gen. David H. Berger, commanding general, I Marine Expeditionary Force listens as Sgt. Milton Hill, field radio operator, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, native of Knoxville, Tenn., talks to him about the capabilities of the Light Armored Vehicle during his visit to the Combat Center, Feb. 5.

Squadron 169, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462, Marine Attack Squadron 214 and Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1. The purpose of his visit was to

take a tour of several I MEF units and receive input from their respective Marines.

"If you listen to Marine com-

See **Visit pg. A6**

Palm Desert adopts 7th Marine Regiment



Lt. Col. Jared Spurlock, executive officer, 7th Marine Regiment, accepts a certificate announcing the adoption of 7th Marine Regiment by the city of Palm Desert from Van Tanner, former mayor, City of Palm Desert, and Palm Desert council members, Jan Harnik and Sabby Jonathan, during the city's tour of the Combat Center, Jan. 28, 2015.

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY LANCE CPL. JULIO
MCGRAW

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. - City officials from Palm Desert, Calif., toured facilities aboard the Combat Center in conjunction with the city's adoption of 7th Marine Regiment, Jan. 28, 2015.

The city adopted the unit through the Adopt-a-Unit program in order to support Marines and sailors of 7th Marine Regiment, who are forward deployed and stationed locally. They intend to help the regiment coordinate events, such as family days, with support from city leadership, various organizations and individuals throughout the community.

"We want to create a strong relationship with the Marines [and sailors] of the regiment," said Jan Harnik, council member, City of Palm Desert. "We want to serve the ones that serve us."

The council members toured facilities and viewed equipment used to train aboard the Combat Center like: The Indoor

Simulated Marksmanship Trainer, convoy simulator, static display of weapons used by U.S. forces and their advisories, along with a live-fire demonstration using M4 service rifles.

Marines from the regiments training cadre showed the council members the different pieces of equipment Marines use, along with supervising the ISMT and live-fire portion of the tour, where council members were given the opportunity to fire M4 service rifles.

"We all learned a lot on this trip," Harnik said. "The [Combat Center] is just up the road from the city but the tour showed us what [service members] do on a day-to-day basis and it is truly remarkable."

According to Harnik and Lt. Col. Jared Spurlock, executive officer, 7th Marine Regiment, both the city and the regiment are looking forward to planning numerous engagement opportunities that will benefit both the local community and the military service members and their families.

At the end of the tour, See **Adopt pg. A6**

Marine Corps' Top Shot

Every week, thousands of fans vote for the week on the best photograph, posted on the Corps' Facebook page. This weeks top shot comes from Lance Cpl. Kathryn Howard.



She captured this photo of Marines with 1st Marine Logistics Group practicing the "combat glide" during Integrated Training Exercise 2-15 at Camp Wilson on The Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, Jan. 31, 2015.

L.I.N.K.S, OSC raise awareness for heart disease



Tamara Belcher-Allen, spouse, native of Osceola, Mo., and her daughters Serena and Sophie walk the runway during The Heart Truth Red Dress Gala and Fashion Show held at the Officer's Club, Feb. 5.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. - In the Officers Club dining hall, elegant women swim in a sea of red satin and silk. A buzz of chatter fills the room and eventually dies down to a low murmur. When a mother escorted by her two daughters gracefully proceed through the hall, donning red gowns. They stand together in this color, which serves as a symbol of awareness for

a leading killer in women, heart disease.

The Officers Club hosted The Heart Truth Red Dress Gala and Fashion Show in their main dining hall, Feb. 5, 2015.

Last year, Lifestyle Insights, Networking, Knowledge, and Skills program teamed up with the Officer's Spouse Club in an effort to raise awareness about heart disease, which is the number one killer of women, according to Amber Bilderrain, L.I.N.K.S program manager. See **Heart pg. A6**



Reprinted from the Observation Post
February 13, 1970

President’s Day; Little things mean a lot

When was the last time you threw a silver dollar across the Potomac? Probably there was no last time. But it is a rare soldier, sailor, airmen or Marine who does not know who did: George Washington.

At least it is said he threw a dollar across the Potomac...or was it the Rappahannock? And remember the incident with the cherry tree? Mom, dad or the school teacher told us about that, and how young George never told a lie.

However, the memory starts to fog up when we sail a little deeper into other incidents in the life of George Washington.

Valley Forge, that rings a bell doesn't it? And General Cornwallis. Wasn't he involved somehow? Mount Vernon. That comes to mind, too.

Perhaps it is not so odd that we do not remember everything about George Washington and his time. After all, momentous events were taking place in those days when the nation shrugged off foreign rule

and took its first steps as a democracy.

Unfortunately, people tend to forget some of the small things too.

When George Washington was 15 years old, he copied in an exercise book certain rules of behavior which he thought were important. The copy book is now on display in the Library of Congress. Some of the rules Washington considered "decent behavior in company and conversation" are listed here with the spelling and capital-

ization of Washington's time used:

"Sleep not when others Speak, Sit not when others Stand, Speak not when you should hold your Peace, walk not on when others Stop.

Use no Reproachful Language against any one neither Curse nor Revile.

Gaze not on the marks or blemished of Others and ask not how they came. What you may Speak in Secret to your Friend deliver not before others.

Treat with men at fit Times about Business

and Whisper not in the Company of Others.

Be not Curious to Know the Affairs of Others neither approach those that Speak in Private.

Labour to keep alive in your Breat that Little Sprak of Celestial fire Called Conscience."

The actions of George Washington in later life proved he never forgot his rules of behavior form his youth. For us, maybe it is all right to occasionally forget the big times.

But let's not forget the little things.

CROSSWORD

- Across**
- 1 Classroom activities
 - 8 Withdraws (oneself)
 - 15 Language spoken by Jesus
 - 16 Debate ender
 - 17 Classic Valentine's Day present #1
 - 19 Nose wrinklers
 - 20 Blend with traffic
 - 21 Hanger on a rack
 - 22 Director Clair
 - 23 Some law firm assistants
 - 24 Point to
 - 25 Elder cits.
 - 26 D.C. VIP
 - 27 Earthquake line
 - 28 Preserves meat
 - 30 Oater search parties
 - 31 Classic Valentine's Day present #2
 - 34 Escapes
 - 35 Racoon relative
 - 36 Overgrown with fronds
 - 37 "See ya!"
 - 38 Jesus's mount, in John
 - 41 Language spoken in Stornoway
 - 42 Some picture frame shapes
 - 45 Mannered fellow
 - 46 Had a BLT, e.g.
 - 47 Previously, to poets
 - 48 Condor's digs
 - 49 Classic Valentine's Day present #3
 - 52 Made official
 - 53 Flew a plane
 - 54 Hard, bony materials beneath the enamel of teeth
 - 55 Homesteaders

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- Down**
- 1 Doings of Hercules
 - 2 Wind or water
 - 3 Early Germanic marauders
 - 4 Campfire goody
 - 5 Dimbulbs
 - 6 CNN correspondent Robertson
 - 7 Sentimentality
 - 8 Gulf of Guinea hub
 - 9 E-musings
 - 10 Isolated
 - 11 Third letter after delta
 - 12 Loony bin
 - 13 Foot levers
 - 14 Sonnet endings
 - 18 Finish'd
 - 23 Some collared pullovers
 - 24 They take the low parts
 - 26 Rice ____
 - 27 Civil War historian Shelby
 - 28 Eau de Paris
 - 29 "Just a ____!"
 - 30 Uses a rosary
 - 31 Nuance
 - 32 Viking
 - 33 Duke or baron
 - 34 Lackin' gumption
 - 38 Add carbonation to

- 39 "American ____" (2014 film)
- 40 Mounts
- 42 Customarily
- 43 Invalidates, as a ticket
- 44 Curved line
- 45 Reach, in a way
- 47 Prefix meaning "opposed to"
- 48 Germany, Italy and Japan, in W.W. II
- 50 Play on Broadway
- 51 "____ got it!"

SUDOKU

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Last week's answers

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



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- 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

Sofie

Beaver, Belgium

PATTERSON

Belgium native, Sofie Patterson, is a volunteer lead with the Red Cross and used to work at a medical facility for the mentally handicapped.

> I'm originally from Belgium and things are different here than where I'm from. I used to go to several different festivals that were held on weekends and if I wanted to, I could just go over to another country and see something from over there because everything was so close together.

> When I first got here, I noticed the way people act, think, or even drive is much different. I was in culture shock for a while. It was something that I had to get used to. I'm still learning how to say some things correctly and people get confused but I'm learning quickly.

> I like how easy it is to meet new people out here. I'll be talking to someone and find out they were originally from Japan or some other place, which just shows how [diverse] America is.

> I worked at a medical facility for the mentally handicapped back in Belgium. It is very different from what I do now with the Red Cross. I started working [at the medical facility] because my mother worked there and there was an opportunity, so I went for it. I thought to myself that I would rather have the experience [helping people].

> I met my husband through a friend while on vacation in Georgia, five years ago. We like to go over to Joshua Tree National Park and hike. We can get away from [the base] but we don't have to travel a great distance to do it.

> I started to volunteer with the Red Cross aboard the base about 10 months ago. A goal of mine is to get a full-time job working for the Red Cross after I finish school, so I thought it was a great idea to get some experience working here by volunteering before I apply and the people here are great to know.

> When I told my grandma that I [volunteered] for the American Red Cross she



thought it was so cool. She remembers what the American Red Cross did back in WWII.

> I wanted to join the Red Cross after I remembered another branch I used to see back in Belgium. I also remember being told about what the American Red Cross did back in World War II and wanted to give back to service members just as they did all those years ago.

> I think that the work I'm doing now is fun. Not all things in the Red Cross are [negative]. Someone can get a message for when their child is about to be born when they are overseas which is a big deal when

families are so far apart. We are also planning to give some training in things like [cardiopulmonary resuscitation] which can be used to save lives in an emergency situation. That's part of the reason I like this job and this program, it does a wide variety of things for the community.

> Being able to help people is something that I think is important. While I work here I hope that I can continue to help and support service members stationed here. I'm grateful for the opportunity to volunteer and gain experience helping Marines and sailors [in my own way].

INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

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‘Kings of Battle’ bring



Lance Cpl. Christian J. Hernandez and Lance Cpl. Giovanni Mejia fire the M777A2 lightweight 155 mm howitzer to support units engaged in the mechanized assault course at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms during Integrated Training Exercise 2-15, Jan. 31.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. WILLIAM HESTER

Crisp, desert air greets the early rising Marines of Alpha Battery, as they prepare themselves and their M777A2 lightweight 155 mm howitzers for the long, draining day ahead. Digging holes for the “feet” of their weapon systems, and moving rounds that weigh near 80 pounds to different areas on the firing line is common during the average day of a cannoneer.

Marines with Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, currently assigned to 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary

Force, as part of the ground combat element of Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force 4, provide indirect fire for other units during Integrated Training Exercise 2-15 aboard the Combat Center, Jan. 31.

“If someone down-range needs suppression or something blown up, they call us. Then, we fire on the target to soften it up so they can roll in,” said Sgt. Daniel M. Gehringer, the section chief for gun three in Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines.

Artillery is providing support for tanks and infantry engaged in the mechanized assault course at ITX 2-15, according to Lt. Col. Neil J. Owens, the com-

manding officer for 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines.

“We are out here in support of everyone that needs it,” Gehringer, a Largo, Florida, native, said. “We support everyone from the infantry on the ground to the [helicopters] and jets in the air.”

One of the great things about ITX 2-15 is that it provides the opportunity to incorporate artillery, mortar and other forms of indirect fire in one setting, according to Owens, a Medford, Massachusetts, native.

“Artillery is very important to the overall mission because if we are landlocked, where they can’t call in naval gunfire, and are not close to air support, we are extreme-

ly versatile,” Gehringer said. “We can go in pretty much any terrain.”

The ability to train in the terrain at Twentynine Palms gives you the capability to operate anywhere in the world, according to Gehringer.

“The impact areas at Twentynine Palms are large,” Owens said. “This gives us less restriction on mission options.”

Twentynine Palms allows different elements of the MAGTF to work together because of the large training area, according to Gehringer.

“(ITX) is great for us because [the different elements always] plan together, but don’t have enough opportunity to train closely in the field

[together],” Owens said.

When every element of the MAGTF can support each other it puts the enemy in position to always be engaged by Marines, according to Owens. However, more elements results in more moving parts.

“Complexity brings a lot of friction, and Marines have to adjust,” Owens said. “[ITX] brings all of those factors together.”

The artillery’s cycle of operations always starts with a fire mission, according to Gehringer. They cannot shoot a single round without it.

Forward observers are Marines, artillery and communications personnel, often attached to infantry units, which sub-

mit a series of planned targets to the fire directing center for artillery, according to Owens.

“We load the round, then, load different charges dictating how far the round will travel,” Gehringer said. “Simultaneously, the gunner and assistant gunner are laying out the correct deflection of quadrants to hit the correct target.”

After the FDC issues a call for fire it must be confirmed by the battery fire support team before any rounds can be fired, according to Owens.

“Everyone in the MAGTF has a job,” Owens said. “There isn’t a single excess piece. We’re extremely excited to be here at ITX 2-15.”



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big guns for ITX 2-15



Cpl. Armontey D. Parks carries charges for the M777A2 lightweight 155 mm howitzer at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms during Integrated Training Exercise 2-15, Jan. 31. Different charges are used to adjust the distance the round will travel.



Smoke explodes out of the M777A2 lightweight 155 mm howitzer as Marines from Alpha Battery provide indirect fire to units engaged in the mechanized assault course at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms during Integrated Training Exercise 2-15, Jan. 31. Artillery is used to provide suppressive, indirect fire to ground and air units on the battlefield.



Marines with Alpha Battery perform weapon maintenance on a M777A2 lightweight 155 mm howitzer at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms during Integrated Training Exercise 2-15, Jan. 30.



Lance Cpl. Christian J. Hernandez cleans the breach of a M777A2 lightweight 155 mm howitzer at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms during Integrated Training Exercise 2-15 to keep the weapon firing properly, Jan. 30.

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Visit from pg. A1



Lt. Gen. David H. Berger, commanding general, I Marine Expeditionary Force talks to aMarines of Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 during his visit to the Combat Center, Feb. 5. Berger spoke to the Marines about their jobs and thanked them for all the hard work they’ve been doing.

manders, sergeants and lance corporals, they will tell you what needs to change, and that’s what I’m here for,” Berger said. “They give me great ideas about equipment, training and organization so that myself and other senior leaders can improve what needs to be changed and give them the right resources to train and be better prepared.”

Donna Berger met with department heads from Marine Corps Community Services, visited the Naval Hospital for program updates, and got an opportunity to meet with the program manager for the Lifestyle Insights, Networking, Knowledge, and Skills program.

Lt. Gen. Berger heard in the Marine’s own words about the jobs they perform and how they think it benefits training.

“Now that he’s the commanding general of I MEF, I think it’s a morale booster for the Marines to see he’s interested in what



Lt. Gen. David H. Berger, commanding general, I Marine Expeditionary Force talks to Lieutenant Colonel Steven R. Murphy, commanding officer, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 during his visit to the Combat Center, Feb. 5. The purpose of his visit was to take a tour of different units in I MEF and receive input from Marines.

they do. They’re able to explain what they do and why they do it,” said Sgt. Maj. Chasen E. Getty, sergeant major, MWSS-374. “I think it brings it full circle for the Marines.”

Being able to return to the Combat Center in his new capacity gave Berger an opportunity

to be able to find out how they’re doing and what he needs to do to help the Marines be successful in training.

“This is the greatest place to train that the Marine Corps has to offer,” Berger said. “It’s really great to be back for a visit.”

Adopt from pg. A1

the city officials met with Marines, sailors and family members of the regiment to introduce themselves. Former Mayor Van Tanner, City of Palm Desert, on behalf of the city, presented Spurlock with a framed certificate offi-

cially adopting the unit. “The City of Palm Desert now has a better opportunity to facilitate and channel community support for military personnel and their families. The Marines and sailors now also have more opportunities to

engage in local community activities and projects,” Spurlock said. “Being adopted by the City of Palm Desert is a great way to create a bond between our local community, which will support the morale of 7th Marine Regiment.”



Sgt. Kris Frillman, training cadre, 7th Marine Regiment, a native of Thayer, Mo., assists Mark Greenwood, director of public works, City of Palm Desert, as during the live-fire portion of the city of Palm Desert’s tour of the Combat Center, Jan. 28, 2015. Throughout the tour, Marines from the Regiment assisted and answered questions.

Heart from pg. A1

er, native of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

“L.I.N.K.S is a program that is predominantly [made up of] women,” Bilderrain said. “We see a lot of spouses, and this is the perfect group of women to come together and educate other women.”

The night began at 5:30 and the event accommodated approximately 70 guests. It included guest speakers from the Naval Hospital, raffle giveaways for cookbooks and a fashion show of the spring line at the Marine Corps Exchange.

“It’s very informative and [everyone] on base should take the opportunity to learn about all of the information they have for us,” said Melinda McCarthy, military spouse.

The event was spon-



Combat Center patrons help themselves to healthy snack alternatives during The Heart Truth Red Dress Gala and Fashion Show held at the Officers Club, Feb. 5. The event had approximately 70 women in attendance and is the second time it has been held here.

sored by eight different organizations to include American Red Cross, Take Shape for Life, Cooking Matters and Thrive. All of the sponsors had either a connection to the military or an interest in healthy living, which tied in nicely with the night’s theme of heart health and awareness.

“Our job is to educate spouses about the Marine Corps,” Bilderrain said. “So why not educate them about something that’s real and menacing to our lives, like heart disease. Events that raise awareness, like this Gala, are important to spread the word about health issues.”

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Tanks assault through ITX 2-15

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. WILLIAM HESTER

The poundingsun of the Mojave Desert beats without mercy on Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force as they perform final maintenance checks on their M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tanks before embarking on a large scale assault incorporating multiple elements of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force: the Tank Mechanized Assault Course.

Company D took on the TMAC Feb. 2 at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms as part of Integrated Training Exercise 2-15.

Tanks provide direct and indirect fire to support other units within Special Purpose Marine-Air Ground Task Force 4 at ITX 2-15.

“We have two tank platoons and a mechanized infantry platoon moving up to assault three objectives,” Said 2nd Lt. Brent C. Teague, a tank officer with Company D, 1st Tank Bn., 1st Marine Division, I MEF.

The TMAC provides good, applicable training for different units because it allows them to train in open space on a scale Marines don’t often have, according to Cpl. Phillip V. Lim, a tank crewman with Company D, 1st Tank Bn., 1st Marine Division, I MEF.

“A big way this helps us train for real-world application is if there are mechanized infantry in the desert environment, or open ground, you’re going to want tanks to be able to push through and defeat threats as the infantry closes in and con-

trols the objective,” said Teague, a McDonough, Georgia, native. ITX 2-15 uses every element of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force in one area to be successful in mission accomplishment, according to Lim.

Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms allows the Marines of Company D to work closely with other units, during ITX 2-15, while being able to employ all of their capabilities, according to Lim, a Derby, Kansas, native.

“Twentynine Palms is great for training, especially for units coming from Okinawa, Japan; Camp Pendleton, California; or Camp Lejeune, North Carolina because we can really spread out and get the dispersion we would truly like to have in a conventional mindset,” said Teague.

They will be using their tactics and capabilities to support other elements of the MAGTF in ITX 2-15, according to Teague.

“The tank capabilities that are going to be showcased in ITX are our ability to shoot, move and communicate at the same time over the rough terrain,” said Teague. “We can move and close on the enemy at a high rate of speed and set the support, by fire, to allow the infantry to move in.”

The company has a lot of new faces that have not had a lot of time to train together, yet, according to Lim.

“I hope the Marines under me can learn on how to better use our tank and how to employ our tank, as tactically as possible,” said Lim. “We’re working together as a platoon and on the bigger scheme, as a company.”



Marines perform maintenance on their M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank Feb. 1 at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms before the Tank Mechanized Assault Course. The TMAC allows Marines to train with different elements within the Marine Air-Ground Task Force and integrate fires for a combined arms assault. The Marines are with Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force.



Company D brings vehicles into formation Jan. 2 before the Tank Mechanized Assault Course at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms during Integrated Training Exercise 2-15.



Marines use an M1 Assault Breacher Vehicle to fire a Mine-Clearing Line Charge to clear an area for Marines to continue their assault Jan. 2 at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms during the Integrated Training Exercise 2-15 Tank Mechanized Assault Course.



Assault amphibious vehicles are used to mobilize infantry units during the Integrated Training Exercise 2-15 Tank Mechanized Assault Course Feb. 2 at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms. AAVs are used to get infantry in the fight fast.

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TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



Valentine’s Day is this Saturday, February 14. I love participating in joyous ceremonies when couples make solemn vows with the promise to love each other forever. I officiated in my first wedding in 1947 and have conducted better than 3,500 ceremonies since then. I still officiate in several weddings each year in the High Desert and I enjoy each one.

I have learned a few things over the years as I have prepared people for weddings and counseled literally hundreds of families with special problems.

The primary thing I have learned is that all great relationships require patience, forgiveness and commitment.

I like an anonymous writer’s description of commitment:

“Commitment means we take the worst of each other, the best of each other and the in-between of each other. Stirring it all together we say with loyalty and gentle understanding, ‘I love and totally accept the mixture of us.’”

Eric Fromm in his masterpiece “The Art of Loving” said it best:

”To love somebody is not just a strong feeling—it is a decision, it is a judgment, it is a promise. If love were only a feeling, there would be no basis for the promise to love forever. Feelings come and go, but love, which is a judgment and a decision, should go on forever.”

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MCCS promotes teen dating violence awareness month.

One in three teens have experienced abuse via physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, stalking, or cyber tactics.

Ten Tips for Preventing Teenage Dating Abuse

Parents play an important role in helping teenagers learn to build healthy relationships. It's never too early to talk with children about abusive behavior and what is healthy, in their relationships with peers. Below are tips you can use to help your teenager build healthy relationships:

- **Model good relationships.** Be respectful in your relationships at home and show your teen that communicating in a positive way helps build trust and respect.
- **Talk with your teen about other dating relationships seen at school or on TV.** Use these opportunities to discuss what's healthy in a relationship and what's not.
- **Teach your teen that abusive or violent behavior is never**



THIS FEBRUARY,

START TALKING ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS!

LOVE HAS MANY DEFINITIONS BUT ABUSE ISN'T ONE OF THEM.

acceptable.

- **Ask questions about your teen's relationships with friends.** Reinforce that you are available to talk whenever your child has questions or concerns.
- **Talk with your teen about the importance of being respected** - and being respectful - in a relationship.
- **Keep the conversation casual.** Let your child ask

questions and guide the discussion.

- **Educate yourself on digital abuse.** This can include excessive texting, sexting, sending threatening texts or emails and using social media sites to post insults. Talk with your teen about using texting and social media sites responsibly.
- **Be supportive of your teen's choices.** Let your

teen know that you are available if he or she ever feels uncomfortable in a relationship and you will do what you can to help.

- **Talk with your teen about the importance of trust and relationship boundaries.** Let your child know that privacy is important. Your teen should be concerned about anyone who wants to share passwords for phone or

email accounts.

- **Remind your teen that relationships don't have to be physically violent to be abusive.** Talk about recognizing the warning signs of an abusive relationship. Your teen should be concerned about anyone who is disrespectful, threatening or demeaning.

Join us on February 20, 2015 for teenager and parent workshops.

Beginning at 5:30 p.m. until 8 p.m. in Building 1707, classroom A. We will have workshops about sexting, what a healthy relationship is, a self defense class, drugs and alcohol in relationships, and gambling addictions. For further information please call 830-4950 or email michele.godfrey@usmc.mil.

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BOWLING CENTER

celebrates Grand Re-Opening



Lt. Col. Frank Marilao, assistant chief of staff, Marine Corps Community Services, cuts the red ribbon, officially re-opening Sandy Hills Bowling Center, Jan. 29. The bowling center was closed for renovations and updates to provide a more family-oriented environment for its patrons.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LANCE CPL. OLIVIA DAY

Lt. Col. Frank Marilao, assistant chief of staff, Marine Corps Community Services, prepares himself and his fellow Marines to cut a bright red ribbon during the Grand Re-Opening and 35th Anniversary Celebration of the Sandy Hills Bowling Center, Jan. 29.

"MCCS Headquarters has a vision about improving the infrastructure of the bases, so they've given the installation commanders the ability, through their MCCS Directors, to determine which infrastructure needs attention, and Headquarters gave us the specific funds to update our bowling alleys," said Marilao.



Lt. Col. Frank Marilao, assistant chief of staff, Marine Corps Community Services, shows Cpl. Anthony Gackle, motor transportation operator, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, how to share his bowling experience by logging onto Facebook from the bowling alley during the Grand Re-Opening and 35th Anniversary Celebration at the Sandy Hills Bowling Center, Jan. 29.

Sandy Hills Bowling Center re-opened with a newly updated interior and equipment, such as touch-screen control panels and 26 interactive bowling games. Sandy Hills also installed new sofas to lounge on while patrons wait for their turn to bowl, coffee tables, and new ball feeders according to Todd Makovsky, manager of Sandy Hills Bowling Center.

The re-opening Celebration was open to everyone and began at 11 a.m., concluding at midnight. At the event, there was a Marine versus Pizza Eating Contest at 6 p.m. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners were awarded prizes. Giveaways were given to the first 250 visitors who attended the celebration newly. The Gametime Grill, located inside the bowling alley, offered a "make your lunch a combo" for free from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

One of the Marines who attended the event was Chief Warrant Officer 2 Linda Marks, Airfield Company, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, native of Oakland, Calif., and was accompanied by her fellow Marines.

"[Marines] work a lot and get wrapped up in operations of the job, which is important, but we need to build that relationship with one another and the Marines are having a blast," Marks said.



Marines gather at the Sandy Hills Bowling Center for the Grand Re-Opening and 35th Anniversary Celebration at the Sandy Hills Bowling Center, Jan. 29. Later on in the day, there was a pizza eating contest and the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners were awarded prizes.



Combat Center Marines get ready to start their weekend at the Grand Re-Opening and 35th Anniversary Celebration of the Sandy Hills Bowling Center, Jan. 29. The Gametime Grill, located inside the bowling alley had a "make your lunch a combo" special from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Combat Center Events

The Education Center will be offering Free SAT Preparation from February 1 to March 22 at the Education Center. The course topics that will be focused on are math, writing and critical reading. The course’s objective is to increase test scores, introduce test-taking strategies, and connect students with others who are taking the SAT and many more. If you would like your son or daughter to participate, please contact the Education Center at 760-830-6881.

Stop by the Combat Center Library anytime during February to go on a blind date with a book. All you have to do is picked up a wrapped book and return it with a short review and your name will be entered in a drawing for a date night for two. You can pick up as many blind date books as you want.

The Officers Spouses Club is scheduled a Mardi Gras charity live and silent auction on February 21st at the Officers’ Club. Cocktail hour starts at 6 p.m. and the live auction starts at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$25 and all hands 21 and over are welcome. Come and enjoy New Orleans influenced appetizers and desserts. Cocktail attire is encouraged. For more information contact OSC29vp@gmail.com.

MCCS and F.O.C.U.S. are holding Strengthening the Homefront at the Officers’ Club Mesa Room on February 24th from 5 to 8 p.m. The event is to enhance the knowledge and explain the impact of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injuries and Operational Stress to Marines, sailors, and their families. For more information or to register, call at (760) 830-3110.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, Feb. 13
6 p.m. – The Gambler, R
8:30 p.m. – Unbroken, PG-13
11:30 p.m. – The Imitation Game, PG-13

Saturday, Feb. 14
10:30 a.m. – Rio 2, G (Free Admission)
1 p.m. – Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb, PG
3:30 p.m. – Into the Woods, PG
6:30 p.m. – Big Eyes, PG-13
9 p.m. – Woman in Black 2 Angle of Death, PG-13
11:30 p.m. – American Sniper, R

Sunday, Feb. 15
12:30 p.m. – The Imitation Game, PG-13
3 p.m. – The Gambler, R
6 p.m. – Paddington, PG
8:30 p.m. – Taken 3, PG-13

Monday, Feb. 16
1 p.m. – American Sniper, R
4 p.m. – The Wedding Ringer, R

Tuesday, Feb. 17
6 p.m. – Taken 3, PG-13

Wednesday, Feb. 17
6 p.m. –Unbroken, PG-13

Thursday, Feb. 19
5 p.m. – Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb, PG
7 p.m. – Into the Woods, PG

Friday, Feb. 20
6 p.m. – Paddington, PG
8:30 p.m. – American Sniper, R
11:30 p.m. – The Wedding Ringer, R



Odd ‘n’ Mod

Johnny Depp’s time-warped, Brit-flavored box office bomb

NEIL POND

*“Mortdecai”
Starring Johnny Depp,
Gwyneth Paltrow &
Ewan McGregor
Directed by David Koepp
Rated R*

Well, at least Johnny Depp’s latest movie has something in common with The Wizard of Oz, Citizen Kane and It’s a Wonderful Life: All three of those films, like his new flop, were initially box-office bombs.

Those flicks much later found respect and beloved places in cinematic history. Perhaps some new appreciation may also be heaped, decades down the road, on Mortdecai. But so far Depp’s dud has been savaged by most critics and has only attracted a trickle of audience turnout. Not many people have wanted to see him, apparently, in yet another nutty role, with a fake accent and goofball mannerisms—and particularly not in this movie, which is a bit of an oddity itself.

Based on a series of musty 1970s British comedic cloak-and-dagger novels, Mortdecai stars Depp as the eccentric art wheeler-dealer of the title, Gwyneth Paltrow as his wife, and Ewan McGregor as a MI5 agent on the trail of a missing art masterpiece that may contain a long-hidden code leading to squirreled-away Nazi gold. Eventually everybody gets in on the action, including Mortdecai’s loyal manservant (Paul Bettany), a competing American art collector (Jeff Goldblum), his nymphomaniac daughter (Olivia Munn) and some nasty Russian thugs.

The whole story seems kookily out of time, a far-out, swingin’-’70s romp plunked down clumsily in the present. Or is it a mod, mapcap comedy run backward through the gears of a time-machine blender? Or a weird parcel from a distant era yet to come, when Depp’s off-kilter-characters are worshipped as idols by a future civilization?

The humor, the jokes, the mannerisms, everything about it is so pseudo-sophisticated British, so Pink Panther-meets-Austin Powers-meets-Mr. Bean, so camp-ily, willfully, woozily derivative of practically every English sleuth saga and spoofy bungle caper that’s ever been done, it begs the question: Why did anyone bother to make this curious, out-of-time artifact of a movie at all, and why now?

Depp, who has fashioned quite a career out of quirk, adds yet another peculiar personality to his collection. Charlie Mortdecai, a wacky conglomeration of grunts, bleats, facial tics and a moustache that becomes one of the movie’s subplots by itself, is a hoot, but dimensionally hollow, and highly unlikely to join Capt. Jack Sparrow, Edward Scissorhands, Ed Wood or Willy Wonka in his hall of fame.

It’s all a tad randy, but only a tad, just barely enough for its R rat-

ing. That means anyone expecting a “raunchy” grown-up comedy, like a lot of R-rated comedies these days, will likely be disappointed at its relative tameness—and that any of Depp’s younger fans, from his Pirates of the Caribbean Disney movies, won’t be able to see it at all.

There are some funny bits, like a rather novel car chase, some clever dialogue and banter, and what seems like a total commitment from the cast, who appear to be having a cheerio, cheeky old time. But the plot is a bit of a runaround slog, and some of the gags require a good deal of stick-with-it—one involves whether a character will take a bite from a slab of stinky old cheese, or not.

Mortdecai may not be Johnny Depp’s finest moment, or even one of them. It’s not looking like it right now, anyway. But hey, let’s give this slab of stinky cheese another 30 or 40 years and see what happens, shall we?

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