

BHB Hosts First Drug Prevention Summit



Special agent Curtis, Navy Criminal Investigative Services, showcases drugs that have begun surfacing throughout the country during the first Behavioral Health Branch Informational Drug Summit, as part of the Drug Demand Reduction Program, at the Officer's Club, Tuesday.

**STORY AND PHOTOS
BY CPL. CHARLES
SANTAMARIA**

Representatives from several Combat Center departments hosted the Combat Center's first Behavioral Health Branch Informational Drug Summit, as part of the Drug Demand Reduction Program, at the Officer's Club, Tuesday.

The informational summit consisted of a series of classes sponsored by Marine Corps Community Services by representatives from the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program, Substance Abuse Control Office, Criminal Investigation Department, Legal Services Support Team, and Navy Criminal Investigative Services, which showcased drug trends and how the Combat Center is using its departments to collaborate with law enforcement and

combat illegal drug use.

"This is the first time the behavioral health branch has worked directly with law enforcement and the legal department to pull resources together and compare data," said Joven Caguioa, representative, Drug Demand Reduction Program, Marine Corps Community Services. "Our goal is to reduce demand for drugs on this installation through education and outreach."

The event was a collaborative effort from all departments involved, which offered educational materials like booklets, pamphlets, notebooks and other resources Marines and sailors could take back to their units.

"What I found useful was the actual process; what should actually be done when you find out a Marine has tested positive for illegal drugs and what steps should be taken after-

ward from CID and legal's [standpoint]," said Staff Sgt. Waldo Walden, mess chief, 7th Marine Regiment.

Although the focus of the summit was illegal drug use, the event offered information on behavioral health, stress and sexual assault prevention.

"Believe it or not, if there is a sexual assault or domestic violence report, drug or alcohol abuse is usually involved," Caguioa said. "Marines or sailors who are having a hard time dealing with a high-stress environment can sometimes use drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism as well. So all of the departments working together for this event relate to each other in some way and the information they provide is important for units to know."

The Summit began with a presentation by Caguioa detailing what the Combat

Center does to deter Marines from drug use.

"Urinalysis is the biggest deterrent," Caguioa said. "When Marines know after they come back from a 96-hour liberty period or vacation they're going to be tested; it's less likely they will use illegal drug substances."

Agents with CID discussed common mistakes commanders and senior enlisted advisors make when they find out a Marine or sailor has tested positive for drug use. Agents advised leaders to not divulge any information to the service member who tested positive until CID becomes involved. This allows agents to perform an efficient investigation of the user.

"What we want from the units is to have the Marine be surprised by the time he sees us," said agent Peterson, CID. "If

See **Summit pg. A7**



U.S. Marines from Joint Task Force 505 load relief supplies from Samaritan's Purse International Relief Organization onto a U.S. Marine Corps MV-22 Osprey at Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu, Nepal, Saturday.

'Gateway to Everest' receives U.S. aid

**STORY BY LANCE CPL. MANDALINE HATCH
AND GUNNERY SGT. JEREMY VOUGHT**

Deployed U.S. Military members and a North Carolina faith-based organization provided earthquake disaster relief supplies to Nepalese villagers in Dolakha District, Saturday and Sunday.

Joint Task Force 505, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Samaritan's Purse worked together to deliver donated supplies to Jiri village using Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey Tiltrotor aircraft during relief efforts in Nepal after two devastating earthquakes.

Jiri - known as the "Gateway to Mt. Everest" - is located in Northeast Nepal and sits at 6,250 feet. Already suffering from the first earthquake on April 25, the citizens of Jiri found themselves at the epicenter of a second earthquake on May 12. Samaritan's Purse aid workers were on the ground when the second quake struck. Nepalese local officials reached out to the aid organization and asked them to help their 1,490 households.

"Because we were working here already and nobody else was, there weren't a lot of people to take anything out there," said Ken Isaacs, Samaritan's Purse vice president of programs and government relations.

Samaritan's Purse coordinated with the United Nations and USAID, who, as the lead U.S. relief agency in the country, verified the requirement with the Government of Nepal and then tasked JTF 505 with their unique military capabilities to deliver the needed supplies from Tribhuvan International Airport using MV-22B Ospreys from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 262.

Over a two day period flying more than 10 sorties, the squadron delivered roughly 33,600 pounds of plastic sheeting and non-food items to the village so Samaritan's Purse could distribute to the people. They successfully transported hundreds of rolls of plastic sheets, measuring at 100 feet long and 20 feet wide each to the Nepalese people.

Isaacs said he thinks the most important thing needed right now in Nepal is the plastic sheeting due to monsoon season right around the corner.

"Rain is coming, people need to stay dry," he said. "If they don't stay dry, they're going to get cold. If they get cold, they're going to get sick, and if they're sick, they won't be able to rebuild."

The rolls of plastic sheets will protect nearly a

See **Aid pg. A7**

Marine Corps' Top Shot

Every week, thousands of fans cast their votes for the best photograph posted on the Corps' Facebook page. This week's top shot comes from Sgt. Marcin Platek.



Cpl. Ryan Johnson a guest member of the Marine Corps Shooting Team, practices sniper marksmanship May 4 at Puckapunyal Military Training Area, Victoria, Australia.

G7 bids farewell to leader



Lt. Col. Gregory Seaman, assistant chief of staff, G7 Mission Assurance Directorate, says his final remarks during his retirement ceremony hosted at the Protestant Chapel, May 15.

**STORY AND PHOTOS
BY CPL. CHARLES
SANTAMARIA**

Lt. Col. Gregory G. Seaman served as the Combat Center's assistant chief of staff for the G7, Mission Assurance Directorate, from 2013 to 2015, and retired after nearly 20 years of service to the Corps, at the Protestant Chapel, May 15, 2015.

Seaman graduated

from Pennsylvania State University and commissioned in 1996. He is a field artillery officer by trade and participated in Operations Unified Assistance, Iraqi Freedom, and Enduring Freedom. Throughout his career, Seaman attended the Expeditionary Warfare School, Marine Corps Command and Staff Course and in 2008 graduated from the Air Force

See **Leader pg. A7**



Reprinted from the Observation Post
By LCPL Scott A. Tynes
Published on May 19, 1989

LAV’s wet their wheels in Yuma

MCAS YUMA, Ariz. – Traversing a river is no problem for amphibious Light Armored Vehicles (LAVs) if drivers are well-versed in the abilities of the machine. With that in mind, Company A (rein), 3rd Light Armored Infantry Battalion (Co. A, 3rd LAI Bn.) of the 7th Marines Expeditionary Brigade from the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) trekked over 220 miles to the Yuma Proving Grounds (YPG) to undertake a variety of training missions designed to build confidence and familiarize drivers with the reality of amphibious driving. The Company arrived at YPG April 25, and immediately began to train. With only three days to train, there was no time to waste. Three missions had been laid down for the Marines to accomplish. “The primary purpose of our training out here is to put the vehicles in the water,” said Capt. Joe Holt, company commander. “We don’t get a chance to so that on a regular basis at Twentynine Palms because we’re so far away from any sizable body of water.” A second mission was to conduct driver mobility course on YPG’s many off-road tracks. These training missions were to teach the Marines how to handle the LAV over rugged and muddy terrain. The third mission was simply to maintain high frequency radio communication with MCAGCC, at the outer edge of the LAV’s radio range. Night training was also conducted, but was not considered one of the primary missions, according to 2ndLt. Thomas L. Langlois, platoon commander. Seventeen of the 26 LAVs in the company deployed and were accompanied by about 92 Marines. Of the deployed Marines, there were only approximately 12 had amphibious experience. “I’m glad we could give the vehicles a workout, they performed well,” said Holt. “This vehicle represents a tremendous capability in the Marines Corps with its mobility and firepower assets. We can provide an awful lot of information to the regimental commander in a tactical environment, deal with the bad guys and relay the information back.” The LAVs, eight wheeled vehicles made by the general motors of Canada, can exceed 60 mph on land and seven mph in the water. Its body style adapts to many different uses. LAVs are designed to accomplish a variety of missions such as reconnaissance of a proposed battle site, transporting troops, and providing prep fires or fire support. The company also deployed here last year with over 600 Marines from the battalion. During the course of the last year, however, the battalion moved to camp Schwab, Okinawa with a company at Camp Fuji, Japan while Company A is at MCAGCC.

CROSSWORD

- Across**
- 1. Diver Louganis
 - 5. Italian wine region
 - 9. Mazda offering
 - 14. Make a call
 - 15. Chastity's mom
 - 16. Keys
 - 17. Moon ____ Zappa
 - 18. Actress Sofer
 - 19. Nights in Paris
 - 20. "Which 'Frozen' Character Are You?", e.g.
 - 23. Soaking place
 - 24. Cereal grass
 - 25. Mouse mover
 - 29. Fens
 - 30. School volunteer gp.
 - 31. Urge to vent, perhaps
 - 32. Florida beach town, familiarly
 - 35. Kin of a fisheye
 - 37. Get as profit
 - 38. Lake creator
 - 39. Author/critic James
 - 40. First-rate
 - 43. Find loathsome
 - 45. Cosmological span
 - 46. Sony alternative
 - 47. Spy from within
 - 48. Fine print
 - 50. Novel part
 - 51. Tooth that turns
 - 54. Ready for the white glove treatment
 - 57. Youth in Job
 - 60. Toward the sheltered side
 - 61. "The Sun ____ Rises"
 - 62. Coyote of toons
 - 63. Singer McEntire
 - 64. Slight in structure
 - 65. Campaign stop, e.g.
 - 66. Fly like a condor
 - 67. Sprayer

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62						63				64				
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- Down**
- 1. Bait shop stock
 - 2. Ascend quickly
 - 3. "My Fair Lady" heroine
 - 4. Sax great Stan
 - 5. Extent of land
 - 6. Three ____ to the wind
 - 7. Manages
 - 8. Jordan neighbor
 - 9. Little shooter
 - 10. Subaru competitor
 - 11. "The Greatest" boxer
 - 12. Oriental holiday
 - 13. Sure-footed critter
 - 21. Pump insert
 - 22. No later than
 - 26. Extended attack
 - 27. Maritime birds
 - 28. Put back to square one
 - 29. Automotive pioneer
 - 30. Fluffy lap dog, for short
 - 32. Ensured, with "up"
 - 33. Western lake and resort
 - 34. Fabric pattern
 - 35. Zig's counterpart
 - 36. Running ____
 - 38. Genetic helix, for short
 - 41. Grill item
 - 42. Human rights org.
 - 43. Mythical unit of time that is seven times a human's

- 44. Util. bill
- 47. Folk singer Miriam
- 49. Whitish
- 50. So-called "caveman diet"
- 51. Yo-Yo string?
- 52. Where to find dates?
- 53. Diminutive dwarf
- 55. Shucked units
- 56. Whip stroke
- 57. Ram's squeeze
- 58. 54, once
- 59. O'Neill work

SUDOKU

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Last week's answers

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WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Jeffery

Alvin, Tx. Petty Officer 2nd Class, religious program specialist, 1st Tank Battalion

RAYNOR

Raynor has been in the Navy for eight years and enjoys paintball, shooting guns and fishing. He is currently the religious program specialist for 1st Tank Battalion.

- > **Growing up**, my friends and brother played paintball. I found it interesting so I bought an inexpensive gun and started playing with them.
- > **I have been playing paintball** on and off for about five years, I picked it back up when I was stationed in Japan.
- > **Paintball gets me out** and doing something. It is good cardio running around everywhere and I get to hang out with some friends at the same time.
- > **When I moved from Fort Hood, Texas**, to Alvin, Texas, we played in pastures with paintball bunkers set up and that is when I decided to buy more durable paintball guns.
- > **I enjoy going out** and shooting guns too. The main weapons I use are my 12-gauge shotgun, my AR-15, and a Smith and Weston .40 caliber handgun. I'm saving up for my next gun which is an M1911 handgun.
- > **I started shooting while** I lived in Southeast Texas. It was fun to see if I can shoot more accurate than my friends.
- > **I also enjoy fishing** when I have the opportunity. That hobby has to wait for later though because there are not a lot of places to go around here.
- > **I joined the Navy** because I wanted travel and I wanted to further my education. In my small town, jobs were hard to get and maintain.
- > **I have had the opportunity**, to go to a lot of places since joining the Navy like: Japan, Quantico, Va., Thailand, Australia, and Korea to name a few.
- > **I came into the Navy undesignated** which is not having a specific job. I became a religious program specialist and I enjoy doing this job.
- > **I have been in the Navy for 8 years.** In two years my contract will be up again. I'm at the point where I would be fine re-enlisting again. It goes by quicker than you expect.
- > **My job is to integrate with the Marines** and see how they are doing for the



- command. I get to go to the ranges with them and I get to know them.
- > **The Marines I work with** are awesome and they are eager to move forward.
 - > **When I go around checking** on the different sections, I can see that these Marines care about each other and are willing to improve and learn. It's a great thing to see.

INTERVIEW AND PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

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Safety Fair teaches, entertains students



Cortez, military working dog, Provost Marshal’s Office, bites Staff Sgt. Charles Hardesty, kennel master, PMO, during a demonstration at the Marine Corps Communication and Electronics School Safety Fair at the MCCES barracks, May 15. The event was held to bring awareness to how Marines can be safe during the “101 Days of Summer.”

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School representatives held their biannual Safety Fair at the MCCES barracks parking lot, May 15.

Approximately 3,000 Marines took the opportunity to learn about safety in an entertaining environment.

“I put this on for my Marines because they need to learn about safety,” said Retired Lt. Col. Joice Teters, director of safety, MCCES. “[They can] learn without looking at a power point, then they are able to enjoy themselves while learning what they need to know.”

A variety of personnel operated booths from several organizations such as the Substance Abuse Control Office, Provost Marshal’s Office K9 unit and representatives from around the local community. The representatives taught the Marines where they can go for entertainment while staying in a safe environment and

how to avoid dangerous situations throughout the summer months.

“We were able to get [representatives] from SACO, who used ‘beer goggles’ to show how alcohol affects your motor skills, as well as a fencing club, and tattoo safety booth from the local community,” said Lt. Col. Speros Koumparakis, commanding officer, Communications Training Battalion, MCCES. “The event showed how to be safe while still having an entertaining time.”

MCCES held the event to prepare for “101 Days of Summer,” a Marine Corps wide installation initiative to increase safety during the summer months.

“During that time, we want Marines to be more vigilant and keep safety in mind,” Koumparakis said. “Marines are not the only people who try to have fun during the summer.”

Alongside the fencing club and PMO booths, there were booths from motorcycle stunt riders, local law enforcement, and other agencies from the community. The Marines learned how alcohol

affects their motor skills by running a small course in pedal cars while wearing beer goggles. They learned about a few basic fencing techniques from the Twentynine Palms Fencing Club as well as safety information from booths from local law enforcement and the Combat Center Fire Department.

“We have about 30 to 35 different groups out here teaching these Marines about safety,” said Gunnery Sgt. Bruce Spencer, safety chief, MCCES. “Safety is the main idea behind this fair and I believe it is important, especially for our students to interact with the community.”

Being out of the classroom gave the students of MCCES a refreshing learning experience.

“This is a fun experience,” said Pfc. Marcus Bains, student, MCCES. “Being able to get out of the traditional classroom and learn is great.”

The Safety Fair has been a biannual event for eight years. MCCES will continue to hold this event to promote safety as a priority for young Marines.

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Pfc. Dustin Sanspree, student, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, partakes in a simulated drunk driving course at the Substance Abuse Control Office booth during the MCCES Safety Fair at the MCCES barracks parking lot, May 15. Participants wore goggles that affected the driver's eyesight as they went through the course.

Tony Carbajal, freestyle stunt bike rider, performs a wheelie on his Kawasaki Ninja ZX6 during the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School Safety Fair, at the MCCES barracks parking lot, May 15.



Marines learn fencing from the Twentynine Palms Fencing Club during the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School Safety Fair at the MCCES barracks parking lot, May 15. The MCCES Safety Fair has been hosted aboard the Combat Center for eight years.



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"I can say that what is special about this base is the amount of teamwork displayed from all the departments," Caguio said. "It was a collaborative effort that we hope to continue."

“It made me feel very proud of the Marines and how hard they’re working, and also very proud of the United States for our involvement here,” said Isaacs.



U.S. Marines part of Joint Task Force 505 secure relief supplies from the Samaritan's Purse International Relief Organization onto a U.S. Marine Corps MV-22 Osprey at Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu, Nepal, Saturday.

“The importance of the G7 as a whole is that they are your first responders to any emergency,” Seaman said. “They have a ‘24 hours a day, seven days a week,’ job. They’re always on duty to ensure they promote the health, welfare and safety of all the residents who live aboard the Combat Center.”

The G7 conducted 10 full scale exer-

"I'd like to recognize the men and women of the G7 for standing the watch for the benefit of the base and all those who live here," Seaman said. "I'm proud to have served the Combat Center and the United States Marine Corps."

The Hi-Desert Star

Dr. Lou can be reached at 760-367-4627
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Chaplains distribute coffee to Combat Center

PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD



Cpl. Tristofer Ducharme, unmanned aerial vehicle operator, Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1, places boxes coffee in the back of a truck for his unit during the Chaplain's coffee giveaway at the Distribution Management Office, Tuesday. This is the fifth time Holy Joe's Café donated coffee to the Combat Center.



Pfc. Jordan White, student, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, passes boxes of coffee to Cpl. Tristofer Ducharme, unmanned aerial vehicle operator, Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1, during the Chaplain's coffee giveaway at the Distribution Management Office, Tuesday. Holy Joe's Café gave two deliveries of coffee measuring out to one and one-half truckloads of coffee.



Pfc. Kristian James, student, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, loads coffee during the Chaplain's coffee giveaway at the Distribution Management Office, Tuesday. The coffee was donated by Holy Joe's Café.



Pfc. Sydney Hart, student, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, finishes loading coffee during the Chaplain's coffee giveaway at the Distribution Management Office, Tuesday. Holy Joe's Café donates coffee to the Combat Center as a form of outreach to the different tenant commands.

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Combat Center Soccer League reaches Semi-Final



Pfc. Axel Marin, administrative clerk, Combat Logistics Company 13, 1st Marine Logistics Group, prepares to kick a soccer ball during the Combat Center Soccer League's semi-final game May 19, 2015. CLC-13 faced Combat Logistics Battalion 7 during the match.



Players from Combat Logistics Company 13 and Combat Logistic Battalion 7 shake hands at the end of the match during the Combat Center Soccer League's semi-final game May 19, 2015. CLC-13 was victorious over CLB-7.



Lance Cpl. Victor Navarro, vehicle mechanic, Combat Logistic Company 13, 1st Marine Logistics Group, dives to block the soccer ball during the Combat Center Soccer League's semi-final game May 19, 2015



Lance Cpl. Oscar Almodova, tank crewman, 1st Tank Battalion, runs past his opponent during the Combat Center Soccer League's semi-final game May 19, 2015. 1st Tanks faced 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment's soccer team in the semi-final game.



Sgt. Jonathan Linares, data and communications maintenance Marine, 1st Battalion 7th Marine Regiment, and Lance Cpl. Angel Quintanilla, tank crewman, 1st Tank Battalion, battle for the soccer ball during the Combat Center Soccer League's semi-final game May 19, 2015.



1st Battalion 7th Marine Regiment and 1st Tank Battalion soccer teams shake hands after their match at Combat Center Soccer League's semi-final game May 19, 2015. 1st tanks won the match with a score of 3-2.



Combat Center Events

Come to the Information Expo at the Vista Del Sol Community Center May 20th from 12 to 2 p.m. The event is open to residents of 801 Housing. Come learn about the Marine and Family Programs has to offer. Learn about programs such as: the New Parent Support Program, School Liaison and Career Resources. For more information call 760-830-8106.

Come visit Sandy Hill Lanes Bowling Center. With well-maintained lanes, large screen televisions, and a digital jukebox, it's a great facility for indoor recreational fun and relaxation. Tournaments are offered regularly and cosmic bowling runs every Friday and Saturday evening. For more information, contact 760-830-6422.

Visit the Sand Trap Grill at the Desert Winds Golf Course, The Grill brings back old favorites like the charbroiled hamburger, salads, hot dogs and breakfast. Their expansive seating accommodates large groups of people. For more information call the golf course at 760-830-6132

A Remembrance Run is scheduled May 28 at 8 a.m. at the Desert Winds Golf Course. Registration is not required and the first 150 runners will receive a free T-shirt. For more information call 760-830-4092

Sunset Cinema

Friday - May 22 3:30 p.m. Saving Private Ryan -R 6:30 p.m. Flags of Our Fathers -R 9:30 p.m. It Follows - R 11:30 p.m. -Unfriended - R	Monday - May 25, 2015 1:00 p.m. Little Boy- PG 13 3:30 p.m. The Age of Adaline – PG 13
Saturday - May 23, 2015 10:30 a.m. - Big Hero 6 – PG 1:00 p.m. - Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2 -PG 3:00 p.m. Woman in Gold - PG 5:00 p.m. Black Hawk Down -R 8:00 p.m. Furious 7 – PG 13 11:00 p.m. The Longest Ride – PG 13	Tuesday - May 26, 2015 7:00 p.m. Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2- PG 13
Sunday - May 24, 2015 12:00 p.m. Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2- PG 2:00 p.m. It Follows - R 4:30 p.m. Furious 7- PG 13 7:00 p.m. American Sniper - R 9:20 p.m. Fury -R	Wednesday - May 27, 2015 7:00 p.m. Woman in Gold - PG-13
	Thursday - May 28, 2015 6:30 a.m. Furious 7- PG 13
	Friday - May 29, 2015 4:30 a.m. Marvel's The Avengers PG 13 8:00 a.m. Avengers: Age of Ultron PG 13 11:30 a.m. Unfriended -R



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Not So Hot

Witherspoon, Vergara comedy a clunky, schlocky misfire

NEIL POND

“Hot Pursuit” Starring Reese Witherspoon & Sophia Vergara Directed by Anne Fletcher Rated R

An uptight, by-the-books Texas policewoman and a sassy, motor-mouth Latina mob wife flee from crooked cops and drug-cartel assassins, leaving a trail of cross-cultural hilarity across the Lone Star State. That’s obviously what was supposed to happen in this odd-couple match-up with Oscar winner Reese Witherspoon and Modern Family TV star Sofia Vergara. And why not? One’s short, blonde and Caucasian, the other’s tall, brown and Columbian. They start as “enemies” and end as friends. It’s a time-tested yuk-yuk template that worked, with various tweaks, in countless other movies. But it sure doesn’t work here. Just about everything is wrong in Hot Pursuit, a clunky misfire that chokes on the fumes of tired lowbrow gags, worn-out

stereotypes, shrill slapstick and lazy, predictable, sub-sitcom writing. One reason might be because two TV-sitcom writer-producers, David Feeney (According to Jim, 2 Broke Girls) and John Quaintance (Material Girls, Whitney), came up with the flimsy concoction that passes for a script without bothering to work in anything new, novel or even halfway worthy of the big screen. Another could be because director Anne Fletcher (The Proposal, The Guilt Trip) doesn’t seem to have any idea what to do with her two leading ladies; maybe she was preoccupied planning her next project, the sequel to Disney’s Enchanted. Here, she mostly seems to leave her stars stranded to fend for themselves in scenes that require them to scream, screech, make out with each other and crack groan-worthy jokes about lesbians, menstruation and “man parts.” In one scene, Witherspoon—literally covered with cocaine—hops around like a bunny rabbit. In another, she and Vergara disguise themselves in a blanket and a

ridiculous fake deer head to elude a police dragnet. In a roadside souvenir shop, we get to see their undies as they try on new outfits, mainly so Vergara, in her form-fitting bra, can make a quip about Witherspoon’s frumpy-looking underpants. A whopping part of the blame has to go to the Vergara and Witherspoon, both of whom are credited as producers of this schlock—which means everyone else was working for them. Ouch. Vergara’s shtick—mangling the English language and parading her voluptuous feminine form—is a big part of Modern Family, and it seems like everyone just wanted to shift her TV character to the screen with a minimum of thought or effort. Witherspoon’s done comedy before (Legally Blonde, Election, Four Christmases), but coming off last year’s hot Oscar-nominated run producing and starring in Wild, appearing with Joaquin Phoenix in the groovy-wacky Inherent Vice and producing Gone Girl, this feels like a real misalignment of talent, timing and material. The two leads valiantly manage to coax a few laughs out some of the setups, like a ride with a busload of senior citizens that becomes a crazy, three-way interstate shootout. But the best part of the movie is at the end, when outtakes show them flubbing their lines, cracking each other up and apparently having a great time all around making Hot Pursuit. If only sitting through it was that much fun for the rest of us.

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Palm Vista Elementary visits 1st Tanks



Lance Cpl. Mason Bennet, tank gunner, 1st Tank Battalion, helps students of Palm Vista Elementary School use the Advanced Gunnery Training System at the 1st Tanks Tank Ramp, Monday. The simulator allowed the children to get a glimpse of how the Marines train to operate tanks.

Lance Cpl. Richard Hedges, tank gunner, 1st Tank Battalion, helps students from Palm Vista Elementary School operate the Advanced Gunnery Training System during a tour of the Tank Ramp, Monday. Thirty-five Marines volunteered to work with the children during the tour.



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD

1st Tank Battalion welcomed Palm Vista Elementary School students for a tour of the Tank Ramp, Monday.

The children got the opportunity to experience a ‘day in the life’ perspective 1st Tanks Marines.

“For a lot of these [children], this will be the first time they have ever been on a military base,” said Lt. Col. Lee Rush, battalion commander, 1st Tanks. “Being able to show them what we do is a great way to show the community the human side of the Marine Corps.”

The children were split up into three groups and had the opportunity to learn about the different vehicles used by 1st Tanks such as the M1A1 Abrams. The children also used a variation of the Advanced Gunnery Training System simulators and asked the Marines of 1st Tanks questions about the equipment.

“The simulators are the same ones we use to train with,” said Master Gunnery Sgt. Steven Heath, operations chief, 1st Tanks. “The only real difference is the ones we generally use are in a box that makes you feel like you are actually in a tank.”

While one group experienced the simulators, the others went outside to look at four M1A1 Abrams tanks, an M88A2 Hercules, an ambulance, a Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement, a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All-Terrain Vehicle and a Logistics Vehicle System Replacement.

“Most of these [children] have never seen anything like this in real life,” Heath said. “It is like Disneyland and SeaWorld mashed up into one for them.”

Approximately 30 Marines volunteered to show the students around the vehicles and help with the equipment.

“It’s great to be able to do things like this for the school,” said Cpl. Matthew Rivera, tank gunner, 1st Tanks. “Showing the [children] around is refreshing and seeing them so excited makes us want to keep doing what we do.”

The children had the opportunity to learn from the Marines and see equipment most people never have the opportunity to see.

“Most of these children have seen the Marines come to their class rooms and help their teachers for a day,” said Navy Lt. j.g. William Daniel, chaplain, 1st Tanks. “For some of them, these Marines are role models.”



Palm Vista Elementary School students lift a stretcher with Seaman Sean Sullivan, field medical service technician, 1st Tank Battalion, on it during a tour of the 1st Tanks Tank Ramp, Monday.



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