

OPM announces steps to protect federal workers from cyber threats



STORY BY U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

WASHINGTON D.C. – The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announced the results of the interagency forensics investigation into a recent cyber incident involving Federal background investigation data and the steps it is taking to protect those impacted. Throughout this investigation, OPM has been committed to providing information in a timely, transparent and accurate manner. As information has become available and verifiable, the agency has updated Congress, the Inspector General, Federal employee representatives, and – most importantly – those that are affected. Today’s announcement is the latest in this series of updates, and OPM will continue to provide additional information going forward.

Since the end of 2013, OPM has undertaken an aggressive effort to upgrade the agency’s cybersecurity posture, adding numerous tools and capabilities to its various legacy networks. As a direct result of these steps, OPM was able to identify two separate but related cybersecurity inci-

dents on its systems.

Today, OPM announced the results of the interagency forensic investigation into the second incident. As previously announced, in late-May 2015, as a result of ongoing efforts to secure its systems, OPM discovered an incident affecting background investigation records of current, former, and prospective Federal employees and contractors. Following the conclusion of the forensics investigation, OPM has determined that the types of information in these records include identification details such as Social Security Numbers; residency and educational history; employment history; information about immediate family and other personal and business acquaintances; health, criminal and financial history; and other details. Some records also include findings from interviews conducted by background investigators and fingerprints. Usernames and passwords that background investigation applicants used to fill out their background investigation forms were also stolen.

While background investigation records do contain some information regarding mental health and financial history provided by those that have applied

for a security clearance and by individuals contacted during the background investigation, there is no evidence that separate systems that store information regarding the health, financial, payroll and retirement records of Federal personnel were impacted by this incident (for example, annuity rolls, retirement records, USA JOBS, Employee Express).

This incident is separate but related to a previous incident, discovered in April 2015, affecting personnel data for current and former Federal employees. OPM and its interagency partners concluded with a high degree of confidence that personnel data for 4.2 million individuals had been stolen. This number has not changed since it was announced by OPM in early June, and OPM has worked to notify all of these individuals and ensure that they are provided with the appropriate support and tools to protect their personal information.

Since learning of the incident affecting background investigation records, OPM and the interagency incident response team have moved swiftly and thoroughly to assess the breach, analyze what data may have been stolen, and identify those individuals who may be affected. The

team has now concluded with high confidence that sensitive information, including the Social Security Numbers (SSNs) of 21.5 million individuals, was stolen from the background investigation databases. This includes 19.7 million individuals that applied for a background investigation, and 1.8 million non-applicants, predominantly spouses or co-habitants of applicants. As noted above, some records also include findings from interviews conducted by background investigators and approximately 1.1 million include fingerprints. There is no information at this time to suggest any misuse or further dissemination of the information that was stolen from OPM’s systems.

If an individual underwent a background investigation through OPM in 2000 or afterwards (which occurs through the submission of forms SF 86, SF 85, or SF 85P for a new investigation or periodic reinvestigation), it is highly likely that the individual is impacted by this cyber breach. If an individual underwent a background investigation prior to 2000, that individual still may be impacted, but it is less likely.

OPM is also announcing the steps it is

See **Threat pg. A6**

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 Cpl. William Perkins.



Lance Cpl. Patrick Murphy, a rifleman assigned to Company I, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, identifies a target through his rifle combat optic during a patrol as part of the 1st Marine Division Super Squad Competition aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., June 30.

To our valued MCCS patrons aboard MCAGCC



COURTESY PHOTO

STORY BY MARINE CORPS COMMUNITY SERVICES

MCCS would like to thank you for all the input regarding the “Saving our Club” letter from the Commanding General published in May. The CG asked for your help and many of you responded. Via ICE, we have received many helpful suggestions on how to improve our lunch services. He stressed the importance of your support through patronage, to which you have also answered the call. We thank you for all that you have done and continue to do to help.

We’d like to take this opportunity to convey the steps we have taken on our part to improve the club, based on your input and the CG’s guidance.

We are in the process of adjusting the menu and will be adding more “kid friendly” and healthy menu items. We have officially returned the pasta bar and taco bar in response to your suggestions. Coupons, adding the ability to pre-order for large parties and providing to-go orders are other items we plan on implementing. As always, we

See **Patrons pg. A6**



Reprinted from the Observation Post
July 14, 1978

Mechanized assault - 'it beats walkin'

The Corps' traditional straight-legged infantry is "mounting up and moving out" with a concept known as the 'Mechanized Task Force.'

In preparation for testing this concept, more than 3,500 Marines have been training here for the past several months. The primary purpose of this test is to operate in a mechanized environment by temporarily task organizing from within current assets to accomplish specific missions. The test is tentatively scheduled for a November-December time frame. The results may establish new doctrine that can be applied to all Marine Amphibious Forces (MAF).

The Mechanized Task Force, with maneuver elements comprised

of tanks combined with infantry in amphibious tractors, centers around task organization from existing assets within a MAF. "Task Organization" is the grouping of equipment and manpower from various units for a specific mission or situation.

With the increased lethality and mobility of the modern battlefield in mind, a review of existing doctrine was conducted. As a result, a fresh and updated concept for mechanized operations is being evaluated. The test concept, however, will in no way end the Corps' role and primary mission of seizing a beachhead. It is intended to make that mission easier, with the support of aircraft and artillery. A mechanized

force with more speed and mobility than straight infantry, would be able to land and rapidly strike inland, reducing the congestion of friendly forces on the beachhead. Once ashore, Marines would live in and fight for those vehicles, melded into tractor teams.

The Training Center has conducted two phases of preliminary evaluation to determine the support required and feasibility of this concept. The first phase involved about 700 Marines in a 2-day, company level combined arms team training exercise. With tracked vehicles, they covered 50 miles of desert using the techniques, maneuvers and tactics of mechanized operations.

The second phase followed with a battalion level 3-day assault covering 60 miles. This aggressed phase included participants from One-Four and 3rd Tanks, augmented by Marines from 1st FSSG, 1st MarDiv and 3rd MAW.

The Training Center will conduct the actual test at the regimental level, using forces designated by CGFMF Pac. The Marine Corps Education and Development Center at Quantico will evaluate the test data.

Is the Mechanized Assault Task Force feasible? That will be decided when all the facts are in. However, an anonymous Grunt was heard to say, "it sure beats the hell out of walking!"

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Whinny
- 6 Palindromic pop group
- 10 Shot
- 14 Person with a mike
- 15 Actor Rudd
- 16 Fire fanatic
- 17 Not much of a sacrifice
- 20 Convert to leather
- 21 Summer cooler
- 22 "___ And Maude"
- 23 "Absolutely!"
- 24 Pepsi rival
- 25 "To be or not to be" speaker
- 28 Spectrum color
- 29 Boxer Muhammad
- 32 Neptune's realm
- 33 Hive dwellers
- 34 Cinematographer Nykvist
- 35 T-bone with a warm, red center
- 38 Carolina college
- 39 Sty cry
- 40 Short-winded
- 41 Anatomical pouch
- 42 On-line auction site
- 43 Ran out
- 44 Score after deuce, in tennis
- 45 Rolais rival
- 46 Chef Lagasse
- 49 Craft
- 50 Blotter letters
- 53 Digestive-system parts
- 56 Molokai meal
- 57 Cubs or Colts
- 58 Three English rivers
- 59 Alternatively
- 60 The good olde days
- 61 Arc lamp gas

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56						57					58			
59						60					61			

Down

- 1 Branch headquarters?
- 2 Actress Watson
- 3 Volunteer's words
- 4 Come together
- 5 Program guide location?
- 6 Culinary cover-up
- 7 Get-out-of-jail money
- 8 Tampa Bay NFLer
- 9 Place for a pint
- 10 Fern-to-be
- 11 Proof goof
- 12 Asia's shrinking ___ Sea
- 13 '80s pitcher nicknamed "Oil Can"
- 18 Verse writer
- 19 "___ a chill pill!"
- 23 Actor Delon
- 24 Office worker
- 25 Development developments
- 26 Amtrak express train
- 27 Red Bordeaux
- 28 Cecil's cartoon friend
- 29 States
- 30 Rent
- 31 Signed
- 33 Beach Boy Wilson
- 34 Way up
- 36 Potential to get around
- 37 Hated 1765 Colonial burden
- 42 Chanteuse Adams

- 43 Author Jorge ___ Borges
- 44 Reason
- 45 Motif
- 46 Fashion magazine
- 47 Stake driver
- 48 Ages
- 49 Antares, for one
- 50 Ever's partner
- 51 Bingo relative
- 52 Part of Nasdaq: Abbr.
- 54 "The Matrix" role
- 55 "___ got an idea"

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

JEFFERY PRESTON RYERSON
Born on June 30, 2015
Born to Lindsay Flodin and Kyle Ryerson

EMILY JANELLE STEWART
Born July 3, 2015
Born to Katy and Brett Stewart

CAROLINE MARIE JOHNSON
Born July 3, 2015
Born to Klint and Janet Johnson

SUDOKU

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Last week's answers

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

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MCIWest off-limits establishments guidance prohibits service members from patronizing the following locations. This order applies to all military personnel.

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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:**
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 - Sports Auto Sales, 1112 National City Blvd.

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 - STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.
 - K Smoke Shop, 5865A Adobe Rd.
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 - Yucca Tobacco Mart, 57602 29 Palms Hwy.
 - Puff's Tobacco Mart, 57063 29 Palms Hwy.
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 - 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

Malachi

Motor transport operations chief, Headquarters Company, 1st Marine Division, 7th Marine Regiment, 31

CANNON

>I started playing the drums when I was five, after my parents bought me my first drum set. I played in church growing up and I joined the Marine Corps at the age of nineteen where I've continued to play.

>I taught myself how to play. I banged all my drum sets to pieces, but in the process I ended up progressing and buying better equipment.

>I've been with motor transportation with the task of refueling aircrafts for most of my time in the Marine Corps.

>When I went on MSG duty in Nouakchott, Mauritania, Africa, from 2007 to 2010, I realized I needed something that felt like home. That's when I started buying individual pieces for my new drum kit.

>In Africa I was also able to find some traditional percussion instruments. Along with the kit, I ended up getting a djembe, a traditional African drum, and a set of congas.

>While I was overseas, playing the drums helped me focus on enjoying my alone time but I preferred playing with other musicians.

>Playing music with other Marines definitely brought some camaraderie to the workplace. Marines who have a musical background or have the ability to play have a comfort when their away from home. It helps them relieve stress.

>Being away from family, and missing holidays and birthdays, I

relied on playing music to bring me happiness while overseas.

>I grew up on Gospel music and focus on it because it brings positive energy to my life. I think listening to the music was the catalyst in developing my faith.

>Music can pull on your emotions and feelings. It can bring joy, encouragement, strength, or anything depending on what you're looking for.

>Anyone who plays music has an outlet to release emotion. Whether it's relieving stress by playing angrily, or playing because you're having a good day, it's all positive. It can change your mood.

>I don't see playing the drums as an aspiration to make money, but as something I can pass onto my kids.

>My wife and I plan on having at least two children. If they want to learn how to play, I'd let them beat on the drums until they break.

>Musical instruments are valuable because they're tangible memories that you can pass on. An instrument has the potential to become an heirloom.

>Making music is something that's always been a part of my life. I don't only look at it as way to relieve stress but rather something that brings me joy.

>My advice is: whatever your outlet is in life, make sure it's positive. Share it with other people and it might help them with their situation.

Cannon has been in the Marine Corps for 12 years. He has served as a Marine Security Guard in Africa and performs at the Combat Centers' Christ Chapel on Sundays.



INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY LANCE CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK



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Around the Corps



Sgt. Maj. Robin C. Fortner, left, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force Sergeant Major, and Col. Matthew G. St. Clair, GCEITF Commanding Officer, case the national ensign during the unit's deactivation ceremony at the Goettge Memorial Field House, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Tuesday.



The Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force renders honors to Brig. Gen. Robert Castellvi, deputy commanding general, II Marine Expeditionary Force, and reviewing officer, during the GCEITF deactivation ceremony at the Goettge Memorial Field House, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Tuesday.

Integrated Task Force deactivates at Camp Lejeune

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. ALICIA R. LEADERS

JACKSONVILLE, N.C. - An era in Marine Corps history came to an end when the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force officially cased the unit colors during a deactivation ceremony at the Goettge Memorial Field House aboard Marine Corps Base

Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Tuesday.

On Jan. 24, 2013, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army Gen. Martin Dempsey rescinded the Direct Combat Exclusion Rule; Services to Expand Integration of Women into Previously Restricted Occupations and Units. Shortly after the rescis-

sion, the GCEITF was stood up.

The GCEITF activated last fall and more than 600 Marines and sailors formed the unit to conduct integrated, gender-neutral training using a battalion landing team model to support the evaluation of the physical performance of participating Marines in the execution of individ-

ual and collective training tasks associated with the ground combat element.

Organization of the task force reflected the functional military occupational specialties to later be assessed by Marine Corps Operational Test and Evaluation Activity at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California, in which the task force spent approximately three and a half months undergoing a rigorous physical and mental assessment that traversed the Mojave Desert; the mountains of Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, California; and the Pacific waters of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California.

The task force consisted of Company A, representing rifleman; Company B, boasting mechanized roles of M1A1 tank crewman, amphibious assault vehicle crewman and light armored vehicle crewman; Weapons Company, further representing the infantry in machine gunner, mortarman, and assaultman and anti-tank missileman; and Battery A, showcasing the field artillery cannoner MOS. The task force was rounded

out with Headquarters and Service Company, which included an Engineer Platoon of combat engineers.

Brig. Gen. Robert Castellvi, deputy commanding general, II Marine Expeditionary Force, was present as the reviewing officer, and pinned the task forces' first and only award, the Navy meritorious unit commendation, onto the colors.

"The GCEITF accomplished everything it was asked to do and then some," Castellvi said. "It is my privilege to pin on this meritorious unit commendation. Wear your meritorious unit commendation with pride and swagger, because you have earned it. Congratulations on a job well done."

Col. Matthew G. St. Clair, GCEITF Commanding Officer, then expressed his gratitude and experience to the audience, and to the Marines and sailors he led over the past year.

"This is a historic chapter in the Marine Corps, as we close a piece of Marine Corps history that will lead us into the future," St. Clair said. "It was no small task to build the task force. Our female volunteers first had to go to their MOS schools and successfully complete that training before they came to us. It didn't leave us a whole lot of time to prepare Marines that came from all over the Marine Corps, from

the operating forces to the reserve component. It was all done under the leadership of our NCOs, SNCOs and officers."

St. Clair gave thanks to the families of Marines and sailors; Maj. Gen. Lewis Craparotta, commanding general, MCAGCC, Brig. Gen. George Smith, Jr., director, Marine Corps Force Integration Office; I Marine Expeditionary Force, and Paul Johnson, head researcher, MCOTEA.

Following his remarks, St. Clair and Sgt. Maj. Robin C. Fortner, GCEITF sergeant major, cased the unit colors as the task force looked on, together, for the last time.

"Marines, thank you for your commitment to each other," St. Clair said. "You took care of each other, you pushed through pain, and your actions and your performance will shape this organization for years to come. I am humbled to have stood beside you. Semper Paratus."

From October 2014 to July 2015, the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force conducted individual and collective skills training in designated combat arms occupational specialties in order to facilitate the standards based assessment of the physical performance of Marines in a simulated operating environment performing specific ground combat arms tasks.

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U.S. Marines kick off Agile Spirit 15

STORY BY CPL. RYAN YOUNG

VAZIANI TRAINING AREA, Georgia - Exercise Agile Spirit 2015 officially kicked off during a ceremony July 8 at Vaziani Training Area, Georgia.

More than 250 Marines and sailors from 10th Marine Regiment and Black Sea Rotational Force are participating in the multilateral exercise from July 8-22.

Exercise Agile Spirit is an exercise involving a NATO Response Force level combined operation. This exercise utilizes a scenario under simulation that incorporates a wide range of planning and execution challenges during a command post exercise and a field training exercise.

The Marines are partnering with armed forces from Georgia, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria to complete the exercise. Soldiers from the nations stood side-by-side during the opening ceremony as leaders from the nations spoke.

"Over the course of the next two weeks, Exercise Agile Spirit will continue to support our growing partnerships and strengthen the bonds between 2nd Marine Division with the fine fighting forces of our partner nations," said Col. Clifford J. Weinstein, commanding officer of 10th Marine Regiment.

Service members from each nation will be training together in different events, including live-fire and patrolling, as well as a command post exercise.

"I do believe that initiating training will render the biggest friendship," said Major General Vakhtang Kapanadze, Chief of General Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces. "I want to wish the success of each and every representative I see in front of me, both on Georgian soil and whatever ground you train on."



PHOTO BY CPL. REBECCA FLOTO

Colonel Clifford J. Weinstein, commanding officer of 10th Marine Regiment, gives his remarks during the opening ceremony of Agile Spirit 15, a multilateral exercise at Vaziani Training Area, Georgia, July 8, 2015.



PHOTO BY CPL. RYAN YOUNG

Georgian, Romanian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Bulgarian, United States of America and NATO flag fly together during the opening ceremony of Exercise Agile Spirit 15, July 8, 2015, at Vaziani, Georgia. Agile Spirit is an annual exercise involving a NATO Response Force level combined operation with participation from six allied and partner countries.



PHOTO BY CPL. REBECCA FLOTO

Forces stand in formation for the opening ceremony of Agile Spirit 15, a multilateral exercise at Vaziani Training Area, Georgia, July 8, 2015.



PHOTO BY CPL. REBECCA FLOTO

Forces stand in formation for the opening ceremony of Agile Spirit 15, a multilateral exercise at Vaziani Training Area, Georgia, July 8, 2015.

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Threat form pg. A1

taking to protect those impacted:

1. Providing a comprehensive suite of monitoring and protection services for background investigation applicants and non-applicants whose Social Security Numbers, and in many cases other sensitive information, were stolen – For the 21.5 million background investigation applicants, spouses or co-habitants with Social Security Numbers and other sensitive information that was stolen from OPM databases, OPM and the Department of Defense (DOD) will work with a private-sector firm specializing in credit and identity theft monitoring to provide services such as:

- Full service identity restoration support and victim recovery assistance
- Identity theft insurance
- Identity monitoring for minor children
- Continuous credit monitoring
- Fraud monitoring services beyond credit files

The protections in this suite of services are tailored to address potential risks created by this particular incident, and will be provided for a period of at least 3 years, at no charge.

In the coming weeks, OPM will begin to send notification packages to these individuals, which will provide details on the incident and information on how to access these services. OPM will also provide educational materials and guidance to help them prevent identity theft, better secure their personal and work-related data, and become more generally informed about cyber threats and other risks presented by malicious actors.

2. Helping other individuals who had

other information included on background investigation forms – Beyond background investigation applicants and their spouses or co-habitants described above, there are other individuals whose name, address, date of birth, or other similar information may have been listed on a background investigation form, but whose Social Security Numbers are not included. These individuals could include immediate family members or other close contacts of the applicant. In many cases, the information about these individuals is the same as information generally available in public forums, such as online directories or social media, and therefore the compromise of this information generally does not present the same level of risk of identity theft or other issues.

The notification package that will be sent to background investigation applicants will include detailed information that the applicant can provide to individuals he or she may have listed on a background investigation form. This information will explain the types of data that may have been included on the form, best practices they can exercise to protect themselves, and the resources publicly available to address questions or concerns.

3. Establishing an online cybersecurity incident resource center – Today, OPM launched a new, online incident resource center - located at <https://www.opm.gov/cybersecurity> - to offer information regarding the OPM incidents as well as direct individuals to materials, training, and useful information on best practices to secure data, protect against identity theft, and stay safe online. This resource

site will be regularly updated with the most recent information about both the personnel records and background investigation incidents, responses to frequently asked questions, and tools that can help guard against emerging cyber threats.

4. Establishing a call center to respond to questions – In the coming weeks, a call center will be opened to respond to questions and provide more information. In the interim, individuals are encouraged to visit <https://www.opm.gov/cybersecurity>. Individuals will not be able to receive personalized information until notifications begin and the call center is opened. OPM recognizes that it is important to be able to provide individual assistance to those that reach out with questions, and will work with its partners to establish this call center as quickly as possible.

5. Protecting all Federal employees – In the coming months, the Administration will work with Federal employee representatives and other stakeholders to develop a proposal for the types of credit and identity theft monitoring services that should be provided to all Federal employees in the future – regardless of whether they have been affected by this incident – to ensure their personal information is always protected.

Continuing to strengthen OPM cybersecurity. OPM continues to take aggressive action to strengthen its broader cyber defenses and information technology (IT) systems, in partnership with experts from DOD, the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and its other interagen-

cy partners. As outlined in its recent Cybersecurity Action Report, in June, OPM identified 15 new steps to improve security, leverage outside expertise, modernize its systems, and ensure internal accountability in its cyber practices. This includes completing deployment of two-factor Strong Authentication for all users, expanding continuous monitoring of its systems, and hiring a new cybersecurity advisor.

Director Archuleta has initiated a comprehensive review of the architectural design of OPM's IT systems, to identify and immediately mitigate any other vulnerabilities that may exist, and assess OPM's data sharing and use policies. That review is ongoing. In addition, OPM will also continue to participate in a Federal Government-wide 30-day cybersecurity sprint, whereby immediate steps are being taken to further protect information and assets and improve the resilience of Federal networks, and will participate in a 90-day interagency review of key questions related to information security, governance, policy, and other aspects of this the security and suitability determination process, to ensure that it is conducted in the most efficient, effective and secure manner possible.

Director Archuleta and the entire Office of Personnel Management are committed to protecting the safety and security of the information of Federal employees and contractors. OPM is also committed to helping those that have been impacted by this incident, safeguarding its systems and data, and fulfilling its mission to serve Federal workers.

Patrons form pg. A1

continue to promise to keep the pricing as affordable as possible.

Many previously assumed that the establishment was not open to everyone. By renaming it the "Frontline Restaurant" we hope to emphasize that this casual dining experience is open to all-ranks and civilians. Both the restaurant and the MCCS Catering department services, within the Officers Club facility, are available to all patrons aboard the installation. We are planning more special events

to invite everyone to the "Top of the Hill"! There will be a revised and more affordable catering menu introduced as well.

Improvements to the building, from the lobby all the way back to the kitchen are also being planned. In addition, our Food and Hospitality manager attended the National Restaurant Association Conference to gain insights into restaurant technology and food trends. Our goal is to make the Frontline Restaurant a place you are proud to bring your

family and friends, while staying current with the ever-evolving and growing food service industry.

In closing, we want you to know your concerns and suggestions have been heard and are valued. We know there is work ahead. We will also be strategically placing suggestion boxes within the Top of the Hill Complex to improve response time to your needs. We look forward to a continued dialogue with our patrons to reach our common goal.

Your MCCS Team



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U.S., Australia conduct amphibious raid exercise



Australian Soldier PVT Justin Gow, with the 2nd Royal Australian Regiment, provides security at Fog Bay during an amphibious assault during exercise Talisman Sabre 15, in the Northern Territory, Australia, July 11. Talisman Sabre provides an invaluable opportunity to conduct operations in a combined, joint, and inter-agency environment that will increase the U.S and Australia's ability to plan and execute contingency responses, from combat missions to humanitarian efforts.

PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. ERIC C. CLAYTON



PHOTO BY GUNNERY SGT. RICARDO MORALES

U.S. Marine Corps 1st Lt. Gary Goodwin, from Company F, Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, uses a radio during an amphibious assault utilizing Combat Rubber Reconnaissance Crafts on Fog Bay along side Australian soldiers of the 2nd Royal Australian Regiment during exercise Talisman Sabre 15, in the Northern Territory, Australia, July 11.



PHOTO BY GUNNERY SGT. RICARDO MORALES

U.S. Marines with Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, and members of the 2nd Royal Australian Regiment conduct an amphibious assault utilizing Combat Rubber Reconnaissance Crafts at Fog Bay during exercise Talisman Sabre 15, in the Northern Territory, Australia, July 11.

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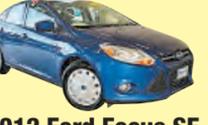
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'Cutting Edge' provides security at Al Taqaddum

PHOTOS BY CPL. JOHN BAKER



U.S. Marine Humvees stage near the Task Force Al Taqaddum security force compound, awaiting mounted patrols at Al Taqaddum Air Base, Iraq, June 28, 2015. The security force regularly patrols the area to ensure the safety of Task Force Al Taqaddum personnel.



U.S. Marine Pfc. Samuel Allingham, a mortarman with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, currently attached to Task Force Al Taqaddum Security Force, drives a Humvee on a patrol at Al Taqaddum Air Base, Iraq, July 3, 2015.



U.S. Marines come to a security halt during a patrol at Al Taqaddum Air Base, Iraq July 3, 2015. Task Force Al Taqaddum is part of Operation Inherent Resolve's Advise & Assist mission, which places U.S. coalition members in mentorship positions with Iraqi Security Force leadership in subjects like logistics and operations planning.



U.S. Marines with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, currently attached to Task Force Al Taqaddum Security Force, meet with Iraqi Security Force soldiers at Al Taqaddum Air Base, Iraq, July 3, 2015.

Visit the official **MCAGCC** facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/the-combatcenter>

‘Cutting Edge’ Marine from Iraq deploys in support of OIR



Lance Cpl. Ali J. Mohammed poses for a photo with a Humvee aboard Al Taqaddum Air Base, Iraq, July 4, 2015. Mohammed is originally from Baghdad and is now serving in the U.S. Marine Corps as a supply Marine. He is currently deployed as an Arabic interpreter for Task Force Al Taqaddum.

STORY BY CPL. JOHN BAKER

U.S. Marines, Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen recently came together to form Task Force Al Taqaddum, an Advise and Assist team operating from a new training site in a familiar location. The joint task force brings Operation Inherent Resolve’s A&A mission closer to the fight, bringing unique capabilities from all services together under one command, partnered with Iraqi forces.

Many times, these U.S. service members work far outside their occupational specialties.

Lance Cpl. Ali J. Mohammed, a supply Marine sourced from Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Division, Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force—Crisis Response—Central Command, is currently at Al Taqaddum with Weapons Company, 3/7, functioning as an interpreter between the U.S. forces and the Iraqi Security Force.

Originally from Baghdad, Mohammed and his family were driven out by an extremist group when it learned his sister had been working as an interpreter for U.S. forces. He and his family contacted the U.S. embassy after fleeing the area and eventually came to California in 2010.

“After my junior year of high school we moved again,” said Mohammed. “I finished my senior year there while working for a security company.”

He said he’d dreamed of becoming a U.S. Marine since his childhood in Iraq.

“The reason I joined the Marine Corps is because I knew Marines who were here when I lived here, and I liked them,” said Mohammed. “I had a feeling I was going to come back here as a Marine.”

When Mohammed first came into the Marine Corps he was not yet a U.S. citizen, but all the hard work he put in at recruit training paid off at his graduation.

“I had a green card and I got my citizenship at boot camp,” said Mohammed. “They did a ceremony at graduation in front of a lot of people. It was one of the biggest days of my life.”

After completing recruit training, Mohammed went

on to Marine Combat Training and then to his formal military occupational specialty school, where he would learn how to ship, receive and inventory supplies for the Marine Corps. Soon after completing all his training he learned he could put to use a skill he has had since a young age.

Mohammed speaks a specific dialect of Arabic that is unique to Iraq. Many of the interpreters at Al Taqaddum speak different dialects of Arabic. Mohammed said this can sometimes cause confusion.

“I speak the Iraqi dialect; it’s different than most Arabic dialects,” said Mohammed. “Iraqi dialect is one of the hardest dialects to master, and the Iraqis speak really fast.”

When he first got to his unit at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California, Mohammed new he wanted to serve in Iraq and volunteered to deploy outside of his occupational status.

“At first nobody knew I spoke Arabic, but I knew translators would end up in Iraq,” said Mohammed. So he talked to one of the officers in the battalion, and told his story. It didn’t take long before the unit’s leadership decided to deploy him as an interpreter—where he could make the biggest impact to the mission.

He explained that his job as an interpreter can be a lot of work. There are several Iraqi units stationed at Al Taqaddum, and Mohammed helps the Marines communicate with the local forces. He is also regularly tasked to sit in on important meetings where he translates for his commander.

“It’s a lot of work sometimes,” said Mohammed, “but I get to work with a lot of different people and I’m getting a lot of experience out of it.”

Mohammed expressed his pride in the fact that he has the opportunity to help the country he was born in, while serving the country he calls home.

“I’m helping Iraq, which is my home country and I’m serving the U.S., which is my home,” said Mohammed. “This is a big deal and I’m willing to work hard for both these countries.”

Liberty Call



Combat Center Events

The Marine Band will perform at the West Gym, building 1519, on Tuesday the 21st of July 2015, from 2 to 3 p.m. The performance is in conjunction with the Combat Center Library's Summer Reading Program "Read to the Rhythm," running through Aug. 3. The event is free and open to all.

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, contact the golf course at 760-830-6132.

For free golf lessons, visit the Desert Winds Golf Course. Golf school for adults will be offered every Tuesday at 9 a.m. and course for ladies will be offered every Wednesday at 9 a.m. Range balls and green fee is included in the course. For more information, contact 760-830-3011.

To keep your mind active this summer check out the Combat Center Library's Summer Reading Program. The six week program runs from June 22 to August 3 and is open to all hands. The event will conclude with prize drawings to those who have completed all five reading levels. Visit the library for the complete Read to the Rhythm Guidelines and schedule of events. For more information, contact 760-830-6875.

Sign up for tackle football to compete for the number one team aboard the Combat Center. Registration will be open until July 31 with the season lasting from September 1 to November 2. All entry forms must be approved by the unit commanding officer and leagues will be limited to the first six teams that register. For more information, contact 760-830-4092.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, July 17

6:00 p.m. – Inside Out (3-D), PG
8:30 p.m. – Spy, R

Saturday, July 18

12:30 p.m. – Inside Out (3-D), PG
3:00 p.m. – Dope, R
5:30 p.m. – Insidious Chapter 3, PG-13
8:00 p.m. – Entourage, R

Sunday, July 19

12:30 p.m. – Inside Out (3-D), PG
3:00 p.m. – Jurassic World, PG-13
5:30 p.m. – Spy, R
8:00 p.m. – San Andreas, PG-13

Monday, July 20

7:00 p.m. – Dope, R

Tuesday, July 21

7:00 p.m. – Inside Out (3-D), PG

Wednesday, July 22

5:00 p.m. – Aloha, PG-13
7:30 p.m. – Insidious Chapter 3, PG-13

Thursday, July 23

5:00 p.m. – Inside Out, PG
7:30 p.m. – San Andreas, PG-13

Friday, July 24

6:00 p.m. – Max, PG
8:30 p.m. – Entourage, R



Trashy Teddy

Seth McFarlane and his foul-mouth furball strike again

"Ted 2"
Starring **Mark Wahlberg & Amanda Seyfried**
Directed by **Seth McFarlane**
Rated **R**

NEIL POND

The bawdy little talking furball is back. Writer-director Seth McFarlane's raunchy teddy bear returns in all his crass, computer-generated comedic glory for another round of surrealist stoner silliness with his Bostonian best friend, John (Mark Wahlberg), in this sequel to the \$550-million-grossing 2012 hit.

It begins, as many movies do, with a wedding, as Ted (voiced by McFarlane) ties the knot with his gum-smacking bride, Tami-Lynn (Jessica Barth). Soon, however, there's trouble in paradise: Ted and Tami-Lynn discover they can't have a baby, for a couple of reasons—including that Ted, a teddy bear, lacks the necessary anatomical equipment. And trying to adopt creates another problem, which comes to loom large: The legal question of whether Ted is a person or a piece of property.

How you feel about the humor in Ted 2 will likely align with how you feel in general about the work of McFarlane, whose TV show Family Guy established and enshrined him as a golden boy of rollicking, ribald politically incorrect hilarity. For some, he's a brilliant, envelope-pushing social satirist. Others lean to the more "offended" side of the critical spectrum, noting his penchant for crude jokes, scatological humor and the sharp, scathing edges on the blades of his irreverent, "insensitive" lampoonery.

There's plenty of all of that, however you feel about it, in Ted 2, from the dazzling Busby Berkeley-inspired musical opening credits sequence

to the almost nonstop parade of crude jokes, celebrity cameos and gurgling bong hits that follow.

I won't say it's not funny, and some of it is flat-out hilarious. McFarlane runs his characters (which include Amanda Seyfried as a newbie attorney who takes on Ted's "personhood" case) through a gamut of R-rated punch lines and crazily comical setups. A Liam Neeson walk-on, as a grocery-store customer overly concerned about the age-appropriateness of his breakfast cereal, is a total hoot. (Stay for all the credits for the full payoff.) Jay Leno gamely goes along with a joke about gay sex.

Characters come to expect the same (obscene) search suggestion for any Google query. Ted's bachelor party—remember, he's a bear—features a unique kind of porn. There a profanely inspired moment of speculative banter about what the F. in author F. Scott Fitzgerald's name really stands for.

But some things seem unnecessarily drawn-out and repetitive, with gags and ploys from the first movie simply recycled or repeated—like a subplot with the creepy stalker Donny (Giovanni Ribisi), who wants to slice into Ted to see what makes him tick. At one point, John yells "Déjà vu!" I hear you, sir!

The Kardashians, rocker Steven Tyler and Harrison Ford all but assuredly won't like the jokes made at their expense, but quarterback Tom Brady was clearly aboard for his scene, in which Ted and John infiltrate his bedroom for an ill-fated artificial-insemination scheme.

If some of that sounds like the bottom of comedy barrel, perhaps you'll be a bit more uplifted by Ted 2's underlying civics lesson about gay rights, the struggle of blacks in America and the inherent dignity of all living things.

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TOUGH MINDED

OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



Steve Kanold has shared these reflections at my request.
Read and enjoy.

"To celebrate my 64th birthday last month, I traveled to the Holy Land to be baptized in the Jordan River. Jesus said to enter the Kingdom of God, one must "be born of water" (John 3:5), and-- having never been baptized--I figured if not now, when?"

Knowing little about the ritual, I phoned Reverend Lou Gerhardt, who has performed baptisms for over six decades, and asked if I should focus on my past discretions while being dunked, thereby drowning my sins (or at least sending them downstream).

"Heck no!" the good pastor retorted. "Go with a clear mind, embrace the setting and just appreciate the moment."

Good advice, I thought two weeks later, wading into the sacred river lined with Galilee pine trees. Dr. Lou was right--at this blessed place, nothing but joy could happen. My bliss was interrupted when suddenly I sensed nibbling at my toes. Carp were swimming between my feet! Other pilgrims felt them, too, as there was much fidgeting as the line made its way toward the minister who--waist high in water--seemed oblivious to the fish. By the time it was my turn, I was ready to leap into his outstretched arms. Like others who had gone before me, I pinched my nostrils and leaned back on cue, momentarily disappearing under the cool current. When it was over, I was relieved to step back onto dry soil. Annoyed that the ceremony had been upstaged, I nevertheless felt liberated and reborn. For the first time ever, I sensed that I had a shot of being admitted into heaven."

This column sponsored by:

Betty "Sam" Szymanski
Yucca Valley

Dr. Lou can be reached at 760-367-4627
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Gas N' Go with a \$2000 Visa Gas Card

NEW! 2015 Toyota Prius Two LB
Model 1223

24 month lease
\$109*/mo+tax

2 at this payment VIN 451297, 451184

*\$2999 due at lease inception plus \$500 military rebate 12000 miles per year .15 per additional mile, excludes \$80 dealer documentation fee on approved above average credit through Toyota Financial Services. \$2000 Visa gas card from Toyota Motor Sales with a 24 month lease through Toyota Financial Services. Security deposit waived. See dealer for details.

NEW! 2015 Toyota Camry LE
Automatic • Model 2532

36 month lease
\$109*/mo+tax

2 at this payment VIN 507264, 509248

*\$2999 due at lease inception plus \$500 military rebate 12000 miles per year .15 per additional mile, excludes \$80 dealer documentation fee on approved above average credit through Toyota Financial Services. Security deposit waived.

NEW! 2015 Toyota Corolla L
Automatic • Model 1832

MSRP 18,808
I-10 Toyota Discount 2000
Military Rebate 500

Net Price \$16,308

(Plus Fees)

2 at this price VIN 326727, 348868

Excludes \$80 dealer documentation fee, tax, license, and all other government fees.



Qualifications

To qualify for the rebate, you must meet these conditions at the time of purchase:

- U.S. military personnel
- Household members of eligible U.S. military personnel (including Gold Star families)
- U.S. military veterans (within 1 year of discharge)
- Provide verifiable proof of military status or active service at the time of purchase: Leave and Earning Statement or Military Identification Card (Photo copy of Military Identification Card is NOT required.) DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty
- Receive a qualifying salary
- Receive credit approval through a Toyota dealer and Toyota Financial Services

For more information, please see your Toyota dealer.

[1] \$500 rebate offered by Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. and may be applied toward finance or lease contracts dated from January 6, 2015 through January 4, 2016. To qualify for the rebate, at the time of purchase or lease you must (1) be in current active duty status in the U.S. military (Navy, Army, Air Force, Marines, National Guard, Coast Guard and active Reserve) OR a U.S. military inactive reserve (i.e., Ready Reserve) that is part of the individual Ready Reserve, Selected Reserve and Inactive National Guard; OR a military veteran or retiree of the U.S. military within one year of their discharge/retirement date; OR a household member of an eligible U.S. military personnel, including Gold Star family members; AND (2) provide verifiable proof of military status or active service; (3) receive a salary sufficient to cover ordinary living expenses and payment for your Toyota; and (4) receive credit approval through a participating Toyota dealer and Toyota Financial Services. Not all applicants will qualify. On lease contracts, rebate must be applied toward the Amount Due at Lease Signing or toward the Capitalized Cost Reduction. On finance contracts, rebate must be applied toward the Down Payment. Limit one rebate per finance or lease transaction per eligible U.S. military personnel or eligible household member. Offer not combinable with the College Graduate Rebate Program, the iFi Program, and the Lease-End Refi Program. Terms, conditions and restrictions apply. Program may not be available in all states. Must pay sales tax. Void where prohibited by law. Not redeemable for cash. Toyota Financial Services is a service mark of Toyota Motor Credit Corporation (TMCC). TMCC is the authorized attorney-in-fact and servicer for Toyota Lease Trust.

TOYOTA CERTIFIED PRE-OWNED



2013 Toyota Corolla LE
\$14,990
(Plus Fees)
VIN 206725



2011 Toyota Prius III
\$15,990
(Plus Fees)
VIN 434867



2011 Toyota Camry Hybrid
\$16,490
(Plus Fees)
VIN 141920



2012 Toyota Tacoma Pre Runner
\$22,490
(Plus Fees)
VIN 023927



2012 Toyota Rav4 LTD
\$24,990
(Plus Fees)
VIN 075359

PRE-OWNED



2005 Ford Focus ZX4
\$7,995 (Plus Fees)
VIN 275919



2008 Toyota Scion XD
\$8,995 (Plus Fees)
VIN 009508



2011 Mitsubishi Galant ES
\$11,990 (Plus Fees)
VIN 017692



2012 Ford Fiesta SE
\$11,990 (Plus Fees)
VIN 207810



2012 Toyota Prius C II
\$14,990 (Plus Fees)
VIN 500590



2013 Hyundai Elantra GLS
\$13,490 (Plus Fees)
VIN 349192



2012 Hyundai Veloster
\$15,990 (Plus Fees)
VIN 078367



2014 Jeep Compass Sport
\$16,990 (Plus Fees)
VIN 535728



2010 Toyota Sienna
\$17,990 (Plus Fees)
VIN 291395



2011 Chevy Silverado Crew Cab 1500
\$24,990 (Plus Fees)
VIN 136838



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