



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. CLARENCE LEAKE

Marines with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, attached to Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Central Command, conduct non-lethal weapons training at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia, Feb. 10. SPMAGTF-CR-CC Marines hone their skills in the event of non-lethal combatant operations.

Suicide Charlie 1/7 conducts Non Lethal Weapons Training

STORY BY
 SGT. OWEN KIMBREL

UNDISCLOSED LOCATION, Southwest Asia—Platoon-sized riot control requires unit cohesion, proficiency with non-lethal weapon systems and an understanding of the proper procedures used to safely administer non-lethal munitions and techniques in a hostile environment. In order to gain these, U.S. Marines with 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment's Company C, Special Purpose Marine

Air Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Central Command, performed a non-lethal weapons live-fire range at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia, Feb. 10.

The Marines alternated course of fires between the M4 shotgun and M203 grenade launcher with non-lethal rounds and then utilized those weapon systems tactically with riot shields. The Marines with shields stood shoulder-to-shoulder to form a protective barrier in order to allow the

See 1/7 pg. A6



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. CLARENCE LEAKE

Lance Cpl. Andrew Decker with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, attached to Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Central Command, fires a Remington M870 12-gauge pump shotgun as part of non-lethal weapons training at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia, Feb. 10.

Active Duty Fund Drive begins aboard Combat Center

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
 CPL. THOMAS MUDD

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society held a class for Active Duty Fund Drive unit representatives at the Visitors Center, Feb. 19.

The Active Duty Fund Drive will take place aboard the Combat Center from March 7 until April 1. The fundraiser will provide funds for Marines and sailors in need through the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society.

"The Active Duty Fund Drive is a method of raising money and awareness for the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society," said Ray Caldwell, director of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, Twentynine Palms Branch. "It is owned, maintained and accomplished through the active duty personnel."



Combat Center unit representatives receive a class about the Active Duty Fund Drive from Ray Caldwell, director of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society at the Village Center, Feb. 19.

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society is an asset that provides Marines and sailors emergency funding and assistance. The society assists individuals or their dependents who need money for bills, food and emergency leave. The society also provides counseling for individuals who have fallen on economic troubles.

"This is not only an asset for people who need money for emergency leave," said Maj. Steven Ingle, exercise control officer, Marine Corps Logistics and Operations Group. "This is an important asset that can be a lifeline for those individuals who need the help. This organization can help these people get back on track or just make it through a hard time in their life."

The fund drive is run by individual units. Each unit is responsible for educating their Marines and sailors about the society and what it can do to assist them. The role of Navy-Marines Corps Relief Society is to provide units with the tools needed to properly

See Fund pg. A6

Raising the flag 71 years ago: Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima

STORY BY GUNNERY SGT. REINA BARNETT

It was seventy one years ago when Joe Rosenthal, a 33-year old Associated Press photographer, hurried up Mount Suribachi on the Japanese Island of Iwo Jima after hearing about an American flag being raised on the volcano at the southern tip of the island.

The war correspondent who followed the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps in the Pacific Theater of Operations during the Second World War had no idea how inspiring or iconic that photograph would become ... he simply snapped the actions of five Marines and one Navy corpsman raising a larger American flag, not far from where a smaller one was being lowered.

Upon reaching the summit, Rosenthal briefly contemplated trying to capture both flags, but decided against it and focused his attention on the second raising instead.

In a 2005 interview with USA Today, Rosenthal said, "I had just a minute or two to make a decision as to whether to get both flags in transition, or just one. I opted for the flag that was going to be in motion."

Rosenthal had no idea how his photo turned out until two days later when he received a message at the command ship from AP's New York office, congratulating him on a fine flag-raising picture. The photograph 'Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima' was immediately wired around the world and appeared on the front page of newspapers across the country.

Rosenthal won the Pulitzer Prize for his photo depicting Marine Sgt. Michael Strank, Marine Cpls. Harlon Block, Rene Gagnon, Ira Hayes, Navy Pharmacist's Mate John Bradley, and Marine Pfc. Franklin Sousley, raising the second American flag.

Some say Rosenthal's powerful photo signaled hope for the U.S., peace was near, and the war would soon come to an end. Others have said the photo helped win World War II.

Here's what's indisputable: more than 25,000 Marines and Sailors lost their lives securing the island of Iwo Jima, and the photo taken 71 years ago exemplified the courage, fortitude, and sacrifice of these men.

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 Lance Cpl. Devan K. Gowans.



A Marine provides security for his team during the night portion of a tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel training scenario at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 8.

**This Week in
Combat
Center**



Reprinted from the Observation Post
February 24, 1984
Story by Sgt. Charles Luedke

Two F/A-18 Hornets of Marine Fighter Attack

Squadron-314, from MCAS El Toro, Calif., visited the Combat Center, Feb. 15, to familiarize ground crews here in handling the new aircraft.

This marked the first landing ever of the Marine Corps' newest fighter-attack aircraft at the Combat Center's Expeditionary landing Field.

According to CWO-3 Joseph M. Rodriguez, Airfield Facilities Officer, the aircraft and flight crews came to the Combat Center to provide aircraft familiarization and safety courses to the Crash Crew,

Recovery and fuel handling units here.

"The entire squadron is scheduled to deploy here for CAX 5-84," said CWO-3 Rodriguez. "These aircraft were brought in now to give ground crews here training for that deployment."

During their short stay at the EAF, one of the F/A-18 pilots, Maj. Richard Dinkel, Marine Aircraft Group-11 Safety Officer and F/A-18 plane captain, LCpl. Steven Wolf, gave safety and operational lectures to all of the EAF's ground crews who

would come in contact with the new aircraft during the operational deployment here.

According to CWO-3 Rodriguez, this was also the first time the F/A-18's were in an expeditionary environment, so special precautions were taken to prevent Foreign Object Debris from being sucked into the engines and damaging the multi-million dollar aircraft.

Eight F/A-18 Hornets from VMFA-314 are scheduled to deploy to the Combat Center for CAX 5-84, which will run from March 19 to April 9.

CROSSWORD

- Across**
- 1 Whack
 - 5 "Sounds good to me!"
 - 9 Displayed audacity
 - 14 Neet rival
 - 15 Rosencrantz or Guildenstern
 - 16 Antipasto morsel
 - 17 Alan of "Jake's Women"
 - 18 ___ sandwich
 - 19 Antiquated
 - 20 "If looks could kill" look
 - 23 Monopolize
 - 24 Hitchcock classic
 - 28 Checks out
 - 31 Clash
 - 33 This woman
 - 34 Muslim honorific
 - 35 In reserve
 - 36 Parseghian of Notre Dame
 - 37 Not a warm welcome
 - 41 Thrash
 - 42 Exudes
 - 43 "What ___?"
 - 44 Put to work
 - 45 Whiff
 - 46 Parenting challenges
 - 47 Bowler's X
 - 49 Guy
 - 50 Brush-off
 - 57 "Happy Birthday ___!"
 - 60 Police action
 - 61 Certain something
 - 62 Don't exist
 - 63 Not being used
 - 64 Casing
 - 65 Not Astroturf
 - 66 Round sound
 - 67 Eat like a bird

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- Down**
- 1 Unexpected difficulty
 - 2 Stopping point
 - 3 Slave girl of opera
 - 4 Of the windpipe
 - 5 Convention label
 - 6 Handle roughly
 - 7 London's ___ of Court
 - 8 Straight
 - 9 Threshold
 - 10 Back street
 - 11 Disencumber
 - 12 Second person
 - 13 Hideout
 - 21 One of the Cyclades
 - 22 Lickety-split
 - 25 ___ longue
 - 26 Horse, so to speak
 - 27 Praying figures.
 - 28 Sticker
 - 29 Shocked
 - 30 Black eye
 - 31 Curl one's lip
 - 32 Snaps
 - 35 Soup pasta
 - 38 Sentinels
 - 39 Alpine song
 - 40 Haberdashery accessory
 - 46 Letter from Greece
 - 48 Desktop pictures

- 49 Runway walker
- 51 Small amount
- 52 "The Sweetest Taboo" singer
- 53 Rise
- 54 Coach K's school
- 55 Rocker Clapton
- 56 Colonel or captain
- 57 Telephone ___
- 58 Famous Bruin
- 59 Indeed

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Last week's answers

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 - 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

Eddie

El Paso, Tx. Cpl., tank commander, 1st Tank Battalion

ACUNA

Acuna operated a tank for the first time during a tank gunnery, after a year of being temporarily assigned to Combat Camera.



>I grew up playing football and ran track throughout high school. I learned about the importance of teamwork playing these sports. I played cornerback for football and ran the 4x100 and the 4x400 relays for my track team.

>I am an only child so playing sports was one of my favorite outlets. I still play flag football for my unit when we have a chance.

>My uncle was a rifleman in the Marine Corps and he loved it. He was the person that first got me interested in joining.

>I joined the Marines right out of high school. I wanted to have a job

that got me close to the action but not too close. I ended up being part of a tank crew.

>When I first got to Twentynine Palms, I was part of the [Fleet Assistant Personnel] program for the Combat Camera reproduction shop. I was there for about a year, and as soon as I got back from the 'Com Cam' shop I was told by one of my mentors, a master gunnery sergeant, that I was going to be his gunner for his last tank gunnery. That was my first time operating in a tank crew.

>A tank gunnery is basically qualifying a tank and its crew. I had not been in a tank before but my master guns taught me everything I

needed to know during that time.

>We shot the battalion high and with my master guns help I became tanker of the year. That is one of the most memorable moments I've had with tanks.

>When I'm not working on tanks here I read various tank manuals. As a tank commander, I want to know as much as I can about the tank so my team can be prepared. It is amazing what tanks can do.

>I plan to continue my career in the Marine Corps and would like to go the route of a first sergeant so I can see more of the Corps and gain new experiences.

INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY CPL. THOMAS MUDD

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One Team, one fight: 1/4, J



A field radio operator assigned to the Western Army Infantry Regiment, Japan Ground Self Defense Force, relays orders to his squad, during a live-fire platoon level assault during Exercise Iron Fist 2016 aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 9. Iron Fist is an annual, bi-lateral training exercise between the JGSDF and Marines to strengthen warfighting capabilities in ship to shore operations.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
CPL. WILLIAM PERKINS

For years, Marines and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force have come together to build upon their storied relationship as allies through Exercise Iron Fist. The exercise requires Marines at all levels to effectively work with a partnered nation to complete tasks and missions.

Marines and sailors assigned to 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, trained alongside JGSDF troops, as part of the live-fire portion of Exercise Iron Fist 2016, aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 9-12.

"The Japanese worked on their platoon and company-level attacks, utilizing our tracks and our indirect assets, like 81

mm mortars," said 1st Lt. Nicholas Boire, executive officer assigned to Weapons Co, 1/4. "They also used their own 81s and 120s to bust the rust and ensure they know how to do everything at the smaller unit level."

After conducting small unit combat training, JGSDF personnel were transported across the open desert in Amphibious Assault Vehicles to stage for follow-on assaults and urban training, using squad rushes and supporting fires.

The platoon and company attacks begin with indirect fire assets, such as mortar and artillery systems, engaging the target area to soften the objective for the ground forces. As one squad bounds forward, the other squad fires to ensure the enemy can't engage the friendly forces while they are essentially defenseless

during their movement. This is commonly referred to as rushing, where the attacking force can cover an open area with limited cover and concealment.

When they weren't training alongside their Japanese counterparts, the Marines of Company B were fine tuning their squad and platoon-level tactics on an adjacent range.

The exercise presented 1/4 with an exceptional chance to share tactics, techniques and procedures to further develop the combat abilities of allied troops, while also honing their own skills. Boire said he believes JGSDF benefits from the opportunity to use the live-fire ranges aboard the Combat Center, which are large enough to allow firing of virtually any conventional weapon.

"I think that the Japanese troops get a unique opportunity," Boire said. "Coming to a different continent, with new terrain they've never been on before and working through a live-fire scenario is [unique]."

Twentynine Palms provides a vast, desert like terrain ideal for field operations and combat training. Marines and their Japanese counterparts were able to use their vehicles and high-powered weaponry to their full capability.

"Twentynine Palms is awesome because you can bring anything out here and fire it," Boire explained.

The combined training efforts and lessons learned, along with the long-term rapport built during the exercise is a tribute to the benefit of this exercise. The realistic training Iron Fist provides to the troops on both sides continues to solidify our partnership with Japan as a worthy ally on the modern battlefield.

"It's important that the Japanese and Marines work together," Staff Sgt. Alex Deykerhoff, platoon sergeant with Company B, 1/4 said. "They're our allies in the Pacific and it's important to train

and integrate with your allies whenever possible because you never know when you're going to be sharing a fighting hole with the adjacent force."

The knowledge and experience gained from the time spent with the Japanese soldiers will leave a lasting impression with the Marines.

"I hope that the Marines get a good partnership the Japanese soldiers," Deykerhoff said. "[I also hope] the Marines take away the good combined-arms training 'cause it's always a good thing when Marines have the opportunity to get live rounds down range in training so they're ready to use them in combat."

In an ever-evolving world of combat, the Marines and their allies must be ready to protect the land they call home.

"As a warfighting organization, it's always important that we train together," added Deykerhoff. "As warriors and as Marines, we're always learning and adapting our tactics to the next fight. It's also important to adapt those tactics in tandem with our allies so we can both be on the same page if we are to fight together."

The training associated with Iron Fist is relevant to the operations on the modern battlefield.

"[This training will be used] wherever it's needed," Deykerhoff said. "Marines specialize in combined-arms, the use of all our assets together on the objective to accomplish a common goal and I think this training is going to benefit us ten-fold in the long run."

The commitment from I Marine Expeditionary Force to conducting Exercise Iron Fist every year is one of the ways it strengthens internal capabilities and interoperability with Japan. Marines with 1/4 are slated to attach to the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit as part of the Ground Combat Element later this year.

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IGSDF take part in Iron Fist



A machine gunner assigned to the Western Army Infantry Regiment, Japan Ground Self Defense Force, reloads a M249 squad automatic weapon during Exercise Iron Fist 2016, aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 9.



Service members assigned to the Western Army Infantry Regiment, Japan Ground Self Defense Force, fire on simulated enemy targets during Exercise Iron Fist 2016, aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 9.



A rifleman assigned to Western Army Infantry Regiment, Japan Ground Self Defense Force, observes the impact area as several service members fire on simulated targets, during a live-fire platoon level assault, during Exercise Iron Fist 2016 aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 9.



A rifleman assigned to Western Army Infantry Regiment, Japan Ground Self Defense Force, provides security from an amphibious assault vehicle, during a live-fire platoon level assault, during Exercise Iron Fist 2016 aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 9.



A field radio operator assigned to Western Army Infantry Regiment, Japan Ground Self Defense Force, observes the impact area, during a live-fire platoon level assault, during Exercise Iron Fist 2016, aboard the Combat Center, Feb. 9.

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PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. CLARENCE LEAKE

Lance Cpl. David Shellarbarger with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, attached to Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Central Command, fires an M203 grenade launcher as part of non-lethal weapons training at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia, Feb. 10.



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. CLARENCE LEAKE

Lance Cpl. Andrew Decker and Lance Cpl. Kenny Trygstab with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, attached to Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Central Command, conduct non-lethal weapons training at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia, Feb. 10.

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Marines with the non-lethal munitions to safely fire the hard rubber projectiles at the targets. These methods allow the Marines to safely deter any noncompliant entity without causing serious bodily harm.

“This training is important because being a part of a crisis-response [unit] we have the ability to be able to reinforce any American or coalition force within the [U.S.] Central Command area of operation,” said 1st Lt. Justin Villanueva, a platoon commander with Company C, 1/7. “This allows us to be more than just a one trick pony; it gives us another tool in our tool belt which makes us more effective.”

Having these non-lethal capabilities ensures the Marines will be able to handle any hostile situation, should one arise.

“I think it’s great that the command can give us extra training to allow us to be well rounded and let us achieve what we want to be which is United States Marines,” said Lance Cpl. Tanner Walker, a rifleman with Company C, 1/7.



PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. CLARENCE LEAKE

Lance Cpl. Tanner Walker with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, attached to Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Central Command, loads a non-lethal round into an M203 grenade launcher as part of non-lethal weapons training at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia, Feb. 10.



Ray Caldwell, director of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, Twentynine Palms Branch, explains the purpose of the Active Duty Fund Drive to Combat Center Unit representatives at the Village Center, Feb. 19.

Fund from pg. A1

inform their Marines and sailors as well as facilitate any needs the unit may have in efficiently disseminating information. “Our goal with the fund drive is to achieve 100 percent contact with the active duty personnel aboard the Combat Center,” Caldwell said. “This society uses donations to help Marines,

sailors and their dependents in the event of an emergency.” For more information on the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society and the Active Duty Fund Drive contact your Active Duty Fund Drive unit representative or visit www.nmcrs.org/locations/entry/twentynine-palms.

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

TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM
by Lou Gerhardt



Harper Lee who won the Pulitzer Prize was one of my favorite authors.

Harper Lee, who physically died Feb. 19, 2016, in her novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, describes a sick woman named Mrs. Dubose. She had taken morphine as a painkiller. As the last months of her life drew nigh, she had become a morphine addict. She could have taken the drug to the end, being relatively free from pain. But she set her mind to breaking the addiction before she died. So she endured the terrible agony of not having the drug, and by the time of her death, she had freed herself from addiction. And the father sent his son to read to Mrs. Dubose to help her pass the hours away. Why? The father explains: “I wanted you to see something about her—I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It’s when you know you’re licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do. Mrs. Dubose won, all ninety-eight pounds of her. According to her views, she died beholden to nothing and nobody. She was the bravest person I ever knew.”

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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **Around the Corps** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



A Marine Corps M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank creates some warmth as it takes part in a live-fire exercise in Rena, Norway, Feb. 18. Tanks with Combined Arms Company took to the firing line as part of a training exercise integrating both U.S. and Norwegian forces.



Marines with Combined Arms Company break loose their Light Armored Vehicles during the ice driving course in Rena, Norway, Feb. 17. The Marines worked and learned alongside members of the Norwegian Army in order to better understand how one another operate.



Cpl. Cody Stoffel, an amphibious assault vehicle crewman with Combined Arms Company, gives firing commands to the gunner of an amphibious assault vehicle as Marines with 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade conduct a live-fire exercise in the frozen hills of Rena, Norway, Feb. 17.

U.S. Marines, Norwegian Army take to the firing line

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CPL. DALTON PRECHT

RENA, Norway – Marines with the Combined Arms Company and members of the Norwegian Army took to the firing line as part of their integration during a live-fire exercise in Rena, Norway, Feb. 18.

The Marines are conducting this training to improve their abilities in cold weather environments.

Staff Sgt. Kyle Lloyd, the master gunner for the tanks of Combined Arms Company, said “After pulling the tanks out of the caves, we zeroed all the weapon systems to prove they would be ready if ever needed.”

The M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tanks were joined by the Norwegian Leopard 2 Tanks as the Marines zeroed their weapons systems.

Lloyd talked about the integration and working alongside the Norwegian Army, “They know they can rely on us and we can rely on them.”

The mix of forces provided insight into different capabilities as well as similarities.

“It is important for us to train with our allies and see how the equipment works in this environment,” said Norwegian Army 1st Lt. Nagnus Babsvik, the tank platoon commander with Telemark Battalion. “This week, we have shown an American tank platoon how we operate.”

While in Rena, the Marines conducted an ice driving course, testing their maneuverability skills on the icy Norwegian terrain.

“We don’t get this kind of training on Camp Lejeune,” said Lloyd. “Driving in the snow and hills and, being out there and learning how to drive in

very slick conditions was fun to do.”

The Combined Arms Company is comprised of multiple vehicles with multiple capabilities, including amphibious assault vehicles, M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tanks and light armored vehicles.

“If we were ever to be a combined unit, we all know the limitations and capabilities of the weapon systems that we have. We’d have the same idea of how we train and how we fight,” said Lloyd.

“Telemark Battalion operates in this environment quite frequently,” said Babsvik. “It’s a good thing that the Marines can come here and learn from us.”

The Marines and Norwegian Army are working together as part of Exercise Cold Response, a joint NATO and allied country exercise comprised of 12 countries and approximately 16,000 troops.

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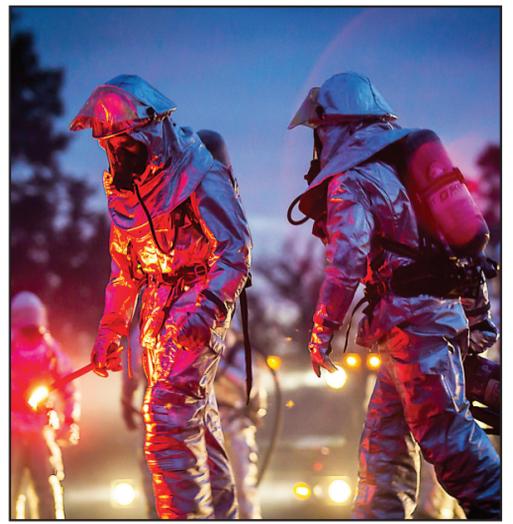
*As reported by Military Times, July/August 2015

WeekINPhotos

ARFF hones firefighting and rescue skills



Marines extinguish a fire during a controlled burn training exercise aboard Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, Feb. 17. The Marines with Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting are trained to be ready to respond for an emergency within three minutes.



Marines prepare to light the fire during a controlled burn training exercise aboard Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, Feb. 17. The exercise utilized burning jet fuel around a model jet to give Marines a realistic experience of putting out an aircraft fire.



Marines extinguish a fire during a controlled burn training exercise aboard Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, Feb. 17. The Marines are wearing heat resistant suits that can withstand up to 2,100 degrees of heat and a breathing apparatus attached to a canister that provides them oxygen as they navigate through the fire.



Marines extinguish a fire during a controlled burn training exercise aboard Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, Feb. 17. Training with live fires not only prepare the Marines for a real life scenario, but also ensure that they understand the importance of their specialty to the air station.

Photos by Lance Cpl. Jonah Lovy

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Expectant mothers treated to baby shower



Laurie Craparotta, wife of Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, shares a laugh with Melanie Vinniane, wife of Sgt. Terrel Vinniane, motor transportation mechanic, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, during the Assistance League of Palm Springs Desert Area Baby Shower Luncheon for Combat Center expectant mothers at the Oasis Country Club in Palm Desert, Calif., Feb. 16.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
 CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

PALM DESERT, Calif. - Combat Center new and expectant mothers were treated to a baby shower luncheon from the Assistance League of Palm Springs Desert Area at the Oasis Country Club in Palm Desert, Calif., Feb. 16.

"We are hosting this luncheon for first-time expectant mothers from the [Combat Center]," said Sally Tilden, president, Assistance League. "We want to honor these young ladies and help them out with baby products they might need."

The league treated the 19 mothers to lunch and gift baskets filled with baby products such as bibs, blankets, hats and socks, along with an assortment of other baby products.

"It is definitely more than I expected," said La Trina Waul, an expectant mother in attendance. "I am so overwhelmed with

what these ladies did for us and all the gifts they gave us to get started."

During the luncheon, each mother was seated at a table surrounded by the ladies of the Assistance League who asked questions and gave the mothers parenting tips and advice on the adventure of motherhood that lies ahead.

"Our one-on-one time with the ladies was awesome because they genuinely cared and asked us personal questions. I definitely met some older seasoned girlfriends," Waul said. "I am very thankful for everything and I'm going to be staying in-touch with these ladies. I plan on sending them a letter to let them know when my baby is here."

Ending the luncheon, Tilden wished them all the best and as the mothers left the country club, their faces radiated smiles and joy as they prepare to embark on the journey of motherhood that awaits them.



Cpl. Samantha Jones, aircraft rescue and firefighter specialist, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, looks at a stuffed panda and book presented to her during the Assistance League of Palm Springs Desert Area Baby Shower Luncheon for Combat Center expectant mothers at the Oasis Country Club in Palm Desert, Calif., Feb. 16.



Katie Goss, wife of Sgt. John Goss III, electronic warfare operator, Tactical Training Exercise Control Group, talks with the Ladies of the Assistance League of Palm Springs Desert Area during the assistant leagues' Baby Shower Luncheon for Combat Center expectant mothers at the Oasis Country Club in Palm Desert, Calif., Feb. 16.



Rosemary Gonzalez, expectant mother, talks with the ladies of the Assistance League of Palm Springs Desert Area during the assistant league's Baby Shower Luncheon for Combat Center expectant mothers at the Oasis Country Club in Palm Desert, Calif., Feb. 16.

Liberty Call



Combat Center Events

The **Combat Center Commissary** will host a Seafood Road show on March 1 and 2. Seafood including Crawfish and Soft Shell Blue Crab will be for sale. The Roadshow will take place between 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on both days.

Marine Corps Community Services is hosting a Motocross Jam Fest, March 12 from 12 to 4 p.m. Enjoy some entertainment with DJ Angie Vee and Emcee Kenny Bell. There will be food and beer concessions available. The event is open to all hands. For more information call 760-830-5086.

An **Education and Career Fair** is scheduled for March 23 at the West Gym from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event is open to all hands and business dress or uniform of the day is suggested. For more information call 760-830-7225

Hashmarks Staff Non-commissioned Officer Club hosts steak night open to all hands Mondays from 4:30p.m. to 8 p.m. and SNCOs only on Fridays. For more information call 760.830.5035.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, February 19

5:00 p.m. - Norm of The North, PG
7:30 p.m. - Ride Along 2, PG-13
10:00 p.m. - 13 Hours:
The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi, R

Saturday, February 20

12:30 p.m. - Norm of The North, PG
3:00 p.m. - The Revenant, R
6:30 p.m. - 13 Hours:
The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi, R
9:30 p.m. - The Big Short, R

Sunday, February 21

12:30 p.m. - Norm of the North, PG
2:30 p.m. - Joy, PG-13
5:30 p.m. - The 5th Wave, PG-13
8:00 p.m. - Dirty Grandpa, R

Monday, February 22

6:30 p.m. - 13 Hours:
The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi, R

Tuesday, February 23

6:30 p.m. - The Revenant, R

Wednesday, February 24

6:30 p.m. - The Big Short, R

Thursday, February 25

5:00 p.m. - Norm of the North, PG
7:00 p.m. - Concussion, PG-13

Friday, February 26

5:00 p.m. - The Forest, PG-13
7:30 p.m. - Dirty Grandpa, R
10:00 p.m. - The Revenant, R



Hooray For Hollywood

Coen Brothers deliver a splendid spoof of movies' golden era

NEIL POND

"Hail, Caesar!"
Starring Josh Brolin, George Clooney, Scarlett Johansson & Alden Ehrenreich
Directed by Ethan Coen and Joel Coen
Rated PG-13

"People don't want facts—they want to believe!" says Eddie Mannix (Josh Brolin), a 1950s Hollywood studio "fixer" in the new Coen Brothers comedy *Hail Caesar!*, a sprawling, star-studded spoof of the golden age of moviemaking.

What people believe, and what they make-believe, are the building blocks of Hollywood itself. And they're certainly the cornerstones of the Coens' lavish, multi-tiered parody

that takes satirical shape around the production of a fictional studio's major new movie, *Hail, Caesar!*, A Tale of the Christ, a Bible-based saga a la Ben-Hur, Spartacus and The Robe.

When the film's lunk-headed leading man, Baird Whitlock (George Clooney), is kidnapped, Mannix has to find him and get the money-train movie back on track.

But in the meantime, he's also got his hands full with other problems, and other films. His job is keeping the machinery of Capitol Pictures Studios whirling, keeping its numerous stars in line and out of trouble, and keeping the whiff of scandal away from prying gossip columnists, particularly twin sisters Thora and Thessily Thacker (Tilda Swinton).

The studio's twice-divorced "innocent" aqua-starlet (Scarlett Johansson) is pregnant with an out-of-wedlock child. Capitol's prissy British prestige-picture director (Ralph Fiennes) is at wit's end trying to wrangle the company's riding,

roping singing cowboy (Alden Ehrenreich) into more refined roles. And a tap-dancing song-and-dance hotshot (Channing Tatum) glides across the set of a new musical, but his light-on-his-feet moves may be hiding heavier secrets.

Look: There's Jonah Hill, Frances McDormand and the guy (Wayne Knight) who played Newman in *Seinfeld*! Even if you don't know anything about Hollywood's "Red Scare," you'll still get a chuckle out of a boatload of Commies bobbing off the California coastline. And Alden Ehrenreich's young sodbuster charming his studio-arranged dinner date (Veronica Osorio) by twirling a strand of spaghetti like a lariat will rope your heart, too.

For many viewers, the quirky movies of writer-director Joel and Ethan Coen have always been a bit of an acquired taste. Sure, most everybody now falls in line to applaud the genius of *Fargo*, *No Country For Old Men*, *True Grit*, *The Big Lebowski* and *O Brother, Where Art Thou*. But where was the box-office love for *The Hudsucker Proxy*, *Barton Fink*, *The Man Who Wasn't There*

and *Inside Llewyn Davis*?

There may be more commercially successful filmmakers, more mainstream filmmakers or filmmakers who win more awards. But you'd be hard-pressed to find many filmmakers who love movies, and making movies, more than the Coens. And that love is evident in every carefully crafted frame of this gloriously goofy homage to the glory days of big studios, big stars and the big wheels that churned out the spectacles of Hollywood's dream factory from a bygone era.

While *Hail, Caesar!* is looking backward with such comedic affection, however, it's also making a sly, playfully subversive statement about our "need" for entertainment, the importance of escapism and how movies have always been—and hopefully will always be—a "potion of balm for the ache of all mankind."

"What a waste of talent," a woman behind me groused as the credits rolled, somehow disappointed. Not me, and not a chance. Strike up another win for the Coens, I say. I'm a believer. *Hooray for Hollywood*, and "Hail, Caesar!"

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Legacy of Tuskegee Airmen honored during Black History Month

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ALUN THOMAS

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. - The Tuskegee Airmen have long been renowned for being the first black pilots in U.S. military history and are a focal point of Black History Month, held yearly every February.

The legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II has been told through countless books and movies, cementing their place in black history, something 'Uncle' Ron Spriggs has dedicated a significant portion of his life to help preserve.

Spriggs was guest speaker at the 63rd Regional Support Command's Black History Month Celebration, Feb. 10, at the headquarters auditorium, where he discussed the history of the airmen and his own role in ensuring their story is passed down to future generations.

Spriggs, an Air Force veteran and founder of the Ron Spriggs Exhibit of Tuskegee Airmen, said there have been a lot of stories told about the airmen, but one that is often misunderstood.

"You may have heard stories about the Tuskegee Airmen never losing a bomber under escort missions. It's not true," Spriggs said. "It was proven six or seven years ago that there were some losses, albeit very few, of bombers under the escort of the Tuskegee crews."

Spriggs said this has been proven by the Tuskegee Airmen National Organization and verified by Air Force archives in Montgomery, Ala., but despite this they were still one of the most productive and proficient air-support units during WWII.

"Benjamin Davis Jr. was the commander of the operation and he literally put out orders that said they would not go as pilots and chase a single plane to defeat that plane in aerial combat," continued Spriggs.

"The Tuskegee Airmen were in the same vicinity as the fighters they were escorting and when they left, it left a hole in the fabric of aerial coverage. If you shoot down one enemy plane that's just one enemy pilot, but if another pilot sneaks in and shoots down a bomber, that's ten lives."

"Their job was to bring those airmen home to their family and friends."

Spriggs said the airmen were highly decorated and received 744 air medals and should be recognized not primarily as black history, but American history.

"I travel all over the country, doing lectures or workshops, and the majority of my audience are young, white students," Spriggs explained. "Quite frankly our students need to hear this stuff. The education system failed me way back 50 years ago and it's still doing the same thing now because the Tuskegee Airmen are not considered a core product."

"If not me then who will teach it? It will fall on your shoulders," he said to the audience.

Having met over 200 verified Tuskegee Airmen, Spriggs said he's heard a lot of stories, but one of his best memories was attending the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony for the airmen in 2007.

"I got a call from (Sen.) Mitch McConnell's office in Kentucky who asked me if I wanted to attend. I was scheduled for surgery that week, so I called my doctor and said 'pause,'" Spriggs said with a grin. "I was allowed the opportunity to observe, and I was as close to President George (W.) Bush and all those honored dignitaries as far as the second row."

"I snuck in - I was supposed to be in the back somewhere. But they needed wheelchair pushers, so I grabbed one of those chairs belonging to one of the airmen and watched as the nation paid tribute to these great men. That single gold medal is now in the Smithsonian."



Donning an authentic Tuskegee Airmen cap, 'Uncle' Ron Spriggs salutes following his speech about the Tuskegee Airmen during the 63rd Regional Support Command's Black History Month Celebration, Feb. 10, in the headquarters auditorium, Mountain View, Calif. Spriggs is an Air Force veteran and founder of the Ron Spriggs Exhibit of Tuskegee Airmen, and tours the nation teaching the history of the famous airmen, the first black aviators in U.S. military history during World War II.



'Uncle' Ron Spriggs speaks about the Tuskegee Airmen during the 63rd Regional Support Command's Black History Month Celebration, Feb. 10, in the headquarters auditorium, Mountain View, Calif.

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Cielo 1 HOME LEFT High \$200s 3 - 4 bedrooms 2.5 - 3 baths 1,648 to 1,962 sf (approx.)	Woodmont 5 HOMES LEFT Mid \$300s 3 - 6 bedrooms 3 - 5 baths 2,385 to 3,681 sf (approx.)

CANYON HILLS IN LAKE ELSINORE		
Meadow Ridge 5 HOMES LEFT High \$300s 4 - 7 bedrooms 3 - 4.5 baths 2,383 to 4,241 sf (approx.)	Summerfield 4 HOMES LEFT Low \$300s 3 - 4 bedrooms 2 - 3 baths 1,538 to 1,948 sf (approx.)	Amberleaf** 5 HOMES LEFT Low \$300s 3 - 5 bedrooms 2 - 4 baths 1,646 to 2,629 sf (approx.) ** Not move-in ready.

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*Offer available on select homes. ***Call a New Home Specialist for details. Pricing subject to change. Information is accurate as of the date of the publication. Not all features are available in all homes. Landscaping, trees and shrubs included with select homes and may differ from photo. Subject to change without notice. CA Contractor's License #251810.

