

CertEx



LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

Marines with Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force, Crisis Response, Central Command, interact with role-players during a non-combatant evacuation operation exercise at Range 220, a military operations on urbanized terrain facility, Wednesday.

SPMAGTF ready to deploy

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

Marines and sailors with Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force, Crisis Response, Central Command 17.1 conducted their Certification Exercise (CertEx) aboard the Combat Center, Aug. 22 through 25.

Following months of pre-deployment training including Integrated Training Exercise, CertEx was the final examination for

the Marines to prove they are capable of serving as the nation's premiere crisis response force in the U.S. Central Command area of operations.

"During ITX, we prepared for major combat operations," said Col. Bill Vivian, commanding officer, 7th Marine Regiment and SPMAGTF 17.1. "Those are the core skills that all Ma-

rines build before they deploy. In addition, a smaller group who will be facing a deployment in the early fall is preparing for mission specific tasks; that is CertEx."

The exercise presented the Marines with a gamut of air and ground operations such as a tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel, reinforcement

of an embassy, logistical movements and personnel evacuation; all of which are vital to the crisis response mission, according to 1st Lt. David Williams, public affairs officer, SPMAGTF 17.1. On Aug. 24 at Range 220, the Combat Center's largest military operations on urbanized terrain facility, Marines worked with

See **CertEx** A6

Combat Center victim advocates receive STOP training

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Victim advocates and clinicians aboard the Combat Center attended the Skills, Techniques, Options and Plans training program held at the Education Center, Aug. 17-19.

The three-day training program, given by Dr. David Wexler, clinical psychologist and executive director, Relationship Training Institute San Diego, teaches attendees how to better support military personnel and their families in instances of domestic violence. The training covered the types of domestic violence, the causes and how advocates can best help the individuals who come through their respective offices.

"For years, different Marine bases have been using the domestic violence treatment programs that my institute developed," Wexler said. "I go to those bases to train the staff on how to use our programs to the best of their ability."

The training also covered some psychological issues that can lead to offenders abusing their spouse

See **STOP** A6



CPL. THOMAS MUDD

David Wexler, clinical psychologist and executive director, Relationship Training Institute San Diego, answers questions during his lecture on domestic violence the Skills, Techniques, Options and Plans training program at the Education Center, Aug. 17.



CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Domestic violence advocates and clinicians from Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif., attend a class on the Skills, Techniques, Options and Plans program at the Education Center, Aug. 17.

Inside the Observation Post

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Corps modernizing tank commander's weapon station

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**U.S. Marine Corps
announces Supplemental
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
to evaluate desert tortoise
translocation at the Combat Center**



A Supplemental EIS is being prepared to evaluate the effects of alternative plans for translocating tortoises from specific newly-acquired training areas following the July 2012 Final EIS for Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment.

Translocation was deemed necessary to mitigate the expected impacts on tortoise populations from planned Marine Expeditionary Brigade-level training activities assessed in the July 2012 Final EIS.

**The U.S. Marine Corps welcomes
your input in this process!**

A Draft Supplemental EIS is scheduled for public release in October 2016 and will be available for a 45-day public review, during which three public information meetings will be held in the communities of Joshua Tree, Palm Springs, and Barstow.

A Notice of Availability of the Draft Supplemental EIS and more details about the public meetings will be published in the Federal Register and local newspapers, and also made available at local libraries and on the project website, in advance of the release of the Draft Supplemental EIS. Those announcements will identify specific opportunities for you to provide your comments on the Draft Supplemental EIS.

Individuals, interest groups, and agencies that were on the mailing list from the July 2012 Final EIS will receive mailed notices and documents related to the preparation of this Supplemental EIS. To add your name to the mailing list, call the Resource Management Group at (760) 830-3737 or mail your request to:

NEPA Program Manager, Bldg. 1418, MAGTFC/MCAGCC,
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8104

For more information visit: www.SEISforLAA.com

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. Timothy Valero.



Marines with 7th Marine Regiment holds a ceremony for the regiment's 99th anniversary aboard Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., Aug. 14. The 7th Marine Regiment has a rich history spanning from the Banana Wars and Guadalcanal to today's Operation Inherent Resolve.



Reprinted from the Observation Post
August 28, 1981

TOW platoon returns from Unit Deployment Oki tour

The first unit from the Combat Center ever involved in the unit deployment program, returned from Okinawa earlier this month after completion of their six month tour. Cpl. Joseph Kunka was one of the returning volunteers who enjoyed the tour.

“The TAD pay lured me into volunteering for the deployment and I would gladly do it again,” Kunka said. “Our job in Okinawa was to provide security for tanks and amtraks.”

The TOW platoon was assigned to the 1st Tracked Vehicle Battalion, but Kunka’s section went on floats to Mt. Fuji and Korea in support of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment.

“When 3/1 assaulted the beach during the exercise in Korea, we provided an over watch to reinforce them,” Kunka said. He added, “Then there were two days of excellent liberty in Pusan, Korea.”

The extra TAD pay sounded good to the extra Marines too. About 90 percent of the deployed sections

were volunteers. One of them, Cpl. Stephen Kenyon, extended his enlistment two months in order to go.

“I think unit deployment is a good thing. It’s better to go away from six months then it is for a whole year,” Kenyon said.

“Although I didn’t care for the open squad bay living conditions, the only thing I really missed was seeing people drive on the right side of the road,” explained Kenyon.

According to 1st Lt. Saulius Petrulis, OIC of the deployed platoon,

“The unit deployment program instills teamwork in the men. It also provides each platoon with cross training in a different environment.”

“While they were overseas, the men experienced battalion landing team floats and also received cross training with weapons from small arms to tanks,” Petrulis explained.

“The TOW platoon carried a real large burden over there but the men were great and hard workers and that made the tour enjoyable,” Petrulis concluded.

CROSSWORD

"Child's Play"

- Across
- 1 Quite a hgt.

4 ___ salad

9 Gemstone

14 "You ___ here"

15 Diamond weight

16 Delete

17 Avoid answering

20 Long play part

21 Tidy sum

22 Wizards' org.

23 Cruel

24 Claw

27 MLB no.

28 Abbr. on old Asian maps

29 Like some cycles

30 English county

31 Some are inert

32 Leg areas

33 Moving in a squatting posture

35 Sign of spring

36 Like hot fudge

37 Cunningly

38 Broth brand

39 Move like a bunny

42 Leaf unit

43 Sunday entrée

44 Spanish lady

45 "I believe," briefly

46 Kick

47 He's toast

48 Warm winter coat

53 More eccentric

54 Amp knobs

55 Word of support

56 Irritable

57 Dominant

58 Spread, as hay

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56						57						58		

- Down
- 1 Women's titles

2 Breathers

3 Sweet stuff

4 Security guard's option

5 Derisive laugh

6 Bard's "before"

7 E-help listing

8 Daze

9 "___ we forget..."

10 Know-how

11 Oil, e.g.

12 Forecaster's lines

13 100-member legislature

18 Family

19 One billion years

24 Elephant's ivory

25 All over again

26 Layered pasta dish

27 Polished

29 Cagney's TV partner

30 More likely to retire

31 Cunning

32 PGA garment

33 Textiles

34 WCs

35 Like some desserts

37 Water bearer?

38 ___ dragon (giant lizard)

39 Greet with a beep

40 Feature of some jacks

41 Said goodbye

43 Relieve

44 M.D., familiarly

46 Actual

47 Sound astonished

49 Go down

50 Take home

51 Turner of note

52 Singer Jennifer's nickname

SUDOKU

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Difficult

Last week's answers

N	E	A		S	T	E	S		Y	H	C	N	U	P
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 - Angelo's Kars, 226 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054
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 - Club San Diego, 3955 Fourth St.
 - Get It On Shoppe, 3219 Mission Blvd.
 - Main Street Motel, 3494 Main St.
 - Vulcan Baths, 805 W. Cedar St.
- In National City:**
 - Dream Crystal, 15366 Highland Ave.
 - Sports Auto Sales, 1112 National City Blvd.

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 - STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.
 - K Smoke Shop, 5865A Adobe Rd.
- In Yucca Valley:**
 - Yucca Tobacco Mart, 57602 29 Palms Hwy.
 - Puff's Tobacco Mart, 57063 29 Palms Hwy.
- In Palm Springs:**
 - 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

Daisy MARTINEZ

Pasadena, Texas Lance Cpl., postal clerk, Installation Post Office, Headquarters Battalion

Martinez was inspired by her elementary school teachers to pursue a future in teaching children. When she moved from Mexico at a young age, her teachers taught her to speak English and how to read.

>Martinez was inspired by her elementary school teachers to pursue a future in teaching children. When she moved from Mexico at a young age, her teachers taught her to speak English and how to read.

>I grew up in a small town outside of Houston, Texas called Pasadena. It was relatively small so I wasn't exposed to a lot of different races and cultures and most of my friends were Hispanic like me. Joining the Marine Corps has opened me up to different people and point of views.

>I took two years of college and got my associates degree at the same time I graduated high school. I didn't want to continue with college so I joined the military because my older brother had joined the military.

>I have two brothers, both older than me, and two younger sisters. My brother in the Marines is a 0351 with [2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment.] I always saw him as pretty average, not doing anything out of the ordinary. When he joined the Marine Corps I was pretty shocked. Being able to say my brother was a Marine was something to be proud of. I wanted to follow in his footsteps.

>I got my associates in social poly-sciences; basically I studied psychology. An associate's degree covers the more basic classes. Just being in college opens your mind to all sorts of things. It got me to read more articles and books to essentially educate myself in different facets of life.

>I especially enjoyed psychology because there are

things people do that they don't realize is common throughout all people. It's pretty cool being able to understand why people act a certain way sometimes.

>I feel that in today's world, the degree you get when you graduate is what really counts in a lot of jobs. While it's not always the case, it opens the door for a lot of different things. Even if you do 20 years in the military, you might want to have a different job in the future. It's good to have something to fall back on, even if school and a classroom setting is not your strength.

>I would like to get my bachelor's degree while I'm still serving and later become an elementary school teacher. I feel like the teachers during those early years of your life are the ones who shape you the most. I want to be able to help other children as well.

>I was born in Mexico and came here with my family at the age of four. My father already had a job here and before we moved he would send back money. My teachers taught me to speak English and how to read.

>What I like most about serving in the military is that there is always somebody there for you. The Marines you work with are always willing to help you with whatever you need. This is the first time I've been away from home for this long. My fellow Marines have helped me adapt to the lifestyle by teaching me basic things like how to pay bills and to really take care of myself.



Interviewed and photographed by Lance Cpl. Levi Schultz

Combat Center VLC provides counsel to Marines, sailors

STORY BY CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

United States Marines pride themselves on belonging to America's elite fighting force, but even the nation's most highly-trained men and women can become victims of serious crimes. The Victims' Legal Counsel provides assistance to Combat Center patrons when they need it the most.

The Victims' Legal Counsel was established by the Secretary of Defense, pursuant to a presidential order, to represent the interests of victims in the criminal justice system," said Capt. John Stark, judge advocate, Victims' Legal Counsel Office-West.

Established in 2013, the VLC was stood up to assist in combating sexual

assault in the military. While they primarily represent victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, they are also available to represent victims of any kind.

"The organization really exists to make it more comfortable and more effective for victims to come forward and report a crime," Stark said. "Everything I talk about with potential clients is

completely confidential and it is my job to ensure the victim is making informed decisions and understands all of their options throughout the process."

According to Stark, if one becomes a victim of a crime in the Marine Corps their first stop should be the VLC. While services such as the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program, the

Victim Witness Assistant Program and the Family Advocacy Program provide valuable resources to victims of a crime, only Stark, who is currently the sole attorney for the Combat Center VLC, is authorized to provide a victim with legal advice.

"Often times, Marines hear rumors about the legal system and think they know how it works," Stark said. "But having

someone who is well-versed in the legal system and represents your interests, and your interests alone, is incredibly beneficial."

If a Marine, sailor, family member, or Department of Defense employee thinks they have been the victim of a serious crime, they can go to the VLC office located in building 1551, room 87, or call 760-830-5162.

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MARINES GET CREATIVE at WOOD HOBBY SHOP



1st Lt. Kyle Repetti, platoon commander, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, attaches sand paper to an electric sander at the Combat Center's Wood Hobby Shop, Aug. 7, 2015.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

The sound of drills and saws reverberating against metal walls do little to distract 1st Lt. Kyle Repetti, platoon commander, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School. His focus is centered on his current project; a board of plywood, the humble beginnings of a bedframe.

At the Combat Center's Wood Hobby Shop, Marines, sailors and family members, above the age of 16, are provided with the tools and the assistance needed to create anything they set their minds to.

"Here at the Wood Hobby Shop, we have all the tools the guys are going to need from start to finish," said Robert Henry, recreation safety specialist supervisor, Marine Corps Community Services. "Literally any project you can think of can be done here."

The projects made at the shop vary from simple plaques, awards and cutting boards to more complex woodwork designs such as kayaks, canoes, wooden chests and bed frames.

"Since I was stationed here I've made a bed frame, two nightstands and a wooden box," Repetti said. "It is definitely a good hobby and a way to help out your command. I've worked on several projects for going away and retirement presents. It's a whole lot cheaper than having to buy a present."

For those interested in woodworking, the shop has tools needed to build, repair or modify their own wooden crafts and hobby items.

"It's usually cheaper to build your bookshelf or your entertainment center than it is to buy it," Henry said. "You're the one that built it so you know how it's constructed and you know how to fix it."

Many of the projects that can be made at the Wood Hobby Shop also serve as presents for holidays or retirements.

"I started woodworking after I retired from the Marine Corps and I didn't know this place existed until after that," said Carl Vanderzee, family readiness officer, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374. "One of the first things I made at the shop was a tea box for my mother. It's something that four years later is still a topic of conversation. It's a skill we are losing in America and



1st Lt. Kyle Repetti, platoon commander, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, makes a cut on a plywood board with a table saw at the Combat Center's Wood Hobby Shop, Aug. 7, 2015.



Joseph Viscuso, recreation attendant, Combat Center's Wood Hobby Shop, instructs patrons on the proper use of tools and machines during a safety class at the Combat Center's Wood Hobby Shop, Aug. 8, 2015.

who doesn't love a handmade gift?"

Even the simplest of designs tests one's problem solving skills when finding the right placement of the pieces.

For many, it's a great way to keep their mind active during off hours.

"It's a healthy alternative to sitting in the barracks and playing video

games," Vanderzee said. "As far as a hobby, it helps you develop skills and it's just great knowledge to have."

In addition to providing tools and assistance, the shop also provides a laser engraving service.

"Our laser engraving pretty much beats our competitors across the board as far as price," Henry said. "We do our engraving while you wait and our completion time is usually about 30 minutes from when you walk in the door."

A fee of 10 dollars per day covers the use of tools and machines with wood also available for purchase. To get started at the shop, patrons must first attend a free safety class held on Wednesdays at 5 p.m. and Saturdays at 11 a.m.

"Once you go through the free safety shop, we turn you loose and you can build whatever you would like," Henry said. "We have staff on hand to help walk you through your project for those who have little to no experience."

For more information about the Wood Hobby Shop, located at Building 1342, contact 830-7214.

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WeekINPhotos

Reserve Marines excel during Northern Strike 16

Photos By Lance Cpl. Devan Barnett



Top, Sgt. Juan Gonzalez, paraflot chief for Company C, 4th Reconnaissance Battalion, Marine Forces Reserve, checks the distance left before a jump during Exercise Northern Strike 2016 at Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center, Mich., Aug. 16.

Middle left, A Marine with 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion, 4th Marine Division, Marine Forces Reserve, provides security for his amphibious assault vehicle at Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center, Mich., Aug. 17.

Middle right, Marines with 4th Reconnaissance Battalion, 4th Marine Division, Marine Forces Reserve, jump from the back of a C-130 during Exercise Northern Strike 2016 at Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center, Mich., Aug. 17.

Left, Marines with 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion, 4th Marine Division, Marine Forces Reserve, provide fire support by calling in movements and attacks during Exercise Northern Strike 2016 at Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center, Mich., Aug. 17.

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A Marine with Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force, Crisis Response, Central Command, checks a role-player during a non-combatant evacuation operation exercise at Range 220, a military operations on urbanized terrain facility, Wednesday.

CertEx From pg. A1

role-players during a non-combatant evacuation operation. They processed U.S. citizens through an evacuation control center, where they underwent identification and medical screening before being transported by aircraft in response to a crisis situation.

“We see ourselves, as Marines, able to accomplish a wide variety of missions,” Vivian said. “Anytime we have a forecast of what our mission might be, we focus on those [requirements] to bring our level of proficiency high on the specific skill set. We are building on the foundation we worked on at ITX to develop the deployment specific skills we might be

called on to do during this deployment.”

Given their successful completion of CertEx, these Marines and sailors will be deploying this fall, replacing SPMAGTF-CR-CC 16.2. The MAGTF structure of the crisis response force, organic to the Marine Corps, allows them to quickly and effectively respond to any crisis, across the area of operations.

“We’re ready to respond to any crisis,” Vivian said. “We are kind of like an insurance policy. We will be alert to whatever the nation needs us to do and we are focused on protecting Americans who are over there doing the nation’s work.”



Marines with Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force, Crisis Response, Central Command, conduct a non-combatant evacuation operation exercise at Range 220, a military operations on urbanized terrain facility, Wednesday.



Sgt. Blake G. Sanches, embark clerk, Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force, Crisis Response, Central Command, guides role-players to a notional evacuation site during a non-combatant evacuation operation exercise at Range 220, a military operations on urbanized terrain facility, Wednesday.

STOP From pg. A1

and how to reach and understand these offenders.

This understanding gives the Combat Center’s advocates and clinicians the tools they need to help reduce instances of domestic violence.

“I attended this training to further

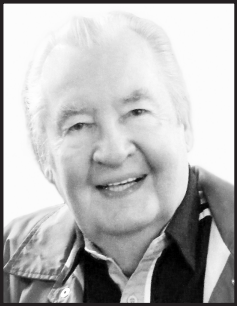
my knowledge about domestic violence,” said Natasha Ratchford, victims’ advocate, Family Advocacy. “This course prepares us for the different scenarios we may face while working in this field. The knowledge we gain here helps us reach the people who suffer from domestic violence and

help them in the best way possible.”

Wexler conducts this training on approximately eight different installations annually and contributes updated ideas and tools for the entities aboard the Combat Center to use while handling a domestic violence case.

“This is one of the most rewarding things I do,” Wexler said. “I consistently hear from the people I teach that the new ideas have contributed to their ability to help people. To know that what I’m saying during the classes is helping people is the best thing I could ask for.”

TOUGH MINDED
OPTIMISM
by Lou Gerhardt



Dianne Greenhouse, my loyal friend, has written the following essay at my report. Read and enjoy.

What is friendship? How do you define a relationship spanning over five decades? I am so fortunate to have several life-long friends, but Michael set the gold bar for BFF.

We met in Mrs. Hawk’s English class and managed to survive the junior high years. One summer we took a journalism/print shop class-learning how to assemble a school newspaper.

Mike became a brother to me, and high school meant more time to explore the world around us. We loved to people watch at LAX and pretend we were foreign visitors at restaurants. (We were easily amused).

Also, we would leave school early on Thursday afternoons (alleged dental appointments) to attend LA Philharmonic matinee concerts at the newly opened Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Such glorious music and sophisticated audiences!

While I college-hopped, Mike graduated from St. John’s Seminary in Camarillo. He faithfully served the LA diocese, studied Canon Law at the Vatican, and led congregations. We didn’t see each other too often, but we managed to stay in touch. Years passed, and Father Mike moved several times from Mission San Buena Ventura to a parish in Glendora.

I called three years ago to wish Michael a happy birthday and was told he had been ‘cloistered’. I sent a card and did not hear from him. I was devastated.


Fast-forward to the present. An envelope arrived with a return address from Mike! Enclosed was an edition of our junior high school paper that we had worked on so long ago.

Who could have predicted that the printed word would re-unite us once again?


This column sponsored by:

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Marines with Company A, 4th Tank Battalion, 4th Marine Division, Marine Forces Reserve, fire a M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank during their annual training at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., July 19.

CPL. GABRIELLE QUIRE

Marine Corps to deliver capability trifecta to tank commanders

STORY BY ASHLEY CALINGO

Marine Corps Systems Command is modernizing the tank commander's weapon station on the M1A1 tank by developing a suite of systems that give tank commanders and their gunners a hunter-killer edge over their enemies.

The new Abrams Integrated Display and Targeting System, Tank Commander Single Handle and slew-to-cue capability make up the modernized trifecta that cuts time to enemy engagement by half while increasing accuracy, range and lethality on the battlefield.

ABRAMS INTEGRATED DISPLAY AND TARGETING SYSTEM

Responding to feedback from Marines, the Abrams Integrated Display and Targeting System, or AIDATS, upgrades the thermal and day sights on the stabilized commander's weapon station through a state-of-the-art, high-definition camera and permanently mounted color display.

"The most significant benefit — the main reason why AIDATS was started—is the color display," said Michael Kreiner, AIDATS project officer in MCSC's Armor and Fire Support Systems. "Users didn't like the black and white camera that was in the tank before, because they have a hard time distinguishing between different color trucks."

In battle, situational awareness is key for tank commanders. Kreiner and his team are leveraging technology currently available in the marketplace to provide a thermal sight that can be used around the clock and pro-



COURTESY PHOTO

The Abrams Integrated Display and Targeting System, or AIDATS, upgrades the thermal and day sights on the stabilized commander's weapon station through a state-of-the-art, high definition camera and permanently-mounted color display. The AIDATS program is part of a suite of systems being developed by Armor and Fire Support Systems at Marine Corps Systems Command to increase the accuracy, range and lethality of the M1A1 Abrams tank on the battlefield.



ASHLEY CALINGO

The Abrams Integrated Display and Targeting System upgrades the thermal and day sight on the stabilized commander's weapon station through a state-of-the-art, high definition camera and permanently-mounted color display. The AIDATS program is managed by Armor and Fire Support Systems at Marine Corps Systems Command.

vide a color day camera with a color display.

"The thermal sight can be used for 24 hours," said James Shaffer, sys-

tems engineer in AFSS. "It has low light capabilities, can see through obscurants, and works in the diverse environments

under adverse weather conditions."

The display for both upgraded thermal and day sights will be hard mounted in front of the tank commander, allowing him to minimize extra movement and focus on the action. Better optics enable commanders to increase identification and detection range while in the tank, which will improve situational awareness.

With AIDATS, tank commanders will have double the identification range with thermal sight and triple the identification range for the day sight, said Gunnery Sgt. Dennis Downes, M1A1 project officer in AFSS.

"AIDATS also has an azimuth indicator that will allow the tank commander to identify where his weapon is in relation

to the vehicle at that moment," said Downes. "On the legacy system, the tank commander had no situational awareness of where the weapon system is in relationship to the turret."

TANK COMMANDER SINGLE HANDLE

In addition to providing tankers better line of sight, the AFSS team is improving tank handling for the commander.

"There's, currently, one set of controls for the stabilized commander's weapon station and another set of controls to operate the turret," Downes said. "Combining the two handles into one gives the commander a better workspace."

Reducing the number of handles the tank commander controls increases the overall efficiency of the system, leading to faster engagement times, he said.

SLEW-TO-CUE

The third upgrade to the tank commander's weapon station has yet to be officially named, but the AFSS team currently refers to it as "slew-to-cue." This new capability enables the tank commander to move the turret, typically controlled by the gunner, over to a target with the push of a button.

"With slew-to-cue, the tank commander can push

a button on his single handle and, as long as the gunner has his handles engaged, the turret will automatically slew to what the commander is looking at on the 0.50-cal machine gun sight," said Kreiner.

This additional capability allows the commander to assist the gunner when the tank is moving, making it easier to manipulate the turret toward a target, said Shaffer. Preliminary tests show the three systems used together reduce target engagement time from six seconds to three seconds. The team hopes to field all three systems simultaneously in the first quarter of 2018. Currently, the team is conducting qualification testing on five demonstration AIDATS systems at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

"We're pushing the envelope where you can actually see the target, identify it and engage it at a farther range," Kreiner said. "All three things combined will significantly reduce the engagement time, and essentially give tank commanders and their gunners a hunter-killer system."

AFSS equips Marines with fire support systems, High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, Expeditionary Fire Support Systems, tank systems, information-related capabilities and radar systems to accomplish their warfighting mission.



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A Marine low crawls under netting during the 2nd Annual Tactical Athlete Championship aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Aug. 18. The competition was a part of the Marine Corps' High Intensity Tactical Training program and tested the strengths and abilities of Marines from different installations around the Corps.

■ MARINES COMPETE IN HITT TACTICAL ATHLETE CHAMPIONSHIP

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PFC. LIAH KITCHEN

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. — The Marine Corps' High Intensity Tactical Training program held its 2nd Annual Tactical Athlete Championship aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., August 15 through 18.

The four-day competition featured male and female Marines from around the Corps who competed in various fitness events designed to test their physical and mental strength.

"This to me is what tactical athleticism is," said Ryan Massimo the HITT program manager. "We combine tactical skills with athleticism and we get the total tactical athlete."

Competitors tested their endurance and strength through a series of events: a 500-yard power shuttle, a 500-yard battle skills challenge, an amphibious tactical challenge, a maneuver under fire tactical course and the tactical fitness challenge.

Participants qualified to compete by going through a preliminary competition at their installation's HITT centers.

"It's interesting to see Marines from different installations coming out to do something they're passionate about," said Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Butler, a competitor and a drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, Papa Company. "It's a positive environment for friendly competition, we're having a lot of fun but at the same time we're competing with one another."

The Marines in the competition could be heard motivating each other during the different events, said Butler.

"What I love about [this competition] is the comradery that it builds," said Massimo. "They're competing against other Marines, but they're also helping each other out."

The competitors were awarded points

“It’s interesting to see Marines from different installations coming out to do something they’re passionate about. It’s a positive environment for friendly competition. We’re having a lot of fun but at the same time we’re competing with one another.”

-Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Butler

based on each timed event. The goal at the end of the competition was to have the least amount of points.

A male and female winner was announced at an awards ceremony, Aug. 18. The male winner was Cpl. Ethan Mawhinney, a Marine Air-Ground Task Force planner, stationed at Camp Allen, Virginia, and the female winner was Sgt. Calie Jacobsen, a nondestructive inspection technician, stationed at MCAS Miramar.

According to Mawhinney, winning the competition is a surreal experience that he looks forward to training hard for next year.



A Marine climbs the rope on an obstacle course during the 2nd Annual Tactical Athlete Championship aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Aug. 18.



A Marine performs pushups with a pack during the 2nd Annual Tactical Athlete Championship aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Aug. 17.



A Marine runs through the obstacle course during the 2nd Annual Tactical Athlete Championship aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Aug. 18.



Combat Center Events

Register now through Sept. 9 to participate in the 2016 Cross Country Race Season. The season begins Sept. 16 and goes through Oct. 28. Teams can consist of four to six participants. The event is open to all active duty, retirees, DoD and families. For more information call 760-830-6857.

Sandy Hill Lanes is scheduled to host a Fall and Winter Bowling League. Registration is open now and ends Sept. 13. There will be opportunities to practice and receive coaching. Come with teams of four to participate in this 24 week tournament. For more information call 760-830-6422.

Hashmarks Staff Noncommissioned Officer Club hosts Steak Night every Monday and Friday from 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. The event is open to all hands Monday and SNCOs on Fridays. For more information, contact 760-830-5035.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, Aug. 26
5:00 p.m. – The Secret Life of Pets (3-D), PG
7:00 p.m. – Ghostbusters (2016), PG-13
9:30 p.m. – Lights Out, PG-13
11:30 p.m. – Jason Bourne, PG-13

Saturday, Aug. 27
12:30 p.m. – The Secret Life of Pets, PG
3:00 p.m. – Ice Age: Collision Course (3-D), PG
5:30 p.m. – Mike and Dave need Wedding Dates, R
8:00 p.m. – Star Trek Beyond (3-D), PG-13
11:00 p.m. – The Infiltrator, R

Sunday, Aug. 28
12:30 p.m. – Ice Age: Collision Course, PG
3:00 p.m. – Star Trek Beyond, PG-13
5:30 p.m. – Bad Moms, R
8:00 p.m. – Nerve, PG-13

Monday, Aug. 29
6:30 p.m. – Jason Bourne, PG-13

Tuesday, Aug. 30
5:00 p.m. – Ghostbusters (2016), PG-13
7:30 p.m. – Lights Out, PG-13

Wednesday, Aug. 31
5:00 p.m. – Ice Age: Collision Course (3-D), PG
7:30 p.m. – Nerve, PG-13

Thursday, Sept. 1
5:00 p.m. – The Secret Life of Pets, PG
7:00 p.m. – Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates, R

Friday, Sept. 2
3:30 p.m. – The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water (NDVD-Free Admission), PG
6:00 p.m. – Suicide Squad (3-D), PG-13
9:00 p.m. – The Infiltrator, R
11:30 p.m. – Star Trek Beyond, PG-13



UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Matt Damon returns to his most iconic role in “Jason Bourne.” Paul Greengrass, the director of The Bourne Supremacy and The Bourne Ultimatum, once again joins Damon for the next chapter of Universal Pictures’ Bourne franchise, which finds the CIA’s most lethal former operative drawn out of the shadows.

Bourne Killer

Matt Damon returns as memory-challenged spy in grim, glum ‘Jason Bourne’

NEIL POND

‘Jason Bourne’
Starring Matt Damon,
Tommy Lee Jones &
Alicia Vikander
Directed by Paul
Greengrass
Rated PG-13

For espionage fans, Jason Bourne has always been the spy who can’t remember. Based on the character created by novelist Robert Ludlum, he’s appeared previously in three movies (2002-2007) played by Matt Damon, who now returns to the role (after sitting on the sidelines for the oddly Bourne-less The Bourne Legacy, starring

Jeremy Renner, in 2012).

A former brainwashed CIA killing machine who went rogue as his head began to clear, Bourne, has been wandering the Earth for the past decade (apparently) in an existential quest to distance himself from the murderous, amnesiac murk of his tortured past.

When his old colleague Nicky Parsons (Julia Stiles) hacks into a government computer, she discovers files suggesting that Bourne’s late father might have been involved in the clandestine government program that “indoctrinated” his young son into the CIA and erased his previous life. She tracks Bourne down to tell him, and it puts both of them in serious danger.

Learning that sensitive, covert computer files have been breached, CIA director (Tommy Lee Jones) knows

the situation requires drastic action. If Bourne and Parsons leak those files, one of his advisors frets, “It could be worse than Snowden.”

That means calling on the agency’s top assassin, known only as “the Asset” (Vincent Cassel), to “cut the head off this thing.”

Alicia Vikander plays an ambitious CIA cyber-ops expert who thinks she can bring Bourne back in to the side of the good guys. But will she get the chance? And the line between “good” guys and “bad” guys gets plenty blurry.

There’s also a plotline about a gigantic new cyber-tech company, Deep Dream, and its charismatic owner (Riz Ahmed), whose ties to the CIA bring up some timely, troubling concerns about privacy and governmental policing.

A generous amount of globetrotting culminates in a slam-bang Las Vegas crescendo involving a hotel sniper, a brutal back-alley brawl and a colossal downtown chase, dozens of smash-ups and a “jackpot” of a crash inside the Riviera

casino.

Paul Greengrass, who also directed two films of the original Bourne trilogy, is behind the camera again—but can’t seem to hold it steady for a single scene. The director’s penchant for woozy, wobbly “shakycam” shots is meant to convey edge, movement and action, but man, it sure gets old. Even when characters are having a calm conversation, the camera is fidgeting like it can’t wait to split.

And spy flicks have always been about thrills, danger and even death—but this Bourne feels and looks especially grim, glum and grungy, especially given the tenor of the times. Gunmen on rooftops, bombs, civilians dying in the fray, government corruption, a mooney Matt Damon—there ain’t no escapist sunshine here, folks.

“I remember... I remember,” Bourne intones at the beginning of the movie. By the end, the audience may remember, too—that there were other, not-quite-so-downer choices at the multiplex.

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Around the Corps

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Clockwise from top:

U.S. Marines with the 1st Marine Logistics Group, Combat Skills Training School use radios to communicate with other Marines as part of the Tactical Convoy Course at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Aug. 19. The purpose of the Tactical Convoy Course training is to teach procedures to counter threats and mitigate risks to Marine forces conducting tactical convoys.

A U.S. Marine Corps Recruit with Company F., 2nd Battalion, Recruit Training Regiment, sprints to an obstacle during Basic Warrior Training (BWT) at Parris Island on Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C., Tuesday. Basic Warrior Training is a 48 hour training evolution that covers land navigation, improvised explosive device, and fire and movement.

Marines with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit wait in line with packs before boarding the USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD-6) at White Beach, Okinawa, Japan, Saturday. The 31st MEU is embarked aboard the ships of the Bonhomme Richard Amphibious Ready Group during a regularly scheduled patrol of the Pacific region.

Sgt. Mathew W. Dearborn, data networking specialist with 4th Medical Battalion, 4th Marine Logistics Group, Marine Forces Reserve, searches a simulated casualty for weapons and contraband before he can be brought to the Shock Trauma Platoon for treatment during Exercise Global Medic at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, Aug. 17. Marines provided security for the STP to ensure that victims were not hiding explosives or other harmful substances on their body and that unauthorized personnel were not entering the STP.



JESS GIBSON Hi-Desert Star

Winner of Hi-Desert Publishing Co.'s recipe contest, Scott Davis, right, accepts his grand prize, a barbecue donated by the Yucca Valley Home Depot and presented by Home Depot manager Cory Jackson.

Grilled Texan Cayenne Pepper Chicken Strips

One large green and one large red bell pepper cut length-wise into thin strips
One large onion cut into thin strips
Combine above ingredients in a glass bowl and season with ¼ teaspoon sea salt and ¼ teaspoon of black pepper. Refrigerate.

Combine the following ingredients in a separate glass bowl:
2lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breasts cut length-wise into thin strips
1 1/2 tsp Cayenne pepper
1 tsp Black pepper

1 1/2 tsp Sea salt
1 tsp Fresh minced garlic
1/2 large squeezed lemon
1 large squeezed lime
1/2 c canola oil

Mix well and refrigerate for 2-3 hours. Grill peppers over medium heat in oil coated perforated pan for five minutes and set aside. Grill chicken over high heat in a coated perforated pan for five minutes, turning a few times. Reduce heat to medium, stir in pepper mix and grill for additional five minutes or until done to preference. Serves 4 - 6 people.

SCOTT DAVIS
Grand Prize Winner

Louie's Peanut Butter & Banana Dog Biscuits

INGREDIENTS
1 egg
1/3 cup peanut butter (JIF Creamy)
1/2 cup mashed banana
1 1/4 tablespoons honey
1 cup whole wheat flour
1/2 cup wheat germ
1 egg white, lightly beaten for brushing

DIRECTIONS
1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees F (150 degrees C)
2. Lightly grease a baking sheet.
3. Stir together the egg, peanut butter, banana and honey in a medium bowl blend thoroughly.
4. Stir in the flour and wheat germ; mix well.
5. Turn dough out onto a floured board and roll to 1/4 in thick.
6. Cut into desired shapes with cookie cutter.
7. Place on prepared cookie sheet and brush tops with egg white.
8. Bake biscuits in preheated oven until dried and golden brown about 30 minutes, depending on size.
9. Remove from oven and cool on wire rack

JIM MOORE
Best Sweet Treat Winner

Cheri Davis Best Drink Winner

Rum Cherry Bomb Drink
(Tropical Party Grilling Drink)

6 oz. Rum (Sailor Jerry Spiced Rum preferred)
6 cups Dole pineapple Orange juice
1/4 cup Grenadine Syrup
1/8 cup Cherry juice (from a jar of maraschino cherries)
8 Maraschino cherries

Fill a 12 oz. glass with ice and pour rum mix over ice - Enjoy!
Makes (4) 12 oz. glasses

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