

## Inside the Observation Post

Volume 60, Issue 40

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**2/7 homecoming**  
 See page A5



CPL. AKEEL AUSTIN

Soldiers with the Singapore Armed Forces conduct a squad level attack range as part of Exercise Valiant Mark 2016 aboard the Combat Center, Sept. 29.

## U.S. Marines, Singaporean Armed Forces strengthen bonds during Valiant Mark

STORY BY CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

U.S. Marines with Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and soldiers with the Singapore Armed Forces exchanged techniques and tactics during platoon-level training at Range 410A aboard the Combat Center, Oct. 4-5, as part of Exercise Valiant Mark 2016.

"We are out here for the 25th anniversary of Exercise Valiant Mark, which is a military-to-military tactical mission exercise," said Maj. Jeremiah Jaykumar, operations officer, Singaporean Armed Forces. "We host the U.S. Marine Corps one year and they host us one year. Essentially, it is a reflection of the very good diplomatic ties that Singapore has enjoyed with the U.S. for the last 50 years."

The exercise is one of the many hosted aboard the installation that promote the operational force readiness of not only the Marine Corps but also its coalition partners. For the Singaporean Armed Forces, Valiant Mark provided an opportunity to test current tactics, techniques and procedures in a distinct environment.

"Some of the benefits that we reap during Valiant Mark at the operational level allow us to understand the concept of operations of the U.S. Marines and speak the same language," Jaykumar said. "At the same time on the troops' levels, to understand the [tactics, techniques and procedures] the Marines utilize in order to operate in this kind of environment."



CPL. AKEEL AUSTIN

2nd Lt. Sean Harper, platoon commander, blue platoon, combined anti-armor team, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, gives introductions prior to a live fire rifle and machine gun range during Exercise Valiant Mark 2016 aboard the Combat Center, Sept. 27.

During the training on Range 410A, Co. C set the pace by conducting the first live-fire assault. Each of the company's platoons then paired up with a Singaporean platoon prior to conducting their own assault on the range.

"It mutually benefits both forces because it's a chance for us to practice working alongside another force and to learn about their culture," said Capt. John Strange, company commander, Co. C, 1/7. "They come from a very different environment and their training and tactical per-

spective reflects that. It's a great opportunity for us to exchange ideas and to work with a force we might work with in the future."

During their respective drills, each platoon shared tactical knowledge and each learned about the contrasts and similarities in culture.

"You look around and see across the board our Marines and their soldiers going over tactical and technical aspects and getting the cross-cultural understanding," Strange said. "While there are many differences, many things remain inherently similar."

## Combat Center officially opens Victory Park

STORY BY CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Combat Center leadership, Marine Corps Community Services and the Public Works Division officially opened Victory Park with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, Oct. 5.

PWD's Facility Engineering and Acquisition Division designed the 5.2-acre park to provide families and Marines an area for recreation and special events to improve morale and welfare. The park offers many commodities including an athletic field, charcoal grills and an amphitheater.

More than 50 spectators gathered with Brig. Gen. William F. Mullen III, Com-

bat Center Commanding General, to celebrate the project, which took three years to construct.

"This is a special project for me because it's my last one before I retire," said Melvin Pickens, lead facilities management specialist, PWD. "Hopefully we'll leave the Marine warfighters with something they can use not only now, but years down the road."

The Combat Center dedicated the field to Maj. Gen. Randall M. Victory, the second Combat Center Commanding General, who served aboard the installation from 1957 to 1959. Victory also commanded

See **Victory Park A8**



CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Brig. Gen. William F. Mullen III, Combat Center Commanding General, cuts the ribbon to officially open Victory Park alongside Richard Bass, superintendent, T.B. Penick and Sons, and Melvin Pickens, lead facilities management specialist, Public Works Division, Oct. 5.

## 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. Aaron Patterson.



CPL. AARON PATTERSON

U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Rick Mercer, a rifleman with Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, emerges from the tree line during the Advanced Infantry Course (AIC) aboard Kahuku Training Area, Sept. 20, 2016. AIC is intermediate training designed to enhance and test the Marine's skills and leadership abilities as squad leaders in a rifle platoon.

## American Red Cross, here to help

STORY BY LANCE CPL. DAVE FLORES

Since its inception in 1881, the American Red Cross has gone hand-in-hand with American history and the military. Its founder, Clara Barton, led a group of nurses into the battlefields of the Spanish-American War to care for injured troops. In the modern era, the American Red Cross staff serves alongside deployed military personnel and supports veterans and families on the homefront.

According to the ARC's mission statement, they serve to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.

"Since Clara Barton made her way to the battlefield to support our troops, she has had many follow in her footsteps in any way they can," said Gene Coughlin, regional director of service to the armed forces, ARC. "We have volunteers here, working at

See **Red Cross A8**



Reprinted from the Observation Post  
October 9, 1965

# Country Fair ... Best Yet!

If the small-fry who lined the paved route on Saturday morning and climbed in, over, under, and around the Marine Corps displays at the Country Fair are any indication, then the exhibits and the fair were both whopping successes.

The parade, consisting of more than 75 marching units was led by the MCB color Guard and Band in dress blues. It took the better part of two hours for the parade to wind its way from the Plaza to Four Corners and down Twentynine Palms Highway to Desert Green. Quizzing the younger members of the sidewalk crowd, we discovered that most had a relative in the Corps and that bands, color guards and blues were old hat. Much more exciting was the parade's Grand Marshal, TV actor James Drury star of the "Virginian."

Out at Knotts Sky Park, site of the Fair, the Marine Corps recaptured the hearts of the young admirers. Missiles, howitzers, machine guns, rifles and projectiles did the trick. What red-blooded boy can resist a shootin' iron? Most of the playground set thought that 4th LAAM Bn. Marines were pretty chicken since they

wouldn't let them shoot off a HAWK.

The Self-Propelled 155mm Gun and the HOWTAR, manned by 3rd 155mm Gun Btry., along with a 155mm Howitzer from K Btry., 4-11, proved to be great attractions as barrels went up and down, and sideways at the spin of a wheel.

H&S Co., MCB, had a popular display, consisting of an 81mm mortar, an M-14 rifle, an M-60 and a 50-cal. Machine gun. This display happened to be set up next to the fast-draw contest and contestants were subject to a continuous stream of imaginary fire from the grade school troops.

Climax of the afternoon's festivities was the concert provided by the MCB Band under the direction of WO Sidney L. Snelling Jr. The huge crowd filled the midway as the band served up a rousing program despite the 100-degree heat.

Also present on the midway Saturday afternoon was Linda Olsen, Miss KDHI, and Queen of the Fair, Queen Linda was interviewed by Ernie Siegrist of KDHI along with many other fair goers. All agreed that the Fair was the best yet.

## The Marine Corps invites you to comment on a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and attend public information meetings



A Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) has been prepared to study alternative plans for translocating tortoises from specific newly-acquired training areas following the July 2012 Final EIS for Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms.

### The Marine Corps welcomes your participation!

Comments will be accepted during the public meetings, by mail, or online at [www.SEISforLAA.com](http://www.SEISforLAA.com).

Submit written comments to:  
29Palms SEIS Project Team  
c/o Cardno Government Services  
3888 State Street, Ste. 201  
Santa Barbara, CA 93105

Comments on the Draft SEIS must be received or postmarked by November 14, 2016, for consideration in the Final SEIS.

The Draft SEIS is available on the website and at public libraries in Apple Valley; Barstow; Palm Springs (Sunrise Way); San Bernardino (Administrative Offices); Twentynine Palms; Victorville (Circle Dr.); Yucca Valley; Joshua Tree; Lucerne Valley; Needles; Ontario (C Street); and Sacramento (Capitol Mall).

### OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC MEETINGS 5 - 8 p.m.

**Joshua Tree**  
Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2016  
Joshua Tree Community Center  
6171 Sunburst St.

**Palm Springs**  
Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2016  
Palm Springs Convention Center  
277 N. Avenida Caballeros

**Barstow**  
Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016  
Barstow Harvey House  
681 N. 1st Ave.

There will not be a formal presentation.

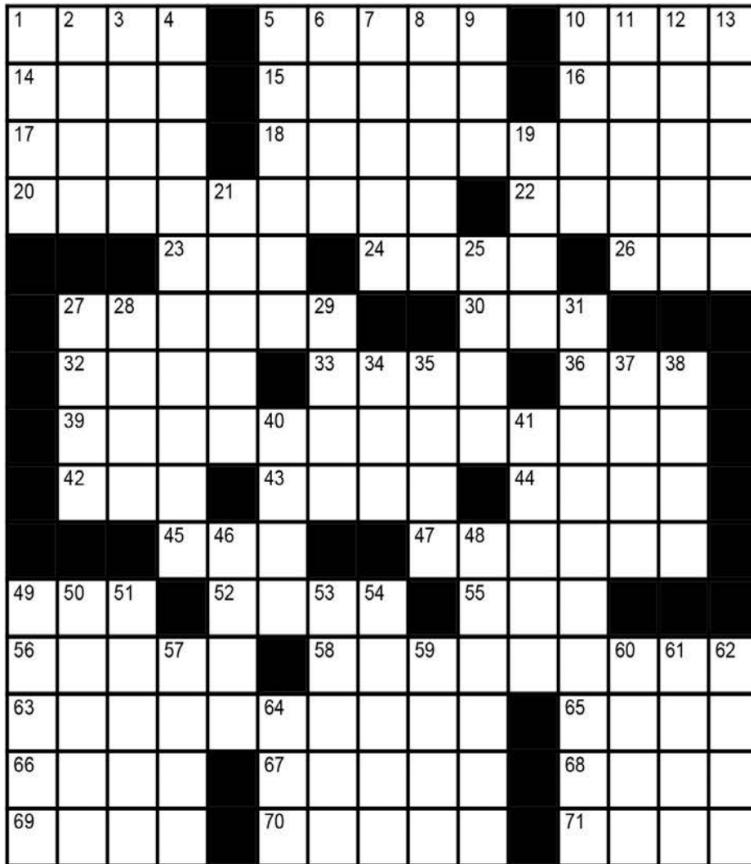
For more information visit [www.SEISforLAA.com](http://www.SEISforLAA.com)

## CROSSWORD

"Double OU"

### Across

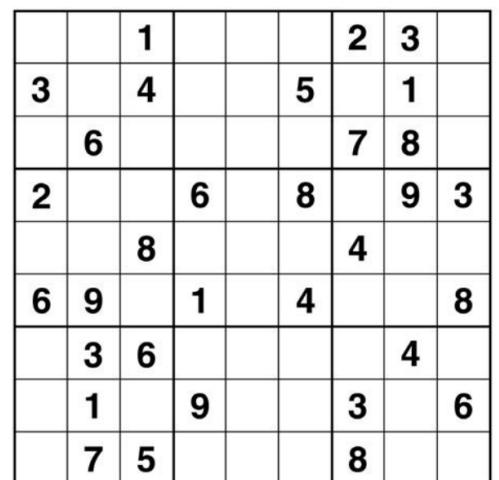
- 1 Crude group?
- 5 Afternoon: Sp.
- 10 Distort
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- 15 Crazy as \_\_\_\_
- 16 Emanation
- 17 Org. with eligibility rules
- 18 Locomotive locale
- 20 Bread type
- 22 North of Virginia
- 23 Pacific ring
- 24 Bindle bearer
- 26 Big \_\_\_\_ Conference
- 27 Far down
- 30 Some hosp. cases
- 32 Once, once
- 33 Grand Ole \_\_\_\_
- 36 On the \_\_\_\_ vive
- 39 "No question"
- 42 \_\_\_\_-Jet (winter vehicle)
- 43 Mouth, slangily
- 44 Dundee denials
- 45 Negative word
- 47 Cooking wine
- 49 CBS cop show
- 52 Starting place
- 55 Job ad abbr.
- 56 Bellybutton type
- 58 Total
- 63 Restaurant special
- 65 "This can't be!"
- 66 \_\_\_\_ Nostra
- 67 Boxer Liston
- 68 Pooch's name
- 69 Newspaper piece
- 70 River to the Missouri
- 71 Put one over on



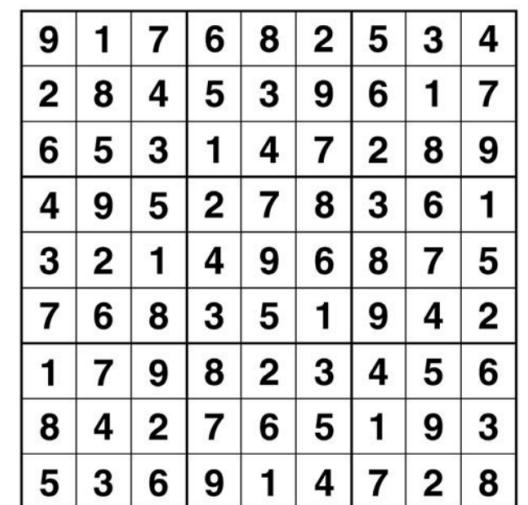
### Down

- 1 Has
- 2 \_\_\_\_ de gallo
- 3 Twin in Genesis
- 4 South Carolina city
- 5 Coal product
- 6 Baseball brother
- 7 Uneven
- 8 "Tiny Bubbles" singer
- 9 Finis
- 10 Ewe's coat
- 11 Mature
- 12 Ms. O'Donnell
- 13 Dress up
- 19 Parka feature
- 21 Profundity
- 25 "Cheers" bartender Woody
- 27 Moistens, in a way
- 28 "\_\_\_\_ go bragh!"
- 29 Part of BYO
- 31 Took a fighting stance
- 34 School tie?
- 35 Emulates Eminem
- 37 Rideshare company
- 38 Teeny
- 40 Sgt. Snorkel's dog
- 41 Tie \_\_\_\_ (tipple)
- 46 Was in the hole
- 48 Town crier's cry
- 49 Kid's name
- 50 Nosy Parker
- 51 Sign on a plane facility
- 53 Magic amulets
- 54 "\_\_\_\_ sera!"
- 57 Apple bestseller
- 59 Mao Tse-\_\_\_\_
- 60 Mississippi feeder
- 61 Bring to ruin
- 62 Hammer or sickle
- 64 WWII entertainers

## SUDOKU



Last week's answers



## OBSERVATION POST

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  - Club Mustang, 2200 University Ave.
  - Club San Diego, 3955 Fourth St.
  - Get It On Shoppe, 3219 Mission Blvd.
  - Main Street Motel, 3494 Main St.
  - Vulcan Baths, 805 W. Cedar St.
- In National City:**
  - Dream Crystal, 15366 Highland Ave.
  - Sports Auto Sales, 1112 National City Blvd.

Local off-limits guidance prohibits service members from patronizing the following locations.

- In Twentynine Palms:**
    - Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Rd.
    - STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.
    - K Smoke Shop, 5865A Adobe Rd.
  - In Yucca Valley:**
    - Yucca Tobacco Mart, 57602 29 Palms Hwy.
    - Puff's Tobacco, 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

# Logan

Fremont, Neb. Lance Cpl., marksmanship instructor, Marksmanship Training Unit

# WINTERSTEIN

**>Golfing means a lot** to me. I started when I was five with some guidance from my grandfather. On my high school team, I competed in two state competitions. I still enjoy competing in various tournaments around Twentynine Palms.

**>I practice regularly** at Desert Winds Golf Course. Every time my buddies and I go, it's always really competitive and it's a good way to measure a person's patience. I brought a group of guys from my shop to compete in the Combined Federal Campaign Tournament.

**>Golfing is a big mental game.** It's similar to the Marine Corps; you have to use your head.

**>When I'm out coaching** on the range, it's important to take the fundamentals into consideration. I have to focus on what small mistakes shooters are making so they can build good habits. It feels good being a part of helping someone improve.

**>Before the Marine Corps,** I was working full-time detailing cars. It was a decent job for someone fresh out of high school but I wanted to challenge myself more. When I saw my older brother graduate boot camp, I knew I wanted to sign up.

**>My brother is a mortarman** in 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. I joined as an intelligence specialist and have spent most of my time in Twentynine Palms.

**>My dad was security forces** in the Air Force, but he never pressured my brother and me to join. My parents have been very supportive of me.

**>The Marine Corps has taught me** a lot about the importance of communication and leadership. I've definitely learned how to tactfully speak with higher ranking Marines and my peers.

**>If you know how to** communicate well, it can be a lot less hassle when correcting problems. The Marine Corps has definitely developed me to be more confident in speaking with people.

**>Being required to** [physically train] has made me more active as a Marine and it's now a part of my daily routine. Staying in shape is rewarding because it's something that is earned and can't be bought. Even when I get out of the Marine Corps, I'll still continue working out.

LANCE CPL. WINTERSTEIN ENJOYS COMPETING IN GOLF TOURNAMENTS AND PLAYING TENNIS. HIS GOAL IS TO FINISH HIS DEGREE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE AT UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA OMAHA. HIS FAVORITE BILLET AS A MARINE IS COACHING ON THE RIFLE RANGE.



**>I'll see how my Marine Corps career** plays out but there's always a need for Information Technology guys in the civilian world. I plan on transferring from community college to full time college at University of Nebraska Omaha. They have a great program for computer science.

**>I'm halfway through** getting my

associates degree and using tuition assistance has been supportive in helping me afford my classes. It takes a lot of determination to keep up with school with the busy lifestyle I have.

**>The Corps values** have rubbed off on me a bit, because I used to be a big procrastinator and now I can say I've learned to be more efficient.

Interviewed and photographed by Cpl. Connor Hancock

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# EXERCISE VALIANT MARK 2016

## U.S. Marines, Singaporean Armed Forces leave their mark

Photos by Cpl. Akeel Austin



Maj. Gen. Daniel O'Donohue, commanding general, 1st Marine Division, speaks with soldiers from the Singapore Armed Forces during Exercise Valiant Mark 2016 at the Combat Center, Sept. 29.



Soldiers from the Singapore Armed Forces conduct a squad level attack range as part of Exercise Valiant Mark 2016 at the Combat Center, Sept. 29.



Sgt. Michael Fuentez, military police officer, 1st Law Enforcement Battalion, instructs soldiers from the Singapore Armed Forces on shotgun breaching during Exercise Valiant Mark 2016 at the Combat Center, Sept. 29. This is the 25th year that U.S. Marines and the Singapore Armed Forces have met for Valiant Mark, which improves and maintains a high level of interoperability, enhanced military to military relations and to enriches mutual combat capabilities through combined training.



Sgt. Michael Fuentez, military police officer, 1st Law Enforcement Battalion, instructs soldiers from the Singapore Armed Forces on shotgun breaching during Exercise Valiant Mark 2016 at the Combat Center, Sept. 29.

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# YIELDING TO NONE



A Marine with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, greets his family during a homecoming at Del Valle Field, Oct. 5. The unit is returning from deployment with Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Central Command 16.2.

## ‘War Dogs’ come home

Photos by Cpl. Levi Schultz



A Marine with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, greets his family during a homecoming at Del Valle Field, Oct. 5.



Lance Cpl. Michael Vitacco, assaultman, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, meets his son, Aiden, 3 months, during a homecoming at Del Valle Field, Oct. 5.



Lance Cpl. McCoy Sloan, assaultman, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, greets his son, Landon, 2, and wife, Lindsey Sloan, during a homecoming at Del Valle Field, Oct. 5.



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TOUGH MINDED  
OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



Two boys were at the same school: George Washington and Peter Miller. Washington became the first president of the United States and Peter Miller became a preacher of the Gospel. Washington lived at Philadelphia and Miller at Ephrata, a village seventy miles from the capitol. For many years the preacher endured much persecution from a man named Michael Wittman who did all in his power to distress the servant of God. He even inflicted personal violence, injured the building, and publicly denounced the preacher's testimony.

At length, Wittman was involved in treason, was arrested and sentenced to death. Upon this the old preacher walked the seventy miles to Philadelphia to plead for the life of his persecutor. "Well Peter, what can I do for you?" "For old acquaintance sake, George, I have come to beg the life of the traitor Wittman." "No, Peter; this case is too black. I cannot give you the life of your friend." "My friend! He is the bitterest enemy any man ever had." And then he told the president what he had suffered from this man for over twenty years. "Ah, then, Peter; this put another aspect upon the matter. I could not give you the life of your friend but I will freely pardon your enemy."

On the third day the preacher and the persecutor walked back the seventy miles to Ephrata. The man was melted by the pardon; he was soundly converted. Peter baptized him and the criminal was brought into the joy of a new life.

This column sponsored by:

**Gina Orban**  
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Dr. Lou can be reached at 760-367-4627  
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## Victory Park From A1

14th Marine Regiment during World War II. "He was a Marine Corps legend," said Lt. Cmdr. Juan Chavira, director, PWD. "He led battles in Saigon and Iwo Jima among others."

Engineers designed Victory Park's amphitheater to support 5,000-pound speaker arrays and lighting systems. The stage's awning also has built in light emitting diode lights (LED).

"All of the electrical work is concealed," said Richard New, facilities maintenance director, MCCA. "When we designed it we ran the conduit underground so there won't be any trip hazards."

In keeping with the Combat Center's promise of being good stewards of the environment, planters on the outside of the stage serve as aesthetic electrical rooms, allowing the Combat Center to eliminate the use of generators.

According to New, improving the quality of life for Marines and sailors aboard the installation makes for a more effective Marine Corps.

"Having a place where the Marines can go and destress allows them to reengage and focus on supporting the mission," New said.



CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Guests attending the Victory Park ribbon-cutting ceremony applaud planners and engineers involved in the completion of Victory Park, Oct. 5.



CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Melvin Pickens, lead facilities management specialist, Public Works Division, speaks to ceremony attendees during the Victory Park ribbon-cutting ceremony, Oct. 5.



CPL. CONNOR HANCOCK

Brig. Gen. William F. Mullen III, Combat Center Commanding General, congratulates Melvin Pickens, lead facilities management specialist, Public Works Division, during the Victory Park ribbon-cutting ceremony, Oct. 5.

## Red Cross From A1

the military treatment facilities, providing care to service members and their families."

ARC's events and volunteer opportunities provide care for Combat Center families. They include pre-deployment briefs, the ARC Youth Club and fundraising events such as bake sales, blood

drives and service member recognition events.

"The American Red Cross helps the spouses and families of Marines who get deployed from here," Anna Lisa Burrell, office lead, ARC. "I mainly focus on the pre-deployment briefs, where we inform the families on what to

expect and the services provided to them while their Marine is on deployment."

A vital service the ARC offers to service members is the Red Cross Message sent when there is a need to inform a service member, as well as his or her command, about a tragedy in

their immediate family. If emergency leave is given, the ARC can facilitate financial assistance on behalf of the Military Aid Societies through either a grant or loan.

"It is important to give back, especially to our service members and veterans," Coughlin said.

"Everyone on base is eligible to volunteer. The only requirement for volunteering is having your sleeves rolled up, your hearts open and you're all in."

To learn more about volunteering opportunities, contact the ARC aboard the Combat Center at (760) 830-6685.

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# Combat Center patrons get handle on bike month



LANCE CPL. DAVE FLORES

A rider observes his progress during the Annual Earth Day Mountain Bike Ride held near Range 100 aboard the Combat Center April 13. The eight-mile ride started at Range 100 and took participants through designated trails behind the range.

## STORY BY LANCE CPL. DAVE FLORES

**T**he month of October is the Combat Center's inaugural Get on Your Bike and Ride Month. Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs encourages base patrons to help reduce their environmental impact by leaving their keys on the counter and riding bicycles to places like work or the store, as well as riding for leisure.

"This challenge is an initiative to reduce our carbon footprint and improve the health and wellness of the Combat Center patrons in as many ways as we can," said Norman Troy, emission's manager, NREA. "From people that drive to the gym to Marines that drive just a few blocks to go to work, we want to make the Marines and sailors to spend less time in their cars and more on their bikes."

The success of Park-to-Park Bike Ride in April of this year and the National Bike Challenge gave NREA the opportunity to start the month long challenge that will promote friendly competition on the Combat Center. Individuals and teams with the most miles will be recognized at the end of each week and at the end of the month. Teams of up to 10 riders can be created with a workspace group through the National Bike Challenge website.

"I think that there is a small yet competitive niche of riders here on the base," said Eddie Valles, air resources manager, NREA. "We are trying to bring them together, recognize those who already ride quite a bit and to also grow the community."

Participants can track their miles with smartphone applications or they can track them manually.

To participate in Get on Your Bike and Ride Month, visit the National Bike Challenge page with Combat Center as the work site.

Ten members is the maximum a team can have, though you can make more than one team. Both new and experienced riders are welcome to take on the challenge not only to increase their exercise habits, but to reduce the Combat Center's carbon footprint.

"We are trying to make people more aware of the simple ways to stay healthy," said Valles. "We're trying to get as many people on base to get on their bikes and ride to grow the awareness and participation."

To register or for more information visit, [www.nationalbikechallenge.org/workspace/10202](http://www.nationalbikechallenge.org/workspace/10202) online and search Combat Center under workspace or call Valles at (760) 830-8480.



LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

Cyclists complete a 50-mile ride during the Park-to-Park Bike Ride through Joshua Tree National Park, Calif., April 30. The event was hosted as a joint effort between the Combat Center, the City of Twentynine Palms and the Joshua Tree National Park Service to celebrate Earth Day as well as the 100-year anniversary of the park.



LANCE CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

Cyclists complete a 50-mile ride during the Park-to-Park Bike Ride through Joshua Tree National Park, Calif., April 30. The event was hosted as a joint effort between the Combat Center, the City of Twentynine Palms and the Joshua Tree National Park Service to celebrate Earth Day as well as the 100-year anniversary of the park.



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# Liberty Call



## Combat Center Events

**The Volunteer Resource Fair** is scheduled to be held at the Community Center, building 1004, Oct. 13. The event starts at 10 a.m. and ends at 2 p.m. The event will provide attendees the opportunity to collect information at the various volunteer opportunities Combat Center and the surrounding community. For more information call 760-830-4163.

**The Jack-O-Lantern Jubilee** is scheduled to be held on Del Valle Field Oct. 28 from 5 to 9 p.m. Come dressed in your favorite costume and enjoy free candy, carnival games, entertainment, fides and face painting. There will be games for all ages and activities will be held throughout the night. For more information call 760-830-5086.

## Sunset Cinema

### Friday, Oct. 7

- 3:20 p.m. – Ice Age: Collision Course (NDVD-Free Admission), PG
- 5:30 p.m. – Kubo and The Two Strings, PG
- 7:40 p.m. – Don't Breathe, R
- 9:50 p.m. – Mechanic: Resurrection, R

### Saturday, Oct. 8

- 10:00 a.m. – The Peanuts Movie (NDVD-Free Admission), G
- 11:50 a.m. – The Angry Birds Movie (NDVD-Free Admission), PG
- 2:00 p.m. – Kubo and The Two Strings, PG
- 4:30 p.m. – The Wild Life (3-D), PG
- 6:40 p.m. – The Light Between Oceans, PG-13
- 9:30 p.m. – War Dogs, R
- 11:50 p.m. – 300: Rise of an Empire, R

### Sunday, Oct. 9

- 12:00 p.m. – Deadpool (NDVD-Free Admission)
- 2:20 p.m. – The Secret Life of Pets (NDVD-Free Admission), PG
- 4:20 p.m. – Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of the Shadows (NDVD-Free Admission), PG-13
- 6:30 p.m. – The Revenant (NDVD-Free Admission), R

### Monday, Oct. 10

- 12:00 p.m. – When The Bough Breaks, PG-13
- 2:20 p.m. – Sully, PG-13
- 4:30 p.m. – The Wild Life, PG

### Tuesday, Oct. 11

- 6:30 p.m. – The Light Between Oceans, PG-13

### Wednesday, Oct. 12

- 5:00 p.m. – Kubo and The Two Strings, PG
- 7:00 p.m. – Sully, PG-13

### Thursday, Oct. 13

- 5:00 p.m. – Ben-Hur, PG-13
- 7:30 p.m. – War Dogs, R

### Friday, Oct. 14

- 5:00 p.m. – The Wild Life (3-D), PG
- 7:00 p.m. – Mechanic: Resurrection, R
- 9:20 p.m. – When The Bough Breaks, PG-13
- 11:50 p.m. – Don't Breathe, R



GILES KEYTE PHOTO

Oscar winners Colin Firth and Renée Zellweger — who reprise their roles in the next chapter of the world's favorite singleton — are joined by Patrick Dempsey in "Bridget Jones's Baby." Directed by Sharon Maguire ("Bridget Jones's Diary"), the new film in the beloved comedy series based on creator Helen Fielding's heroine finds Bridget unexpectedly expecting.

# Romantic triangle sets up sturdy comedy in 'Bridget Jones's Baby'

NEIL POND

*Bridget Jones's Baby*  
Starring Renée Zellweger, Colin Firth & Patrick Dempsey  
Directed by Sharon Maguire  
Rated R  
In theaters Sept. 16, 2016

"How in the hell did I end up here again?" Bridget Jones asks herself as she sits on the couch of her London flat watching the pitiful flicker of a birthday candle in a cupcake remind her that she's celebrating yet another birthday — number 43 — alone.

We might ask the same question: How did Renée Zellweger end up in the same place, in the same role, one she hasn't played in 12 years (since "Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason"), as a character that she launched back in 2001 in a movie originally made from a Helen Fielding novel kinda-sorta based on Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice"?

Zellweger received an Oscar nomination for "Bridget Jones's Diary," a delightfully frothy British rom-com, in the title role that captured viewers' hearts — a plucky, single, working-class lass struggling with her career, her weight, her love life and her tendencies to over-indulge in booze and cigarettes. She chronicled

it all in her diary.

Now, 15 years down the road, Bridget has moved up — and somewhat on. She's a producer for a TV news show; she's managed to corral her figure into something she's proud to show off. She's stopped smoking and cut down on the booze. These days she writes on a laptop. But she's still single, and now more than ever she's feeling the ticking of her biological clock.

"I'm beginning to think I've passed my sexual sell-by date," she tells one of her co-workers. She refers to her ovaries as "the last barren husks in London."

But that's about to change, as you likely surmised by the title of the movie.

Yes, Bridget gets pregnant. But the big question is, who's the daddy?

Is it her longtime — nearly lifelong — crush, London barrister Mark Darcy (Colin Firth)? Or is it the new American dating-website guru Jack Qwant (Patrick Dempsey)? As fate would have it, Bridget had "intimate encounters" with them both, just weeks apart. As the old saying goes, when it rains, it pours.

That romantic triangle sets up the sturdy structure of the movie's comedy, and there are plenty of laughs as Bridget at first tries to keep both

Darcy and Qwant in the dark about each other, then resigns herself to telling them both. Original Diary director Sharon Maguire also sets up some hilarious gaffes and snafus in Bridget's workplace as her personal life begins to intrude — once again — on her career.

It's nice to have the original Diary gang — or most of them — back, including many of the supporting players (like Bridget's parents and pals). Zellweger and Firth pick up where they left off, just as their characters do, after more than a decade apart; the absence of Hugh Grant's caddish Daniel Cleaver, Bridget's other love from the previous two films, is explained early in the movie, with a dry twist of British wit. Dempsey slides right into his role like a sweet slice of blue-eyed American pie.

And Emma Thompson, who was also one of the screenwriters, shines as a bright comedic charm as Bridget's no-nonsense OB/GYN. There's a very cool cameo from Grammy-winning British singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran.

So how did Bridget end up here again? The important thing is the little bundle of joy she leaves with two hours later, and the laughter — and the surprises — along the way.

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