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Vol. 60 Issue 48



Lt. Col. Christopher Meyers, commanding officer, 1st Tank Battalion, speaks with his Marines at the start of the battalion's operational pause at Del Valle Field aboard the Combat Center, Nov. 29. During the operational pause, the Marines talked in guided discussions about various issues that are affecting units throughout the Marine Corps.

1st Tank Battalion builds camaraderie

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CPL. THOMAS MUDD

First Tank Battalion conducted an operational pause at Del Valle Field, Nov. 29, in accordance with the All Marine Corps Activities 037/16 from Gen. Robert B. Neller, Commandant of the Marine Corps. Neller has asked all Marines to participate in a corps-wide



La Contenta students show appreciation

STORY BY CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

YUCCA VALLEY, Calif.- Marines with the Combat Center's Public Affairs Office visited La Contenta Middle School to answer student's questions and receive letters of support, Wednesday.

Don Henry, a teacher at the middle school, coordinates the event annually in an effort to inspire a sense of patriotism in the students while also providing them an opportunity to show their appreciation for members of the military.

"I was in the Army when I was in my early twenties and



CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

Lance Cpl. Dave Flores, combat correspondent, Headquarters Battalion, answers students' questions during a visit to La Contenta Middle School in Yucca Valley, Calif., Wednesday.

it gave me a huge sense of patriotism," Henry said. "My students write letters that can and have made a difference to people who are serving. I teach my students before they write that freedom isn't free, it's payed for. Whether the Marines are deployed around the world or on base, if they read letters from middle school students about who they are and what they do, it could lift their spirits."



professional development operational pause for units to guard against complacency and a lack of focus at home station.

"When I became Commandant, I promised we would have candid discussions," Neller said in ALMAR 037/16. "I have listened to your input on how to make our Corps better, and I owe it to you to give you my honest opinions, both when we succeed, and when we need to improve."

the Marine Corps is per-

Lance Cpl. Jalille Ryan Cristobal, tank mechanic, and Lance Cpl. Alan Kuang, driver, 1st Tank Battalion, grapple during a physical training competition as part of the battalion's operational pause at Del Valle Field aboard the Combat Center, Nov. 29.

forming well with operational tasks. However, losing even one Marine According to Neller, to suicide, accidents or poor decision-making is

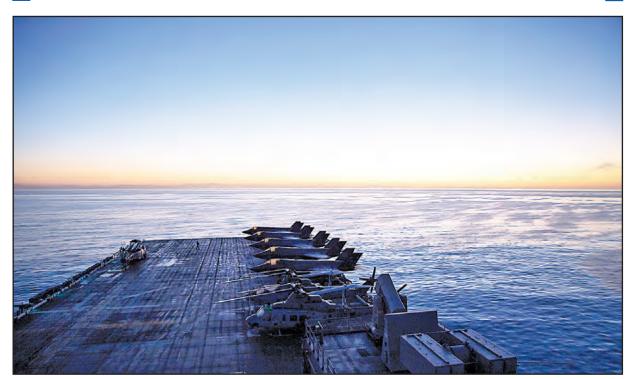
one too many. in place so units can talk about things that are affecting their Marines,"

said Lt. Col. Christopher "This pause was put Meyers, commanding officer, 1st Tanks. "The

See 1st Tanks A6

Marine Corps' Top Shot

Every week, thousands of fans cast their votes for the best photograph posted on the Corps' Facebook page. This week's top shot comes from Lance Cpl. Dana Beesley.



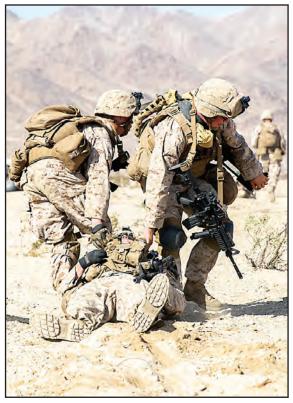
Marine Corps aircraft prepare for morning flight operations on the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), Nov. 18.

CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

Cpl. Medina Ayala-Lo, combat correspondent, Headquarters Battalion, receives students' letters from Don Henry, a teacher at La Contenta Middle School, during a visit to answer student's questions in Yucca Valley, Calif., Wednesday.

Inside the Observation Post

Volume 60, Issue 48



Marines prepare for upcoming deployment See pages A4 and A5



Reprinted from the Observation Post November 28, 1968

Marines help ARVN soldiers prepare for civilian vocations

DA NANG, VIETNAM-Even for soldiers of the Republic of Vietnam, war and combat tactics must eventually be put aside for a vocation.

This is where a program called the "Vietnamese Veteran's Vocational Training School" and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) is working hand in hand to provide training for civilian careers.

Marine Captain Stanley M. Zenda, wing civil affairs officer, explains how Vietnamese of the Marine Corp's Project Transition Works.

CROSSWORD

"Vietnamese about to be discharged from the army attend a six-week school that deals with the vocational specialty each man has chosen.

"During the last two-weeks of his training he is sent to a utilities section of either Marine Aircraft Group 11 (MAG 11) Marine Wing Support Group (MWSG0 17, or Marine Aircraft Control Group (MACG) 18, for on the job training in one of these sections: motor transport, plumbers and electricians. Once there, each Vietnamese soldier will work with a Marine Supervisor.

Sergeant Chung Ho is 24 years old. He has served as an infantryman in the Army since he was 17. He has little chance to learn any skill other than M-60 Machineguns and platoon tactics, but he has shown an interest in engines, trucks and automobiles. With Ho's family living in Da Nang, he was ideally situated for the Veterans Vocational Program.

Sergeant William Miller is Ho's counterpart — he works in the motor transport section at MACG-18, and this is the second Vietnamese he's had assigned to him.

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BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS Audrina Ann Rynish Born: Nov. 9, 2016 Born to: Luke & Brittany Rynish **Cheyenne Makenzie Hixson** Born: Nov. 9, 2016 Born to: Robben & Edith Hixson **Chandler Nicole Jones** Born: Nov. 10, 2016 Born to: Justin & Vanessa Jones **Tristan James Vanmanen** Born: Nov. 10, 2016 Born to: Michael & Lori VanManen **Bishop Lottie Wallace** Born: Nov. 13, 2016 Born to: Robert & Andrea Wallace **Ainsley Grey Remillard** Born: Nov. 15, 2016 Born to: Kristopher & Jenna Remillard

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OFF-LIMITS ESTABLISHMENTS

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

- Off Limit Establishments as of Oct 25, 2016
- Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Road, Twentynine Palms
- STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Road, Twentynine Palms
- Puff's Tobacco, 57063 29 Palms Highway, Yucca Valley
- Yucca Tobacco Mart, 57602 29 Palms Highway, Yucca Valley
- NYPD Pizza, 260-262 North Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs
- Sam's Smoke Shop, 16520 West Main Street, Barstow
- Teazer's Bar & Grill Nightclub, 14269
- Seventh Street, Victorville
- Angelo's Kars, 222 & 226 S. Coast

- Highway, Oceanside
- Denny's Parking Lot, 692 E Street, Chula Vista
- Burger King & McDonald's, 28th Street (parking lots), San Diego
- Club Mustang, 2200 University Avenue, San Diego
- Club San Diego, 3955 4th Avenue, San
- Diego
- Get It On Shoppe, San Diego
- Main Street Motel, 3494 Main Street, San Diego
- Trolley Stations, Palomar Street & San Ysidro, San Diego
- Vulcan Baths, 805 W. Cedar Street, San
- Diego • Dream Crystal, 1536 Highland Avenue, National City
- Sports Auto Sales, 1111 National City Boulevard, National City

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Marlena Salem, N.C. Corporal, chief dispatcher, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 CARTAGENIA

CARTAGENA HOPES TO GET HER NURSING DEGREE TO HELP THOSE IN NEED. SHE ALSO VOLUN-TEERS HER TIME TO HELP PEOPLE WHO ARE LESS FORTUNATE.

>I grew up in Salem, N.C., with my mother in the early years of my life. When I was still pretty young, I decided to move in with my father for more stability in my life.

>Moving in with him was better for me. Since he was strict, he helped me do well in school and led me toward the right path.

>My father was a flight nurse and my step-mother was also a nurse, which is why I would like to pursue nursing myself when I get older. Watching them care for people really opened my eyes to wanting to do the same thing.

>I was pretty active in school with lacrosse and [Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps.] I will never forget when one of my instructors told me, "Don't let life's little things get to you." I abide by that philosophy today in the Marine Corps and with anything else I do.

>I joined the Corps because I feel like everyone should take the time to serve their country. To be defended by our armed services means that you should want to take the time to do it yourself.

>I feel a lot of pride serving my country, especially in the Marine Corps.

>What I liked about being a motor vehicle operator was that we are essential to the unit's mission. Getting the necessary materials and always having a line for transport is what made me proud of what I did.

>After going to a secondary military occupation school for refueler's course, my job is to refuel all of the aircraft that come onto the landing strip. It's pretty different from my last job, but it's still something I enjoy.

>We have very busy schedules as chief dispatchers, especially when there is an [Integrated Training Exercise] and pilots are coming back from their flights during all hours of the day.

>When I'm not in uniform, I love to travel to new places in California. We live relatively close to everything so if I don't have work on the weekend, I try to go somewhere new and exciting.



>I would consider myself a person of the arts. I like photography, poetry and even scrapbooking. Poetry has become a huge part of my life. It's an outlet for me whether I'm sad or happy.

>I would like to stay in the Marine Corps and take full advantage of all the things it has to offer.

>I want to start working on my nursing degree while I'm still in the military. I haven't decided yet what type of nurse I will be, but I'm leaning toward working with children.

>Something I wrote that I try to live by is, choose the path of most resistance, your destiny is inevitable. It means to never take the easy way out of things, and always be willing to challenge and push yourself. At the end of a lifetime, we all have the same result and you do not want a life filled with the easy way.

Interviewed and photographed by Lance Cpl. Dave Flores





LANCE CPL. PRESTON MCDONALD

Lance Cpl. Martin Villagran, machine gunner, Company C, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, prepares links of 7.62 mm rounds for Pfc. William Chapman, machine gunner, 1/2, during a mechanized assault course aboard the Combat Center Oct. 22. The platoon sized attack allowed for rifleman squads to attack the simulated enemy objective while receiving overhead suppression from machinegun and mortar fire.

STORY BY LANCE CPL. JUAN A. SOTO-DELGADO

Marines with 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, participated in Integrated Training Exercise 1-17 aboard the Combat Center, Oct. 21-Nov. 12. The training is in preparation for an upcoming deployment with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response and the Black Sea Rotational Force.

During the exercise, the unit teamed with multiple air, logistical and other ground eletechniques and implementation of warfighting capabilities.

"This is the best training you're going to get," said Lt. Col. David Emmel, the commanding officer of 1/2, who also reinforced the idea of maintaining a tactical mindset throughout the course of training in preparation for the unit's deployment.

Upon their arrival, the Marines hit the ground running by conducting company sized attacks on simulated targets. Engineers with 2nd and offensive tactics, breaching provide suppressive fire and "The amount of fire power combative skillsets for potential

flanking the simulated enemy bunkers.

"I enjoyed the training, overall it was the best training of my career," said Lance Cpl. James Obrin, a grenadier with 2nd Platoon, Company C, 1/2. "We got a chance to apply what we've learned such as control rates of fire and maneuvering over the harsh terrain."

"The Platoon did an excellent job. We got there and the enemy withdrew because of too much suppressive fire," said 2nd Lt. John S. Robinson,

was very impressive; during the defense, the simulated enemy got into our defensive position, but the platoon did a great job at countering the assault and making the simulated enemy withdraw."

Finally, the Marines executed Military Operations in Urban Terrain training. The unit cleared a mock city, thwarting simulated enemies, while also gathering intelligence and providing security to role players.

Events like MAC and MOUT logistical and other ground ele-ments to train on defensive and positioning themselves to 2nd Platoon, Company C, 1/2. infantry unit to enhance their scheduled to deploy in early

real-world situations faced on deployment.

"Training this way as a battalion and integrating the MAGTF to become a more lethal fighting force is something we don't have the opportunity to do in Camp Lejeune," said Capt. Kevin Nicholson, the commanding officer of Charlie Company, 1/2. ""The training here with Tactical Training Exercise Control Group is as realistic as it gets and it allows us to strengthen our weaknesses before we deploy."

2017.



TOUGH MINDED **OPTIMISM** by Lou Gerhardt



In the wonderful story the Whisper Test, Mary Ann Bird writes:

"I grew up knowing I was different, and I hated it. I was born with a cleft palate, and when I started school, my classmates made it clear to me how I looked to others: a little girl with a misshapen lip, crooked nose, lopsided teeth, and garbled speech.

When schoolmates asked, "What happened to your lip?" I'd tell them I'd fallen and cut it on a piece of glass. Somehow it seemed more acceptable to have suffered an accident than to have been born different. I was convinced that no one outside my family could love me.

There was, however, a teacher in the second grade whom we all adored-Mrs. Leonard by name. She was short, round, happy-a sparkling lady

Annually we had a hearing test....Mrs. Leonard gave the test to everyone in the class, and finally it was my turn. I knew from past years that as we stood against the door and covered one ear, the teacher sitting at her desk would whisper something, and we would have to repeat it back—things like "The sky is blue" or "Do you have new shoes?" I waited there for those words that God must have put into her mouth, those seven words that changed my life. Mrs. Leonard said, in her whisper, "I wish you were my little girl."

This column sponsored by: **Steve Kanold and Lalo Alvarez** www.act-tours.com www.lalovisions.com 760-367-4627 Dr. Lou can be reached at

800-995-1620 res19mxc@verizon.net

prepare for upcoming deployment



LANCE CPL. PRESTON MCDONALD

Cpl. Joshua Eby and Lance Cpl. Clay Melville, riflemen, Company C, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, defend their position during a mechanized assault course aboard the Combat Center Oct. 27. The event required the Marines to assault three enemy objectives and set in a defensive position over the course of three days.



LANCE CPL. JUAN SOTO-DELGADO

A High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (Humvee) patrols during Military Operations in Urban Terrain training aboard the Combat Center Nov. 10. The Humvee is a four-wheel drive, 3 speed armored vehicle with the capability of mounting an M2 .50Cal. M240 or a M249 machine gun.



LANCE CPL. JUAN SOTO-DELGADO

Cpl. Joel Decilles uses the hatch to exit an Amphibious Assault vehicle aboard the Combat Center Nov. 7. Marines with 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, utilize AAV and M1A1 Abrams Tanks as a part of an integrated training exercise in preparation for an upcoming deployment.



LANCE CPL. PRESTON MCDONALD

Lance Cpl. Robert Gill, squad leader, Company C, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, left, and Lance Cpl. Kyle Byron, section leader, Company C, 1/2, right, drag a simulated casualty to safety during a mechanized assault course aboard the Combat Center Oct. 24. The company-reinforced attack, led by 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, integrated ground and air assets from 2nd Tank Battalion, 2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion, Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 167, 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion and 10th Marine Regiment.



Marine Corps loses far too many people to things like suicide and drunk driving. We are further discussing issues like these to try to put a stop to them."

Throughout the day, Marines of 1st Tanks held guided discussions about how to improve their daily lives and help their Marines. The Marines also participated in physical competitions at scheduled times.

"Being split up into smaller groups keeps us engaged with the discussions and listening," said Lance Cpl. Minhyung Lee, crewman, 1st Tanks. "Having PT thrown into the mix gets our blood pumping again and keeps us engaged."

Through guided discussions and competitions, 1st Tanks leadership hoped to build camaraderie amongst their Marines, which can lower potential losses.

"I want to be clear that the great majority of our Marines and units are doing an outstanding job," Neller said. "This message is meant to reinforce all the great things you are doing. But, as I have said to you when I visited you at bases and stations around our Corps, the best professional teams are proactive in ensuring they get better. They pause, reflect, discuss, learn and get better before they have problems that are beyond their control."



Lance Cpl. Minhyung Lee, driver, 1st Tank Battalion, performs military presses with a tank track section as part of a physical training competition during the battalion's operational pause at Del Valle Field aboard the Combat Center, Nov. 29.

HEARTLAND QUALITY







Try a little





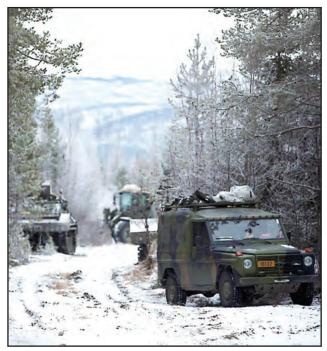
U.S. Marines in Norway complete Exercise Reindeer II



U.S. Marines work together with the Norwegian Army to conduct offensive and defensive operations at the battalion and brigade-level during Exercise Reindeer II in Blåtind, Norway, Nov. 24. Reindeer II is a bilateral training exercise hosted by the Norwegian military to increase support capabilities between NATO allies in extreme conditions.



PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. TIMOTHY LUTZ



U.S. Marines work together with the Norwegian Army to conduct offensive and defensive operations at the battalion and brigade-level during Exercise Reindeer II in Blåtind, Norway, Nov. 24.



U.S. Marines work together with the Norwegian Army to conduct offensive and defensive operations at the battalion and brigade-level during Exercise Reindeer II in Blåtind, Norway, Nov. 24. Black Sea Rotational Force is an annual multilateral security cooperation activity between the U.S. Marine Corps and partner nations in the Black Sea, Balkan and Caucasus regions designed to enhance participants' collective professional military capacity, promote regional stability and build enduring relationships with partner nations.



U.S. Marines work together with the Norwegian Army to conduct offensive and defensive operations at the battalion and brigade-level during Exercise Reindeer II in Blåtind, Norway, Nov. 23.



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December 2, 2016

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'Rhinos' leadership face off in Turkey Bowl

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. DAVE FLORES

Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 leadership went toe-to-toe in a Turkey Bowl flag football game at Felix Field, Nov. 22.

The game was a part of MWSS-374's monthly squadron-wide physical training and in the Turkey Bowl, a team of staff noncommissioned officers

faced off against a team of commissioned officers.

"The purpose of the Turkey Bowl is to build camaraderie within the unit," said Gunnery Sgt. Dana Dockery, operations chief, MWSS-374.

Even though we didn't come out victorious, everyone did really well today. It gives everyone the chance to come out and get in a good PT before going and eating the big Thanksgiving meals.

Lt. Col. Christopher D. Siler, commanding officer, MWSS-374

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By the end of the second half, the officers were in the lead, but after a small break and a pep talk, the staff noncommissioned officers turned the game around, winning 38 to 24. Though the staff noncommissioned officers won, the more than 20 squadron leaders who played left the game a more cohesive unit than they were at kickoff.

"Even though we didn't come out victorious, everyone did really well today," said Lt. Col. Christopher D. Siler, commanding officer, MWSS-374. "It gives everyone the chance to come out and get in a good PT before going and eating the big Thanksgiving meals."

Staff noncommissioned officers and officers of Marine Wing Sup-port Squadron 374 shake hands after the MWSS-374 Turkey Bowl at Felix Field aboard the Combat Center, Nov. 22. MWSS-374 held the Turkey Bowl to build camaraderie within the senior leadership.



Officers of Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 take a break during half time of the MWSS-374 Tur-key Bowl at Felix Field aboard the Combat Center, New 32, MWCS 274 held the Turkey Dewl to build Nov. 22. MWSS-374 held the Turkey Bowl to build camaraderie within the senior leadership.



1st Lt. Andrew de Lannoy, combat engineer officer, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, rushes the ball pass the staff noncommissioned officers' defensive line during the MWSS-374 Turkey Bowl at Felix Field aboard the Combat Center, Nov. 22. MWSS-374 held the Turkey Bowl to build camaraderie within the senior leadership.



Combat Center Events

The Combat Center Holiday Show will be at Sunset Cinema from 5 to 8:30 p.m., Saturday. The Creating Arts Studios will perform the Grinch and there will be a meet and greet with the cast. For more information, call (760) 830-5086.

The Combat Center Toy Giveaway will be held at the West Gym, Dec. 10 from 1 to 4 p.m. Each military child ages fourteen and younger will be offered a free age appropriate toy to keep. The USO will be serving Hot Chocolate during the event. For more information call (760) 830-5086.

Head to Mameluke's Pub Monday Nights from 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for Monday Night Football! Food and drink specials are available. See if your team will make it all the way to the championships. For more information, call (760) 830-6610.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, Dec. 2

5:00 p.m. – Nation Lampoon's Christmas Vacation (NDVD-Free Admission), PG-13

7:30 p.m. - Doctor Strange (3-D), PG-13

11:00 p.m. – Hacksaw Ridge, R

Saturday, Dec. 3

5:00 p.m. – NO MOVIES- Free Event Combat Center Holiday Show

Sunday, Dec. 4

12:30 p.m. – Trolls (3-D), PG

3:00 p.m. - Doctor Strange (3-D), PG-13

6:00 p.m. – Hacksaw Ridge, R

Monday, Dec. 5

6:30 p.m. - Hacksaw Ridge, R

Tuesday, Dec. 6

5:00 p.m. - Trolls, PG

7:00 p.m. – Doctor Strange, PG-13

Wednesday, Dec. 7

5:00 p.m. – Tyler Perry Boo! A Medina Halloween, PG-13

7:10 p.m. – Jack Reacher: Never Go Back, Pg-13



CPL. WILLIAM JACKSON

The Observation Post staff headed to Joshua Tree National Park to explore the high desert July 12, 2013. The park has trails for all-day hikes into the back-country, campgrounds available by permit and an extensive network of dirt roads that makes for less crowded and safer cycling than the paved main roads.

Explore Joshua Tree National Park, a nature getaway

STORY BY LANCE CPL. DAVE FLORES

JOSHUA TREE, Calif. – In the Southern Mojave Desert, the terrain is characterized by most as harsh and unforgiving. But located within that vast landscape is an area that many would consider a tranquil sanctuary.

Every year, more than two million people come from around the world to visit Joshua Tree National Park. Sitting north of the Coachella Valley, and neighboring the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, the park provides opportunities endless such as hiking, camping and world renowned rock climbing. It's no wonder to learn why locals and tourists alike flock to this peaceful outdoor wonderland. President When Clinton Bill signed California Desert the Protection of 1994, Joshua Tree Monument was recognized as a national park for California's desert.



Thursday, Dec. 8

5:00 p.m. - Kevin Hart: What Now, R

7:00 p.m. - The Accountant, R

Friday, Dec. 9

6:50 p.m. - Keeping Up With the Jonses, PG-13

9:00 p.m. - Inferno, PG-13

11:30 p.m. - Ouija: Original Evil, PG-13





LANCE CPL. LAUREN KURKIMILIS

Joshua Tree National Park has trails for all-day hikes into the back-country, campgrounds available by permit and is also a popular rock climbing venue.

Along with being given the title of national park, JTNP was allotted 250,000 more acres of land for preservation.

Within the more than 750,000 acres of the national park, there is something for almost everyone. Rock climbing has become a huge attraction in JTNP. According to George Land, public information officer, National Park Services, more than 300,000 climbers have visited the park in 2016 alone. From amateur climbers looking to gain experience, to advanced climbers who are seeking a thrill, there is a vast selection of different climbing routes to choose from.

For Marines, sailors and their families stationed aboard the Combat Center, the national park is most commonly accessed through Utah Trail off of Highway 62 in Twentynine Palms and off of Park Avenue in Joshua Tree. The National Park Service issues an annual pass offering free entrance to all national parks for active duty military members, their dependents and disabled veterans. Whether for a weekend trip or just a few hours, the national park symbolizes more than preserved land in Southern California; it's become a refuge for history, culture and a therapeutic connection to the natural world.



Cinema 6 Showtimes Effective 12/2/16 - 12/8/16 Moana (PG) 2D 12:00 6:00 9:00 3D 3:00 Fantastic Beasts & Where To Find Them (PG13) 12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00 Allied (R) 12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00 **Bad Santa 2** (R) 12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00 1 (760) 365-9633 www.cinema6theatre.com





LANCE CPL. DEVAN GOWANS

Marines and sailors with the Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, take part in a five kilometer run on the flight deck of the USS Makin Island (LHD 8) done in celebration of Thanksgiving Day, while afloat in the Indian Ocean, Nov. 24





Marines with Black Sea Rotational Force 16.2 hand out food to their fellow Marines at the Thanksgiving celebration dinner during Exercise Iron Sword 16 in the Rukla Training Area, Lithuania, Nov. 25.



An inflatable Santa atop a float Nov. 25 during the Tree Lighting Festival aboard Camp Kinser, Okinawa, Japan. Marine units decorated their vehicles and drove through

