



Marines with 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, gather around an instructor before a hike during Mountain Training Exercise 1-17 aboard the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Jan. 17. The MWTC is one of the most secluded posts, comprised of approximately 46,000 acres of terrain with elevations ranging from 5,000 feet to 11,000 feet. The exercise trains elements of the Marine air-ground task force across the warfighting functions for operations in mountainous, high altitude, and cold weather environments in order to enhance a unit's ability to shoot, move, communicate, sustain, and survive in the most rugged regions of the world.

## Marines expand capabilities for 'every clime and place'

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
 CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

MARINE CORPS MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING CENTER BRIDGEPORT, Calif. — In mountain warfare, adversaries come in two forms, the enemy force and the unforgiving elements. In many respects, an alpine terrain can be the more formidable opponent, for unlike our enemies, we cannot oblige Mother Nature to relent.

Marines and sailors with 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, are putting their cold-weather survival skills to the test during Mountain Training Exercise 1-17 aboard the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Jan. 13 through Feb. 6, 2017. MC-MWTC is one of the Marine Corps' most secluded posts, comprised of approximately 46,000 acres of terrain with elevations ranging from 5,000 to 11,000 feet. MTX trains elements of the Marine air-ground task

force across the warfighting functions for operations in mountainous, high-altitude and cold-weather environments in order to enhance a unit's ability to shoot, move, communicate, sustain and survive in the most rugged regions of the world.

During this iteration of MTX, the inclusion of the Arctic Tent, designed to house up to 15 personnel, enabled the "Warlords" to be truly immersed in the frigid landscape throughout the full duration of the training.

"For the first time, we established a tent city in Grouse Meadows on top of about 5 feet of snow," Wlaschin said. "The plan was to billet up to 1,200 personnel; however, we ended up with a max of 811 people living in the city, similar to many forward staging bases around the world."

Improving upon previously used cold-weather tents, the Arctic Tents more effectively insulate heat

See **Clime** A7



Marines with 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, trek through the snow during Mountain Training Exercise 1-17 aboard the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Jan. 17.

## Combat Center Tax Center opens for business

CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

Brig. Gen. William F. Mullen III, Combat Center Commanding General, unveiled the new location for the Combat Center Tax Center, Monday. Later that day, the Tax Center was open for business and began assisting Combat Center personnel with filing their 2016 taxes.

"Our mission is to provide free tax preparation

can better focus on their individual missions without this weighing on their mind."

The Tax Center, located in building 1525 on Fourth Street, provides free tax return preparation assistance to service members, dependents and retirees. The Marines there are trained and certified through the Internal Reve-



Brig. Gen. William F. Mullen III, Combat Center Commanding General, unveiled the new location for the Combat Center Tax Center aboard the Combat Center, Monday. The Tax Center, located in building 1525 on Fourth Street, provides free tax return preparation assistance to service members, dependents and retirees.

services for the Marines, sailors and their dependents," said 1st Lt. Louis Glinzak, officer in charge, Tax Center. "The goal is to help service members by providing them with the service of tax preparation and getting them in and out as fast as possible so they

nue Service and California State Franchise Tax Board. With the new facilities centrally located on base, getting to the center is more convenient for service members and their dependents.

"Marines take care of

See **Tax Center** A7



Brig. Gen. William F. Mullen III, Combat Center Commanding General, addresses Combat Center Marines after unveiling the new location for the Combat Center Tax Center aboard the Combat Center, Monday.

## Inside the Observation Post

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- B6..... Around the Corps



Combat Center kids pine for racing days

See page B1

## 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 Sgt. Lillian Stephens.



Marine Corps F-35Bs from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, transit the Pacific from Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Jan. 9, with its final destination of Iwakuni, Japan, to join 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. VMFA-121, originally an F/A-18 squadron was re-designated as the Marine Corps' first F-35 squadron in 2012.



Reprinted from the Observation Post  
January 29, 1982

# 'Bomb' dog joins canine corps

SGT. CYNTHIA ATWOOD

It was the third time around for the yet untrainable Jimmy, a two-year-old German Shepard dog. But the stubbornness was met by the determination of Combat Center policeman Corporal Brian Benbow.

## First explosive detective dog

The result is the Combat Center's first explosive detective dog, one of only nine in the Marine Corps. The specially trained dog, in a departure from the normal dope detectors, will be used to help ferret out bombs and check buildings where bomb threats have been received, to find possible explosive material.

How sensitive is the new recruit? According to Benbow, Jimmy can find an old cap that used to hold powder on just trace scents.

On his list of specialties are smokeless powder, C-4, detonation cord, TNT, dynamite, tovox-water gel and "any nitro-based explosive," according to his handler.

## 10-week basic training course

Benbow and Jimmy went through a 10-week basic training course at Lackland Air Force Base. Jimmy had already been rejected by two previous handlers. Even after Benbow made up his mind that he would take the dog, it took three days of patience to convince Jimmy to let him in his kennel.

The training also included basic patrol tactics, and Jimmy will be seen on the street during watches. Jimmy's explosive detection expertise will be called in when there are suspected explosives in the area, or when commands call the team in to conduct spot searches for ordnance.

## Jimmy training complete

Jimmy's training is complete, but Benbow's credentials as a handler must be recertified if he leaves the Combat Center and has a new dog to work with.

"We mainly have to school with the new dogs to be sure how they alert (point out an explosive)," Benbow notes. "They all do it differently and sometimes it can be hard to tell. When

Jimmy smells something he just sits down. Some dope dogs will hit it (the drugs)."

"When you're working with a bomb dog, an aggressive alert (like hitting the prey) can be dangerous. That's why all of the aggressive alerts are being taken out of the program. But some of the non-aggressive alerts are subtle and hard to find," Benbow adds.

## Joining two other dogs

Jimmy will be joining the Center's other two working dogs, Matt and Yukon, while another narcotics detection dog is schedule to arrive in February.

Benbow, here at the Combat Center since July 1980, continues in his duties as NCOIC of the working dog section.

## CROSSWORD

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69					70					71				

- Across**  
 1. Hindu princesses  
 6. Unload, as stock  
 10. Supergarb  
 14. Avoid  
 15. "Mi chiamano Mimi," e.g.  
 16. Clickable image  
 17. Front of the plane  
 19. Put one's foot down?  
 20. "Star Trek" rank: Abbr.  
 21. "For shame!"  
 22. Nay-\_\_\_\_\_  
 24. Illicit cigarette  
 26. Provides an upper interior surface to a room  
 28. Cabernet, e.g.  
 29. To create a ring  
 33. #1 spot  
 36. Dalai \_\_\_\_  
 38. A flat sheet of micro-film  
 39. Defamation

41. Small bag  
 43. Beverage made with fruit juices  
 44. Airy  
 46. Some male dolls  
 47. Odd shaped fish with elongated snout  
 49. Crystal meth, in slang  
 51. Admiral's command  
 52. Home decorator Stewart  
 56. Round lot's 100  
 59. Toni Morrison's "\_\_\_\_ Baby"  
 60. Howard of "Happy Days"  
 61. Checker, perhaps  
 62. Not willing to endure  
 66. \_\_\_\_ vera  
 67. Dirty coat  
 68. Enjoy  
 69. Short for generations  
 70. Certain surgeon's "patient"

71. About 1.3 cubic yards  
**Down**  
 1. Allude  
 2. Dress style  
 3. Care for  
 4. Driver's lic. and others  
 5. Couch  
 6. Preserve, in a way  
 7. Victorian, for one  
 8. Sue Grafton's "\_\_\_\_ for Lawless"  
 9. Famous TV collie  
 10. Fancy person from the big city  
 11. "God's Little \_\_\_\_"  
 12. "D"  
 13. Aims  
 18. Turn  
 23. High up  
 25. 'American' side  
 26. Video maker, for short  
 27. Clear, as a disk  
 30. Advil target

31. Accordingly  
 32. Congers  
 33. Dangerous biters  
 34. Hint  
 35. Fictional resource of magic  
 37. Appeared  
 40. Wild Asian dog  
 42. Sloth, e.g.  
 45. Favorite  
 48. To fight back  
 50. Fondle  
 53. A crossbeam  
 54. Accept  
 55. Cavern, in poetry  
 56. Alone  
 57. Fit  
 58. Impulse transmitter  
 59. \_\_\_\_ bag  
 63. "\_\_\_\_ any drop to drink": Coleridge  
 64. "For shame!"  
 65. Backstabber

## SUDOKU

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

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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

# Ludwin PORTILLO

Washington, D.C., Sergeant, Administrative Specialist, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion

## INTERESTING FACT

WHILE NOT IN THE FIELD OR COMPLETING HIS MISSION AS PLATOON SERGEANT, PORTILLO, ALSO KNOWN AS DJ BOOM, SPENDS HIS FREE TIME PERFORMING AND DISK JOCKEYING EVENTS.

**> Growing up in D.C.** was good for me. My parents came from El Salvador to raise me there. Living there made me who I am today and allows me to appreciate everything I have and everything I've earned, especially coming from a low income area.

**>I joined the Marine Corps** to travel and seek adventure. I knew the Marine Corps would allow me to gain independence and grow up while doing it.

**>I've been DJing** since I was 11 years old. When I started my hobby, my parents were big party people. We always had parties at the house and invited family members.

**>We used to play CD's** for music, but at some point the disc would end and people would stop dancing. It got to the point where my dad got me a mix station and told me to learn how to play with it. It had two discs on each side, and I figured out how to play it. I learned and it stuck on me.

**>I graduated onto CDJs**, which are basically turntables for CD's. I saved up and bought myself some more gear before finally moving onto turntables.

**>I wanted to learn the roots of DJing.** When you say DJ, the first thing most people think of is turntables, not somebody on a laptop. The vintage look is awesome, and the records bring back memories to a lot of older people. I play a lot of old school vinyl records at home, usually from the 70's or 80's.

**>I've played at clubs and other hired events**, but weddings are my favorite to play. They're very special moments for the people you're DJing for. I've always gotten good feedback



from the couples and it feels good to be a part of that memorable moment at a wedding. That one night can be remembered for a lifetime.

**>Right now, my main goal** is providing music to the military. I volunteer a lot. It's a hobby and I love it. I don't do it for the money. Music lifts the soul and it sets the mood.

**>Growing up, I always tried to stay versatile** with my music, learning all types of genres. I like to get out of my shell and learn about other types of music and cultures. I've done different parties for all types of people. It's important to give people their memories back through music. I spend a lot of time researching and downloading

terabytes of music.

**>I've been in the Marine Corps** for about eight years and have made a lot of connections DJing.

**>My goal has always been** to open up a club once I get out of the Marine Corps. For me, the ultimate goal is having a business in entertainment.

Interviewed and photographed by Cpl. Connor Hancock/Cpl. Levi Schultz

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# MARINES GET CREATIVE

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, August 7, 2015.

## ... at Wood Hobby Shop



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, August 8, 2015. For those interested in woodworking, the shop has the tools needed to build, repair or modify their own woodwork, craft and hobby items.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
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 who doesn't love a handmade gift?"

Even the simplest of designs test 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 6 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.



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

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# DO YOU REUSE • REDUCE • RECYCLE?

What Can Be Recycled  
**At MCAGCC**

FY 16 Combat Center  
**Fun Facts**

Big Sale & Reutilization  
**PROGRAM**

Good To  
**KNOW**

## PREPARATION

Please do not bag your recyclables. Put the below items straight into your designated recycling bin for curbside pickup.

### NO. 1 PLASTICS

PREP: quick rinse • no lids  
CRV Plastic (soda/water bottles)

### NO. 2 PLASTICS

PREP: quick rinse • no lids  
milk/water jugs, juice bottles

### ALUMINUM & STEEL CANS

PREP: empty and rinse out food and beverage residue

### PAPER & CARDBOARD PRODUCTS

Copy paper, white ledger paper, shredded paper, newspaper, magazines, telephone books and all types of cardboard

### GLASS CLEAR/BROWN/GREEN

PREP: empty and rinse out food and beverage residue

## CARDBOARD

The Combat Center preserved nearly 7,000 gallons of oil by recycling cardboard!

## ALUMINUM

Each month the Combat Center preserved over 50,000 kWh of energy by recycling aluminum!

## PLASTIC

The Combat Center preserved approximately 1,600 cubic yards of landfill space by recycling plastic.

## PAPER

The Combat Center saved over 6 trees a day by recycling paper!

## TIRES

The Combat Center recycled approximately 17,000 tires, preserving roughly 1,000 cubic yards of landfill space.

## LEAD-ACID BATTERIES

The Combat Center recycled almost 100 tons of lead-acid batteries which is the most recycled product in the United States.

## ELECTRONIC WASTE (E-WASTE)

The Combat Center recycled over 30 tons of e-waste in 2016.

## STEEL

Each month the Combat Center preserved over 1 trillion Btu's of energy by recycling steel!

## BID SALE PROGRAM

The Qualified Recycling Program (QRP) bid sales are typically conducted once a quarter and are open to EVERYONE! Individuals can view the bid sale inventory by visiting the Residential Commercial Recycling Section (RCRS) at Bldg. 2085 T1 on Rifle Range Rd. or visit [www.green29.org](http://www.green29.org). If you wish to sign up for the upcoming bid sale please come visit RCRS.

### Bid sale items may consist of:

- Scrap metal (ferrous and non-ferrous)
- Scrap wood, including unusable/unserviceable pallets and crates
- Scrap plastics
- Appliances (unusable/unserviceable)
- Used furniture (non-repairable, unusable/unserviceable)

The proceeds generated from the QRP bid sales can help fund the following efforts aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC).

- Recycling initiatives
- Energy conservation projects
- Pollution abatement
- Occupational safety and health activities
- Moral, welfare, and recreational projects

### Reutilization program

The QRP enables MCAGCC units (ONLY) to reutilize items or materials at no cost to the command. Typical reutilization items may consist of:

- Desks
- Tables
- Chairs
- File cabinets
- Pallets
- Ammo cans

## HAZARDOUS WASTE

Lead acid batteries, used motor oil, light bulbs, paint, aerosol cans, and used antifreeze can all be recycled and should be disposed at Hazardous Waste Management Branch (HWMB).

## E-WASTE RECYCLING

Old, obsolete and non-functioning TVs, computers, monitors, printers, toner cartridges and other miscellaneous small electronic equipment can be turned into the HWMB for proper recycling.

## NON-RECYCLABLE ITEMS

Aluminum foil, pie pans, etc., compact disks, wax paper (milk boxes, frozen food cartons), plastic no. 3, ceramic glass (plates, bowls, cups), styrofoam and rubber products (latex gloves) cannot be recycled aboard MCAGCC.

The QRP bid sale and reutilization program directly supports the installation's goal to meet executive order recycling mandates. QRP operations are conducted in accordance with local & federal laws, regulations and Department of Defense policies and instructions.

**QRP  
BID SALE**

For more information contact  
Base Recycling at 760.830.5666  
or visit [www.green29.org](http://www.green29.org)



## Clima From A1

and can be installed with heating stoves.

"[The tent city] really facilitated their learning in an administrative manner," Wlaschin said. "Having 15-man tents connected in rows of three allowed them to organize platoon-level leadership to make sure everyone was doing the right things and that medical issues were addressed quickly."

The snow-covered tent city served as a sprawling center of operations throughout the exercise.

"During the first phase

of MTX 1-17, we see [the Marines] conducting the mobility training of the exercise where they learn flat ground techniques," said Maj. Mark A. Wlaschin, logistics officer, MCMWTC. "This includes learning to ski and move on snow shoes in a flat environment before moving on to downhill techniques."

Throughout this phase, Marines also learn to thrive in frigid temperatures that can drop as low as minus 25 degrees Fahrenheit during winter months. Mountain warfare

instructors teach basic survival techniques, from heating and purifying water to how to properly utilize cold weather gear.

For Marines, this is just one means of being prepared to complete their mission "in every climate and place."

"They trained us in the proper gear and taught us how to survive," said Cpl. Corey Jarvis, squad leader, 2/2. "If you can train out here and get past that mental block, than I feel like you can step up and do anything."



Marines with 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, set up communication equipment in a tent city located in Grouse Meadows during Mountain Training Exercise 1-17 aboard the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Jan. 18.

## Tax Center From A1



Brig. Gen. William F. Mullen III, Combat Center Commanding General, addresses Combat Center Marines after unveiling the new location for the Combat Center Tax Center aboard the Combat Center, Monday.

each other and this new center is just another example of that," Mullen said. "Thank you all for your hard work, it is appreciated."

The Tax Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The center takes both appointments and walk-in customers and will operate through the filing deadline, April 18, to help those who need to file late. To make an appointment, one must serve in a demanding billet or have a complicated return. For those who require assistance after the center has closed, there will be services in building 1514 to assist them year round.

The cost-free returns and convenient location are some of the advantages in preparing taxes on base.

The staff urges Marines, sailors and family members to file their taxes sooner rather than later to avoid delays in returns. To be prepared for a tax interview, clients should bring,

at a minimum, their wage statements, military identification and Social Security cards. For more information on the Tax Center or to make an appointment, call 760-830-4TAX.

## TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



My friend Claudia Byran of Reno, Nevada just sent me the following significant information from the January 15 issue of the Reno Gazette - Journal.

A recent article in Inc. magazine suggests that being subjected to chronic complaining can have adverse effects on the brain.

Trevor Blake, author of the book "Three Simple Steps: A Map to Success in Business and Life," says neuroscientists have learned to measure brain activity in response to constant complaining.

"The brain works more like a muscle than we thought," Blake said in the interview. "So if you're pinned in a corner for too long listening to someone being negative, you're more likely to behave that way as well."

He goes on to suggest that listening to too much complaining literally can serve to make you dumb. He points to research findings suggesting that exposure to 30 minutes or more of negativity—including complaining on television—actually destroys neurons in the brain.

"The constant negativity issuing forth from chronic complainers presents a huge challenge for those around them," Winch wrote in a column for Psychology Today. "Trying to remain positive, motivated and productive amid a constant stream of complaints and dissatisfaction can try anyone's patience."

Well, there you have it, my friends. Being called a tough minded optimist isn't so bad! I thoroughly relish the title.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Philippians 4:8

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# WeekINPhotos

## HMH-464 Marines engage Course of Fire during Exercise Frigid Condor

PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. JERED STONE



A CH-53E Super Stallion with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 464 flies during Exercise Frigid Condor above Fort Drum, N.Y., Monday. HMH-464 conducted the exercise to increase the squadron's operational readiness in extreme conditions.



Sgt. Maj. Brian S. Alsleben, left, the Sergeant Major of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 464, loads an ammunition belt for a .50-caliber machine gun during flight operations in Brunswick, Maine, Monday.



Sgt. Adam Lindsey, a CH-53E Super Stallion crew chief assigned to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 464, observes a course of fire during Exercise Frigid Condor above Fort Drum, N.Y., Monday.



Sgt. Adam Lindsey, a CH-53E Super Stallion crew chief assigned to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 464, fires a .50-caliber machine gun during a course of fire above Fort Drum, N.Y., Monday.

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Wyatt Wheeler, son of Chief Petty Officer Casey Wheeler, senior enlisted advisor for Navy personnel, 7th Marine Regiment, displays his trophy and race car at the end of the annual Cub Scout Pinewood Derby at the Armed Services YMCA Scout Hut, Saturday.

# Pinewood Derby returns to Combat Center

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
 CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Homemade race cars zoomed in a blur across the track as children and families with Cub Scout Pack 78 cheered on their wooden creations during the annual Pinewood Derby at the Armed Service YMCA Scout Hut, Saturday.

"This event is a great way for families to come together," said Chief Petty Officer Casey Wheeler, Pinewood Derby facilitator. "It also helps teach the children how to use tools while learning sportsmanship in the process."

Approximately 60 families are registered within the scout troop with children in age groups ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade.

"The best part of the derby is seeing all the different kids rooting for one

another to win and seeing their faces as their cars cross the finish line," said Gunnery Sgt. Joel Holmes, committee chairman, Pack 78. "All the children, win or lose, leave with new stories

**"The best part of the derby is seeing all the different kids rooting for one another to win and seeing their faces as their cars cross the finish line. All the children, win or lose, leave with new stories and a determination to do better next year."**

- Gunnery Sgt. Joel Holmes, committee chairman, Pack 78

and a determination to do better next year."

Wyatt Wheeler, son of Wheeler who is also senior enlisted advisor for navy personnel, 7th Marine Regiment, claimed first place in this year's derby.



Children with Cub Scout Pack 78 cheer as their race cars pass the finish line during the annual Cub Scout Pinewood Derby at the Armed Services YMCA Scout Hut, Saturday.



Pinewood Derby cars race down the track during the annual Cub Scout Pinewood Derby at the Armed Services YMCA Scout Hut, Saturday.



Children with Cub Scout Pack 78 watch as their race cars zoom by them during the annual Cub Scout Pinewood Derby at the Armed Services YMCA Scout Hut, Saturday.

# Face it and Embrace it: 29 Palms is my favorite duty station

STORY BY LAUREN COMER, COURTESY OF MILITARYSPOUSE.COM

I'll never forget when my husband, Reece, called from the shared phone at Officer Candidate School with the orders to our first duty station. After months of excited anticipation, compounded by months of separation, I could not wait to find out where the first stop of our Naval adventure would take us.

We had submitted our list of preferences to the detailer – glamorous and exciting places like Italy, San Diego, Key West, Spain, Hawaii. If it sounded tropical or exotic, it was there!

However, looking back, I can just envision the detailer at his desk, looking at this extravagant list, having a good chuckle at our naiveté, and then throwing our preferences in the trash.

## First Stage: Shock

“Lauren, I got my orders. We're moving to Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms,” my husband shared.

“Great. . . where is that? It sounds tropical!” I asked. “Yeah, it does, but I'm not sure where it is. . . pull it up on Google maps.”

I double checked my search. No, this was indeed 29 Palms, California. I zoomed in. How could a place that looked like Mars have a name that sounded so tropical?

“Well,” I stammered to my husband, “it looks . . . interesting. But definitely not tropical.”

## Second Stage: Apprehension

We really didn't know what to expect or what we had gotten ourselves into. Reece had joined the Navy, and two kids from Florida who'd grown up on and near the water, we definitely assumed the Navy would keep us near . . . water.

For those unfamiliar with 29 Palms, it is situated in the Mojave Desert, seemingly in the middle of nowhere. Aside from base, there is very little commerce and definitely no night-life. The closest shopping available at the time was a 25 mile drive to Walmart two towns over in Yucca Valley, after which



CPL. LEVI SCHULTZ

The Combat Center is renowned as the Marine Corps' premiere training facility.

the next shopping would be in Palm Springs, an additional 35 miles away.

Reece and his father moved our stuff out to California a month before I could join, as I stayed behind in Jacksonville to tie up some loose ends at work. When my father and I were preparing to complete our own cross-country drive a few weeks later, we couldn't understand why my father-in-law kept insisting that we take a seemingly indirect route from Phoenix, AZ to 29 Palms.

Years later, he shared with me that he was afraid I would go into shock and start crying at the stark, unpopulated, and barren terrain if we drove the direct route, as you could easily drive 50-60 miles without seeing another living soul.

Needless to say, when we first arrived we were apprehensive about what our lives would be like in this interesting place. But we tried to remain positive.

Once we were settled into our new house in Joshua Tree – the next town over from 29 palms – it really sunk in – we actually

live here. We realized that our hobbies from Florida would not translate to our arid new home, and that it wasn't going to be the easiest place to make new friends.

We did, however, have Joshua Tree National Park, the unique and world-renowned national park – visited by roughly 1.5 million people every year – right in our backyard. We spent time exploring the park, and quickly learned that Joshua Tree is a global rock-climbing mecca. So while surfing, boating, and beaching were out of the question, we now had access to some of the best rock-climbing and hiking around.

So what did we do? Well, we made lemons out of lemonade! We learned to rock climb, and took advantage of the hikes literally outside our back door almost daily. While friends were not in plenty, we developed a nurtured a few key friendships and quickly built our own desert family – and they remain our “family” to this day.

No, our lives were not the same as they had been in

Florida. We couldn't spend our weekends at hip, new restaurants or out on the town . . . but our lives developed a lovely, but full, simplicity. When the weekends came around, our plans were easy – climb in the park, grill out with friends, maybe people-watch at the Saloon, and repeat.

Once we accepted and embraced our circumstances and what Joshua Tree and 29 Palms had to offer, we could see the desert through new eyes. Through the eyes we could appreciate the strange and unique culture of Joshua Tree, and could feel the magical energy that flows in the Mojave.

## Third Stage: Adoration

Now when people ask what my favorite duty station has been, I always say 29 Palms without hesitation. Folks in the military – who actually know a bit about 29 Palms – are always very surprised. How could I have enjoyed a place in the middle of nowhere more than living on the coast at Naval Base Ventura County, a train-ride from Manhattan at NWS Earle in NJ,

or on the water in South Florida during grad school?! IT is all because of the hobbies, interests, and love we developed for the desert during our time there.

During the course of a military career, it's inevitable that you will receive orders to a base that you could hate. It may not be because it's in the desert or the middle of nowhere. It may just be outside your comfort zone and away from the activities, people and places you typically enjoy.

When that time comes, face it and embrace it.

Make the most of your time there. Seek out new ways to grow. Acknowledge that since you can't do anything to change the situation, you might as well try to have fun instead of wallowing in self-pity. Yes, you can allow yourself a few minutes from time to time to daydream about what life would be like at your duty station of preference. But for the most part, remember – anyone can live anywhere for a few years – and when this season of your life passes, you may look back and realize that it was one of your best season yet.

## Sunset Cinema

Friday  
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5:00 PM - Rogue One: A Star Wars Story (3-D) PG-13

8:00 PM - Why Him? R

11:00 PM - Assassin's Creed (3-D) PG-13

Saturday  
Jan. 28, 2017

11:00 AM - Sing (3-D) PG

1:40 PM - Rogue One: A Star Wars Story PG-13

5:00 PM - Passengers (3-D) PG-13

Sunday  
Jan. 29, 2017

12:00 PM - Sing PG

2:20 PM - La La Land PG-13

5:00 PM - Fences PG-13

8:00 PM - Why Him? R

Monday  
Jan. 30, 2017

6:30 PM - Assassin's Creed (3-D) PG-13

Tuesday  
Jan. 31, 2017

6:30 PM - Fences PG-13

Wednesday  
Feb. 1, 2017

5:00 PM - Sing PG

7:20 PM - Office Christmas Party R

Thursday  
Feb. 2, 2017

5:00 PM - Collateral Beauty PG-13

7:30 PM - Nocturnal Animals

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cbroadrunner.com  
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## YUCCA VALLEY

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## RESIDENTIAL FURNISHED 215

**29 PALMS**  
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Get your ads noticed in the classifieds! For more details on our Enhanced Listings, call the Hi-Desert Star at (760) 365-3315

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2BR/2BA, all single story  
Private patios, small pet OK  
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\$700/mo  
Ask for current move-in special  
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To place your classified ad call 760-365-3315 or submit ad online :  
www.hidesertstar.com

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**ROUTE 62 VINTAGE MARKETPLACE**  
Magical Treasure Hunt!

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74863 Aladdin 4/2 - \$1400  
71620 Juanita 3/2 - \$1300  
6643 Copper Mtn 3/2 - \$1280  
73914 White Sands 3/2 - \$1250  
5165 Veranda 3/2 - \$1200  
73567 Didsbury 2/1.5 - \$1200  
74690 Serrano 3/2 - \$1200  
74895 Alta Loma 2/1 - \$1200  
6216 Morongo 3/2 - \$1100  
74026 Casita 3/2 - \$950  
74414 Cottonwood 3/2 - \$925  
5549 Daisy 3/2 - \$900  
6610 Adobe Rd #A 2/1 - \$800  
69063 Old Dale 2/1.5 - \$800  
7445 Saladin 2/1.5 - \$750  
72051 29 Palms Hwy 2/1 - \$750  
6422 Smoketree 2/1 - \$675  
73577 Sunnyslope #A 2/2 - \$650  
73577 Sunnyslope #C 2/2 - \$650  
6630 Adobe Rd #14 1/1 - \$625  
6630 Adobe Rd #2 1/1 - \$625  
7504 Maude Adams 1/1 - \$600  
73404 Sun Valley 1/1 - \$550  
6664 Adobe Rd 0/1 - \$500  
6630 Adobe Rd #7 1/1 - \$500

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- Hedge Trimming
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CALL: **Kris Subratie @ 760-406-1777**  
Best rates in town • Environmentally friendly • Guaranteed satisfaction "no job too small" Lic.# 003428

**SUPERIOR LANDSCAPES**  
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- Excellent Prep

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No Short Cuts  
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Contest

# READY FOR KICKOFF!

**Enter this contest for a chance to win a Gift Certificate to Roost Café at Hawk's Landing.**



## FOOTBALL FANS! Test your NFL IQ

### ? QUESTION 1

Which city has hosted the most Super Bowl games?

### ? QUESTION 2

How many NFL Championships have the Philadelphia Eagles won?

### ? QUESTION 3

How many number of teams are currently in the NFL?

### ? QUESTION 4

Which former NFL player also has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame?

### ? QUESTION 5

Former Dolphins QB, Dan Marino plays a key role in which Jim Carrey movie?

### ? QUESTION 6

Which NFL team features a helmet decal only on one side of the helmet?

### ? QUESTION 6

What was the last team to win back-to-back Super Bowls?

### ? QUESTION 8

What city did the Rams play in before St. Louis?

### ? QUESTION 9

What team won the first Super Bowl and has the most NFL Titles?

### ? QUESTION 10

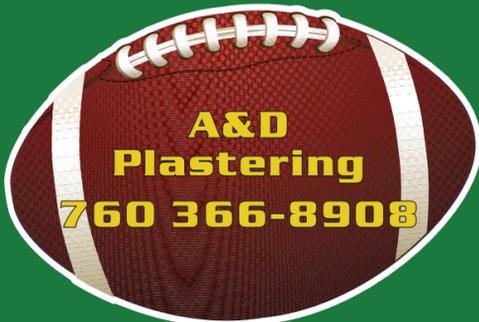
Which quarterback has thrown for the most yards in history?

### ? QUESTION 11

Which running back has run for the most TD's in history?

### ? QUESTION 12

True or False: Oakland Raiders have won in the super bowl game 5 times in their NFL history.



**The Roost Cafe & Hawk's Landing 760 365-0033**



Contest Rules: To enter, complete entry form with the correct answers & return to Hi Desert Star or Desert Trail offices by 5pm, no later than Mon. Jan. 30th, 2017. Drawing will take place Tuesday, Jan. 31st, 2017. Participants must be 18 years of age or older. Employees & family members of Hi Desert Publishing Co. are not eligible to participate in this contest. Good Luck :-)

### CONTEST ENTRY FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

Answer #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer #5: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer #6: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer #7: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer #8: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer #9: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer #10: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer #11: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer #12: \_\_\_\_\_

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# ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Around the Corps ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



LANCE CPL. DAMARKO BONES

A Marine with 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division climbs a rope on the obstacle course during an event known as advance course preparation training at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Monday.



GUNNERY SGT. ADAECUS BROOKS

Petty Officer 3rd Class Jon Abad, an aviation boatswain handler aboard USS Mesa Verde, guides an MH-60S helicopter as it departs the ship after being refueled for a vertical replenishment mission on Jan. 18.



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY FORD

Marines with Marine Wing Communications Squadron (MWCS) 28, participate in a grappling competition during their semi-annual field event, the Spartan Cup, at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., Friday.



CPL. AARON HENSON

Lance Cpl. Joey Samuels, a Provost Marshal's Office military working dog handler with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, watches as his K-9 searches for hidden explosives during training at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, Tuesday.

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