The Combat Center hosted an Integrated Training Exercise for Spouses aboard the Combat Center, March 30, where spouses and significant others of Marines and sailors from a variety of Combat Center units got to experience a day in the life of a Marine.

Marine Corps Community Services, Lifestyle Insights Networking Knowledge Skills, and Government and External Affairs, G-5 hosted a group of 38 participants during the ITX for Spouses event. The group visited training areas including Range 800, where they learned the basics of countering improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Participants had the opportunity to use a Holley stick, a tool used exclusively by Marine Corps explosive ordnance disposal technicians, to investigate and manipulate a suspect IED from a stand-off distance.

In keeping with the Department of Defense’s tobacco policy, the Combat Center began matching the tobacco prices with those of the surrounding community, Saturday.

“Tobacco use is one of the leading causes negatively affecting combat readiness. It’s our job to help Marines get over stress and make sure they’re ready to meet their mission.” – Martha Hunt

In keeping with the Department of Defense’s tobacco policy, the Combat Center, began matching the tobacco prices with those of the surrounding community, Saturday.

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B1........, Marine Corps Spouse of the Year
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B4........, Earth Day Extravaganza

LANCE CPL. SAMANTHA TORRES
In keeping with the Department of Defense’s tobacco policy, the Combat Center, began matching the tobacco prices with those of the surrounding community, Saturday.

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. Sarah Steggall.

Gunnery Sgt. Mayra Garcia, senior drill instructor, Platoon 4011, 4th Battalion, Recruit Training Regiment, returns her sword to her scabbard during a final drill evaluation at Peatross parade deck on Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C., March 22. The recruits are scored for final drill according to confidence, attention to detail, and discipline.

LANCE CPL. SABRINA TOPPER
In keeping with the Department of Defense’s tobacco policy, the Combat Center, began matching the tobacco prices with those of the surrounding community, Saturday.
Vehicle training aid slated for students

Three 24-ton, 6X3-4 survey trucks are presently being stripped down in hopes of obtaining a complete running vehicle that will be used as a training aid for the Force Troop Drivers School.

According to Maj. Kenneth M. Bus, Force Troop Support Office, the trucks, Jan. 27, 2992, are being converted to test targets. All four trucks and a small tractor will be converted to targets. The three Marines, Mark Ruiz, McKey and Rivera, are now working on the various firing ranges, and the trucks are being converted to targets.

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WHAT I’VE LEARNED

Interviewed and photographed by Cpl. Medina Ayala-Lo

FLORES was the recipient of the 2016 Innovation Challenge for the creation of his multi-purpose cable unit. He is currently working on innovating new, more efficient technologies.

I’m from Soldotna, Alaska. It’s more rural, there were maybe 5,000 people from the hometown.

I grew up with a relatively normal rural family. I have an older brother, a younger brother and then my parents. We were a pretty close family. My dad owns a fishing business in Alaska, so we helped out with the business a lot.

My dad told me that when I was younger he didn’t want me to go to college, but he needed to do something to support the family. It’s something that’s important to me.

The camaraderie and the patriotism is what drew me in to the military. I was young, I was in high school when Opha Mae Johnson joined and my grandfather was an engineer in Germany. Then my grandfather on my mom’s side was in the Army over in Korea.

We weren’t super pushed toward military service. My parents just wanted to make sure that we had a plan. My mom always wanted one of us to go to college and be a doctor or律师 or something big, but that’s not really what we wanted to do.

I always had an interest in joining the military, but my brother influenced me to join Marines. I wasn’t ready for college, but I needed to do something so I joined the military.

The coolest thing we ever built in high school was a dune buggy. We used the engine from a Volkswagen Bug and we built one out of a road frame and it could be wheeled. It had seven seats on it, there were two seats in the front, two seats on the side above each wheel and then three seats in the back. The thing looked crazy. In the corner you had a little lever, and those three seats went on a shelf bar, so if all these people’s weight kicked back, you would see the entire thing up on a wheelie.

I love fishing, hunting and any thing outdoors. I love being outside; it’s the warrior mentality, you don’t have to build a certain thing. With metal working and electronics you don’t have to build a certain thing. You can shape what you want to and explore, a little bit more.

I grew up with a sense of pride. I think it instills a sense of pride. You’re going out for your own food, knowing where it’s coming from and having the knowledge of if you put your mind to it you’ll get it.

I love fishing, hunting and any thing outdoors. I love being outside; it’s the warrior mentality, you don’t have to build a certain thing. With metal working and electronics you don’t have to build a certain thing. You can shape what you want to and explore, a little bit more.

I often get impatient when working with my MOS. I get to experiment with different things and that’s something I will make my MOS more efficient for as long as I can. I can come down to the FabLab and try some things out.

I look metal shop all four years of high school and then took the general electronics class. I liked the freedom to do what you wanted. With metal working and electronics you don’t have to build a certain thing. You can shape what you want to and explore, a little bit more.

I always wanted to make a more efficient process because the one we use takes almost a full day, and with the cable test box, it takes 15 minutes.

Growing up our parents were very supportive of us in every way. They told us to figure out what we want to do, they let us do it. They raised us with the mentality of if you put your mind to it you’ll get it.

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I always wanted to make a more efficient process because the one we use takes almost a full day, and with the cable test box, it takes 15 minutes.
Wood Hobby Shop holds new hours

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

Currently the Wood Hobby Shop hours are Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Starting April 12, they will operate under new hours. It will be open from Wednesday through Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

“It’s a hub for the Marine Corps,” said Robert Henry, Marine Corps Community Services, “It’s a place where you can think of anything you can do here.”

The projects made at the shop vary from simple plaques, awards and cutting boards to more complex woodworking designs such as tactical, wooden choice and bed frames.

Lucia A. Vanderzee, family readiness officer, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, “As far as a hobby, it helps you develop skills and it’s great to have something you can use to build your mind active during off hours.”

For more information about the Wood Hobby Shop, visit their website at 1542, contact (760) 365-7244.

Spouses From A1

Andrew Mauk, counter, improvised Explosive Device instruc.tor, Marine Corps Engineer School, teaches ITX for Spouses participants how to sweep for IEDs at Range 800 aboard the Combat Center, March 30.

“Since I was stationed here I’ve made a bed frame, two nightstands and a wood desk,” said Lt. Kyle Repetti, plans, programs, and communication-Electronics officer. “It’s definitely a good hobby and a way to help out in your community. 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 at the shop than to buy. It’s a healthy alternative to smoking,” said Yvonne Siller, participant. “I enjoy woodworking, especially for new spouses of those new military.”

The ITX for Spouses program is planning another event in the fall. Anyone interested in participating can call Nicole Horta at (760) 830-1696 for more information.

Tobacco From A1

The Desert Trail

The Naval Hospital offers free tobacco cessation products aboard installations will be similar to the final prices of some items at civilian retailers, which will encourage service members from partaking tobacco products. “We are one of the leading causes negatively affecting combat readiness,” said Martha Hunt, health promotion officer. “A lot of our service members are using tobacco products. Our goal is to help Marines get off tobacco and make sure they are healthier and in better shape.”

The Naval Hospital offers free tobacco cessation tools including nicotine patches, gum and lozenges. For more information call: (760) 851-2424, 1-800-NL-QUIT-NO or visit www.nhsmc.org.

For more information, call Barbara Harris, counter, (760) 365-6220, or visit www.med.navy.mil. The DoD tobacco policy requires that prices in the United States, including territories and possessions, for tobacco products affecting combat readiness,” said Martha Hunt, health promotion officer.

“Overall, I’ve had a lot of fun and really enjoyed learning a lot of information,” said Melvin Harris, counter, HED instructor, Marine Corps Engineer School.

“Not only do we teach the participants at the shop to build their own projects, but it helps the Marine Corps and improves the whole family dynamic.”

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Fingers Crossed

Adam Camp, operations officer and tour manager, Government and External Affairs (G-5), escorts ITX for Spouses participants through Range 220 aboard the Combat Center, March 30.
Capt. Zachary Weisenfelds, left, officer in charge, Fabrication Laboratory, explains the capabilities of the FabLab to Maj. Gen. Daniel O’Donohue, Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, during a visit to the Combat Center, March 29. The newly established FabLab is the first of its kind in the Marine Corps and will provide Marines and sailors the opportunity to develop avant-garde solutions to common problems through utilizing 3D printing technology.

1st MarDiv CG visits Combat Center

Maj. Gen. Daniel O’Donohue, Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, viewed the innovative capabilities of the Combat Center’s Fabrication Laboratory during a visit to the base, March 29.

The newly-established FabLab is the first of its kind in the Marine Corps and will provide Marines and sailors the opportunity to develop avant-garde solutions to common problems through utilizing 3D printing technology.

“The fire circuit tester we currently have is an inauspicious light bulb and it tells you how many volts are actually going through the firing pin,” Murray said. “I wanted to improve something that was already working, so I invented a functional fire circuit tester.”

Once the doors officially open, the laboratory will be open to everyone who is affiliated with the Department of Defense on a first-come, first-served basis. I think having a central location where people can come and learn is going to be really helpful. I think having a central location where people can come and learn is going to be really helpful. I think having a central location where people can come and learn is going to be really helpful.

Capt. Robert Murray, tank commander, Bravo Co., 1st Tank Battalion, who was also introduced to the ShopBot CNC router. He said he would like to eventually get a laser cutter and a 3D printing machine, which he feels will provide the greatest return on investment.

“While the doors are open to every rank, I think having a central location where people can come and learn is going to be really helpful. I think having a central location where people can come and learn is going to be really helpful. I think having a central location where people can come and learn is going to be really helpful.

Zachary Weisenfelds, officer in charge, FabLab, said, “It’s pretty cool to have a laser cutter and a 3D printing machine, which I feel will provide the greatest return on investment.

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O’Donohue was briefed on the various capabilities of the FabLab to include 3D printing machines, a laser cutter and a ShopBot CNC router. He was also introduced to Capt. Robert Murray, tank commander, Bravo Co., 1st Tank Battalion, who invented a functional fire circuit tester.

“The fire circuit tester we currently have is an inauspicious light bulb and it tells you how many volts are actually going through the firing pin,” Murray said. “I wanted to improve something that was already working, so I invented a functional fire circuit tester.”

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Would you like to know more about the fabulous resources available to those who are interested in the Marine Corps? If so, be sure to visit the official MCAGCC Facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter

For the Marine Corps, in the long run, it’s going to save times, money and produce innovative solutions.

I just hope that after seeing the FabLab up and running that it expands to installations throughout the Corps.”
Contest Rules: Entries must be colored 100% by the child entering the picture, any coloring medium is accepted as well as embellishments (cotton, glitter, buttons, ribbon, etc.) and all pictures must be turned in by 5pm Wednesday April 12th, 2017.

Winners will be notified Thursday, April 13th, 2017 before Easter Sunday. Please make sure that your child’s age, name & # are legible. 1st place winners in each age group will each receive an Easter surprise.

Entries can be mailed in or dropped off at Hi Desert Star or the Desert Trail office.
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STORY AND PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. DAVE FLORES

The Combat Center’s Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs division completed its second release of juvenile desert tortoises from the Tortoise Research and Captive Rearing Site March 14 through 17, 2017.

Biologists with the head start program, an initiative implemented by NREA in 2006 in partnership with University of California, Los Angeles, released 50 tortoises, who were hatched at the facility approximately nine years earlier, into the Sandhill non-fire training area. The release of these tortoises is in no connection to desert tortoise manipulation, or the tortoises that will serve as a mitigation effort in support of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014, and is slated to take place at a later time.

TRACRS’ first release of 35 large juveniles occurred in September 2015. The tortoises released in 2015 have maintained a survival rate, which is 10 percent higher than the average survival rate of tortoises raised indoors. Biologists closely monitor each animal via Global Positioning System tracking after their release. The Combat Center established the program to assess how to protect native, hatchling and juvenile tortoises until they grow resilient enough to endure the harsh physical environment, better fend off predators, find food plants and vegetation in their enclosures. In March, 50 juvenile tortoises were released.

Mary Lane Poe, biologist, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs, feeds the juvenile tortoises too young to be released at the enclosures at the Headstart facility at the Tortoise Research and Captive Rearing Site aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif. April 5, 2017. TRACRS released 50 juvenile tortoises in March. The program was designed to find effective ways to increase the population of the tortoises on and around the installation as well as to solve potential problems that wild tortoises face today.

Thelma and Louise, a pair of captive female desert tortoises who live at the Tortoise Research and Captive Rearing Site and serve as ambassadors for educational programs conducted by Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs, munch on escarole in their enclosures at the head start facility aboard the Combat Center, April 5. Wild tortoises being released here are raised in a salt facility monitoring and protecting the remaining 390 juveniles until the remaining 390 tortoises have grown large enough to fend off predators and can be released into the wild.

“The primary factor here is that the TRACRS tagging and tracking tags out nearly all predators that would kill and consume eggs, hatchlings and small juveniles,” said Dr. Ken Nagy, research professor, UCLA. “Secondly, TRACRS is monitoring when necessary so that a natural rainfall regimen typical of a ‘good rainfall’ year during every year, so that food plants are available every year, on a regular seasonal schedule.”

Once the juveniles are released, they are tracked and monitored weekly via transmitted signals using directional antennas and receivers until they retreat underground for their winter dormancy period. Tracking continues during those months and picks up more frequently once the tortoises become active above ground in the warmer months.

Nagy said the monitoring of tortoises can continue for the threatened Desert Tortoise species.

The Easter Bunny is Coming! - CALL FOR TEA TIME TODAY!

LANCE CPL. DAVE FLORES

Mary Lane Poe, biologist, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs, feeds the juvenile tortoises too young to be released at the enclosures at the Headstart facility at the Tortoise Research and Captive Rearing Site aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif., April 5, 2017. TRACRS released 50 juvenile tortoises in March. The program was designed to find effective ways to increase the population of the tortoises on and around the installation as well as to solve potential problems that wild tortoises face today.

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S Selflessness is embodied when one is more concerned with the happiness of others than with their own. An act of self-lessness can be as simple as holding the door for a stranger or as heroic as facing danger to protect another. Jessica Rudd, a Marine veteran, wife, mother and the wife of a marine, exemplifies selflessness in all that she does.

Jessica, one of the Corps’ best, is an active-duty Marine and the wife of 1st Lt. Andrew Rudd, executive officer to the 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment. She is also the wife of a Marine and the wife of a military service member. Jessica was chosen as the 2017 MSOY for her dedication to helping improve the quality of life of military members and their spouses.

Humble beginnings
Raised in the mid-western city of Columbus, Ohio, by her devout mother and father, Jessica developed a sense of duty and leadership from an early age. “I come from a Christian family, and I’m the third of five,” Jessica said. “I think that’s always kind of instilled in me, leadership and responsibility because there have always been younger kids looking up to me in the family.”

For Jessica, being a leader is not about the recognition she receives or the number of people who recognize her. Whether it’s in the civilian or the military lifestyle, Jessica has always felt natural part of her life. “Whether it’s in the civilian or the military, whatever it is, she has always been younger kids looking up to me in the family.”

“Trying to help people and love and have the concern for other people is something that I’ve always been interested in,” Jessica said.

Marine Corps roots
Following her graduation from high school, Jessica went on to college with the mindset of becoming a Marine, to become the first in her family to graduate, to make her parents proud. She went on to attend the University of Cincinnati, and the Marine Corps Camp Lejeune.

“Being around her has taught me so much about what the Marine Corps lifestyle entails which is ultimately inspired her to join,” said Aubrey Rudd, 7 years old, daughter of Jessica Rudd.

“The thing I liked most about the Marine Corps was the challenge,” Aubrey said. “If I do something, I go all in and I knew from the beginning that if I was going to do anything serious I needed to interact with our military and security and I was going to be there and the American people think in the best.”

One of our deployment, one of our promotions promotion and four years of honorable service, Jessica com- pleted her tour of active duty, ready to navigate the world that now offered itself to her.

Continuing to serve
Having been on both sides of the coin, Jessica was accustomed to moving from installation to installation. Once she found herself and her family around the Combat Center, Jessica knew that she wanted to remain involved in the community and that something that impacted her family. She called him one day and told him that she was going to start a non-profit organization, and that he should be involved. Right away, they contacted the family readiness officer for her husband’s unit and began to work together.

“Mrs. Rudd has been involved with the unit for three years,” said Gunnery Sgt. Aaron Cottman, FRO, 1-11. “She was one of the very first people to interact with, to let me know what goes on with the FRO’s program when I was taking over. She is my go-to person for just about anything.”

According to Cottman, Jessica is extremely active in her support for military families. Because of the negative stigma that is sometimes attached to being married to the Combat Center, she makes a point of welcoming new spouses and remaining involved in the unit’s community.

Jessica and her husband, along with her family and the rest of the Rudd family, have been active in their children’s education while remaining flexible to the demands of a military lifestyle. “One thing we enjoy about homeschooling is that we have the fluidity to say what is being taught and how it is being taught,” Jessica said. “We have a flexible environment for the kids because it’s a better kind of school system to work around with our not very mobile career of being in the military.”

Jessica Rudd, Armed Forces Insurance Marine Spouse of the Year 2017 presented by Military Spouse Magazine, shows a photo of herself and her younger sister, Molly. 10 months old, at their home in Yucca Valley, Calif., March 29.

Aubrey Rudd, 7 years old, daughter of Jessica Rudd. Armed Forces Insurance Marine Spouse of the Year 2017 presented by Military Spouse Magazine, holds a box of toys for the Rudd’s daughter Aubrey. 7 years old, at their home in Yucca Valley, Calif., March 29.

The Corps’ best
According to “Military Spouse Magazine”, more than a million military spouses support and maintain the home front for the vast majority of service members. Ms. Rudd exemplifies this role in her determination to help the Corps’ best.

According to Cottman, Jessica is extremely active in her support for military families. Because of the negative stigma that is sometimes attached to being married to the Combat Center, she makes a point of welcoming new spouses and remaining involved in the unit’s community.

Jessica is a military kid, and anyone who has lived in a military environment will attest to the fact that Jessica Rudd embodies the spirit of a Marine. From her preparation for boot camp to her preparation for a deployment, Jessica has always remained involved in the Marine Corps and is a result in no small part to the desire and commitment she has had to come to mean so much to her. But this time, she was looking to give back.”

“Jessica is an advocate for home-schooling resources within the local community. ‘I’m on the board for local home school groups,’ Jessica said. ‘I am very passionate about home schooling resources, different groups and trying to streamline different resources for military children.’”

Jessica Rudd, Armed Forces Insurance Marine Spouse of the Year 2017 presented by Military Spouse Magazine, holds a box of toys for her newly-be- born daughter Aubrey. 7 years old, at their home in Yucca Valley, Calif., March 29.

Aubrey Rudd, 7 years old, daughter of Jessica Rudd. Armed Forces Insurance Marine Spouse of the Year 2017 presented by Military Spouse Magazine, holds a box of toys for her newly-born daughter Aubrey. 7 years old, at their home in Yucca Valley, Calif., March 29.

Aubrey Rudd, 7 years old, daughter of Jessica Rudd. Armed Forces Insurance Marine Spouse of the Year 2017 presented by Military Spouse Magazine, shows a photo of herself and her younger sister, Molly. 10 months old, at their home in Yucca Valley, Calif., March 29.

Aubrey Rudd, 7 years old, daughter of Jessica Rudd. Armed Forces Insurance Marine Spouse of the Year 2017 presented by Military Spouse Magazine, shows a photo of herself and her younger sister, Molly. 10 months old, at their home in Yucca Valley, Calif., March 29.
During each week in April, the G-7 Mission Assurance Center. During each week in April, the G-7 Mission Assurance Center. During each week in April, the G-7 Mission Assurance Center. During each week in April, the G-7 Mission Assurance Center.
EARTH DAY EXTRAVAGANZA

DANMARK PROPERTY (LONG CANYON PEAK, YUCCA VALLEY)
APRIL 22, 2017 FROM 9AM – 12PM
CHECK-IN BEGINS AT 8:15

Citizens and active duty of all ranks are invited to participate in a clean up as we celebrate Earth Day. A box lunch will be provided following the clean up. Volunteers are not required to stay the entire 4 hours. Please sign up with the ASYMCA (building 192) before April 21st.

For more information please call Yaseida at (760) 830-7481.

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