

#### May 12, 2017

www.29palms.marines.mil

LANCE CPL. BECKY CALHOUN

An AH-1Z Viper with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 469, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, participates in a command and control exercise during Integrated Training Exercise 3-17 at the Strategic Expeditionary Landing Field, aboard the Combat Center, Sunday. ITX is a combined-arms exercise enabling the different sections of an air combat element the opportunity to combine and demonstrate their capabilities in conjunction with the other elements of a Marine air-ground task force.

# Signature training commences

Landing Field, aboard the Combat Center, Sunday.

Integrated Training Exercise 3-17 began aboard the Combat Center May 2, 2017 and will continue until June 2, 2017.

The 28-day exercise is currently the longest-lasting training evolution that occurs aboard the installation and involves a series of progressive live-fire exer-



rine Aircraft Wing, participate in a command and control exer-

cise during Integrated Training Exercise 3-17 at the Strategic Expeditionary

# PMO hosts community safety forum

Vol. 61 Issue 18

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. CONNOR HANCOCK

In an effort to address residents' concerns about crime aboard the installation, the Combat Center's Provost Marshal's Office hosted a forum to discuss safety and crime prevention with Combat Center residents at the Adobe District Clubhouse, Tuesday.

During the meeting, Maj. Daniel Lammers, Combat Center Provost Marshal, and PMO staff discussed crime statistics, prevention, and how residents can make a difference in their community.

"It's important for residents to take basic precautions to protect themselves," Lammers said. "We are on base, but thieves can still be prevalent."

According to Lammers, approximately 77 percent of larceny cases involved unsecured property.

If residents see something out of the ordinary, they're encouraged to call PMO's non-emergency line at (760) 830-6800.

"It's the best way for us to get the information so we can document it and take action," Lammers said. "If we see a lot of suspicious activity in one area, it allows us to focus in on where we want our patrol units, so we can observe what's going on."

During the forum, community members were also able to ask specific questions regarding PMO's standard procedures and recommend ideas, including increasing foot patrols in neighborhoods.

"It's important to have a discussion with the community so they understand that they do have ownership of what goes on," Lammers said. "As law enforcement, we support the community and work together as a team to ensure we have a safe community."

For more information about PMO and crime fighting resources, visit 29palms.marines.mil/Staff/G7-Mission-Assurance/Provost-Marshal/.



cises that assess the ability and adaptability of a force of more than 3,500 Marines and sailors.

The goal of ITX is to ensure units are capable of operating as an integrated MAGTF. For Marines, this means learning to work in conjunction with the other components that compose a MAGTF. This includes the Ground Combat Element, the Aviation Combat Element, the Logistics Combat Element and the Command Element.

LANCE CPL. BECKY CALHOUN Marines with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 469. 3rd Ma-

Maj. Daniel Lammers, Combat Center Provost Marshal, speaks with Combat Center residents during a safety forum at the Adobe District Clubhouse aboard the Combat Center, Tuesday.

## Officers' Spouses' Club awards fundraised grants

#### STORY BY CPL. DAVE FLORES

The Combat Center's Officers' Spouses' Club gave out more than \$55,000 dollars in grants and scholarships to their 2017 recipients at the home of Combat Center Commanding General, Brig. Gen. William F. Mullen III, May 4.

Members of OSC awarded \$22,000 in grants to local community organizations and \$36,000 in scholarships to 18 recipients. Funds were raised this past year, generated by many different fundraising events coordinated by OSC.

"This year we raised about \$16,000 at the gala [at Smith

See Officers' Spouses' Club A6



KURT SCHAUPPNER The Desert Trail

Sam Eggers, left, a Twentynine Palms High School student who plans to attend Cal Poly, receives a scholarship certificate from Tracy Gilchrist, scholarships chairwoman, Officers' Spouses' Club, May 4.

# **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. Clare Shaffer.



U.S. Marines with 1st Marine Raider Battalion, Marine Raider Regiment, Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, await departure during final exercise (FINEX) two as part of Weapons and Tactics Instructors Course (WTI) 2-17, near Yuma, Ariz., April 27. This exercise was designed to execute a simulated special operating forces raid while simultaneously supporting regimental combat team objectives and focusing on conducting all six functions of Marine Aviation. WTI was a seven-week training event hosted by Marine Aviation and Weapons and Tactics One (MAWTS-1) cadre, which emphasizes operational integration of the six functions of Marine Corps aviation in support of a Marine Air Ground Task Force and provides standardized advanced tactical training and certification of unit instructor qualifications to support Marine Aviation Training and Readiness and assists in developing and employing aviation weapons and tactics.

# **MCAGCC TO CONDUCT ACTIVE SHOOTER EXERCISE**

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. - The Combat Center will conduct an active shooter exercise aboard the installation from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., May 16. The full-scale exercise will evaluate the installation's emergency operations plans, policies and procedures as well as first-responders' capability and capacity to operate in coordination with multi-jurisdictional agencies.

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## **To Nameless Mothers**

©1984 Estell E. Torgerson Twentynine Palms, California

I do not know you; I seldom know your son, but I recognize him by his youth and Marine-cropped hair. I see him at church, at the bank, with a buddy at the market buying milk; at the laundromat, packing clean wash into a duffel; crossing a street. You wonder what he is doing, and I know.

Sometimes he appears a bit tired or alone; more often, he is bright and good-natured, enjoying his friends. His carriage suggests assurance that belies his boyish countenance, and I suspect he is more grown-up than you remember. Briefly, I look upon him with your mother-love and wish him well.

Far away, you will see my son; you may not know him, but you will recognize him by his youth and Army-cropped hair. I will wonder what he is doing, and you will know. Look upon him with my mother-love and wish him well.

Medium

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Last week's answers

Visit the official MCAGCC Facebook page www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter

#### **OBSERVATION POST**

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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

MARTIN ENJOYS THE WORK OF MUSICIAN MARILYN MANSON AND HOPES TO CREATE MUSIC OF HIS OWN SOMEDAY.

Kenneth Austin, Texas Lance corporal, food service specialist, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion

**>Growing up** it was just me and my sister. We were born only 14 months apart which made us really close.

ARTIN

>I was born in Los Angeles, [Calif.] but we moved around a lot. I lived in Fort Worth, [Texas], California, and South Carolina before we finally settled in Austin, [Texas] when I was 12.

>I come from a military background on my father's side of the family. My dad was in the Navy, my aunt was a Marine, and my grandpa was in the Army. Growing up, military service wasn't something that was necessarily engrained in me but I was always aware of it.

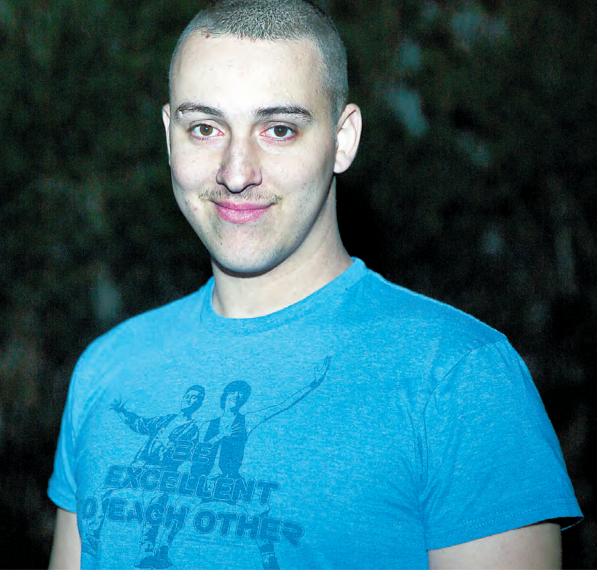
>It was the summer before my senior year in high school and I got a phone call from a Marine Corps recruiter. At the time the recruiter called I wasn't doing so well in high school and I had no plans to go to college. I found out later that my dad went on the website and filled out the application. Even though he was the one who provided my information, he wasn't expecting me to join. My mom didn't know what to say; she didn't want me to leave her. We're pretty close.

>My favorite part about being in the Marine **Corps** is the friendship. It's like living in the same neighborhood with everyone you go to high school with. You go to work with them, you go home and it's like, "hey, they're your neighbor", so the friendship continues. Also just knowing that everyone is facing the same hardships as you helps to reinforce those bonds because you all have each other's backs.

>When I was younger, I was the kid who was just different from everyone else. I was rebellious from the stand-point of societal norms. I listened to a lot of music that wasn't mainstream, like classic rock and hard rock.

>One of my favorite artists is Marilyn Manson. He's different and not afraid to let people know. His music is about expressing his opinion and basically just being yourself.

>Music and the culinary arts interest me. I'd >l've always liked cooking even before the



like to write music of my own someday. I used to write short stories. I liked being able to write whatever I wanted. I would mostly write fantasy; they kind of just popped into my head.

>I think the hardest part of writing, for me, is the introduction because I want to draw people in, but once I get past that I'm on a roll.

Marine Corps. I enjoy the presentation of the dishes and learning how to make new things.

>Always treat people with kindness. Whenever someone asks me for a favor, I think, "what if that person was God and he's just hanging around asking for favors?" I always try to be kind to people, no matter who they are. If I was in need, I would want someone to help me, so I try to help others.

# Date night!

Check out the Sunset Cinema movie schedule

Page B2 every week

### **Composting and Recycling Workshop**

Saturday, May 13 • 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Yucca Valley Senior Center

57088 Twentynine Palms Hwy (behind the library), Yucca Valley

The **FREE** workshop will discuss:

- **Backyard Composting**
- Vermicomposting (composting with worms)
- Grasscycling
- Recycling
- Becoming a Master Composter Volunteer

PALM SPRINGS **AERIAL** 

To sign up, or for more information,

call 951.265.8699 or e-mail MC\_Coordinator@dnbvisions.com. Seating is limited, so please RSVP.



The workshop is sponsored by The Town of Yucca Valley, The City of Twentynine Palms, the County of San Bernardino and the Mojave Desert & Mountain Recycling Authority

For more info, visit www.urecycle.org, or call 1-888-URECYCLE.

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Showtimes Effective 5/12/17 - 5/18/17 Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2 (PG13) 2D 12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00 3D 12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30 King Arthur: Legend Of The Sword (PG13) 2D 12:00 6:00 3D 3:00 9:00 Snatched (R) 12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00 1 (760) 365-9633 ww.cinema6theatre.com

c**inema 6** 

# Celebrating mothers

The word mother has many meanings. She can be the woman who birthed you, or the one who took you in and loved you like her own. May 14th is Mother's Day, and a time to let her know just how much she is loved and appreciated. This year, members of the Public Affairs Office took time out to reflect on their appreciation for the mothers in their lives.

# My thank you on Mother's Day

#### BY CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Growing up, my brother and I did not see my mother every day because my parents divorced when I was about 2 years old. I saw my mom most weekends and we did all we could to enjoy the time we spent together. I'm grateful for all the times my mom listened to me complain and gave me advice through some of the hardest times in my life. There were many times mom would stay up late with me playing games, watch movies or, in the worst cases take care of me when I was sick.





However, I had more than one motherly figure growing up. My father got remarried and my step-mother has done a lot for me in the time that she has been with us. There were plenty of times where she was one of the driving forces pushing me to do my best. I'm grateful for all the times that I was struggling with school or life and she was one of the few people that I felt I could go to when I felt beaten down. She has been there for me through some of my worst moments as well as my best.

Saying thank you is not nearly enough for everything that the two of you have done for me throughout my life.



## Mothers, the shoulders we stand on

#### BY CPL. DAVE FLORES

From the day that I came into this world, my mom always looked out for me. She believed that I could achieve anything I set my mind to, no matter how difficult or random. She believed in me when I wanted to be an astronaut on Monday and still believed in me by Friday when I wanted to be a soccer player.

The support my mother showed me has made me the person I am today. I can only imagine the nights she put food on my plate by taking food off of hers. She always put on a smile every morning when I would rush in the room to sleep in bed with my parents. On every first day of school, she looked me in the eyes and told me that each year gets better than the last.

From college life, the military and even dating, I have always looked to my mom for advice. Though the conversations we have are less frequent, I still feel the same amount of love from her every day.

When I think about the success in my life, I owe it all to my mom. They say that mother's shoulders are the ones we step on as children to achieve our dreams. Even though my mom is 4'11, she helped me reach for the stars.



# A real-life hero

#### BY CPL, MEDINA AYALA-LO

My mother is one of the bravest people I know. She came into this world the third of seven children, raised on 103rd Street in Manhattan, at a time when crime and drugs ruled the streets of New York City.

The odds were stacked against her but despite her far from ideal circumstances, she persevered and made something of herself and went on to pass all of her best qualities to her twin daughters. She worked hard through school to become a lawyer and later a special needs teacher.

Standing at 5 feet 10 inches with locks that drape past her waist, she will always be my hero. She's not the hero from the comic books, who wears a cape and can do no wrong. She is the one with flaws and fears. The one who makes mistakes but is better for it.

She taught me the necessity of a good education, the value in being kind to others and to always speak my mind

regardless of popular opinion. She always told me when I was wrong, let me slip when I came up short but never let me fall.

My mother taught me that the world is my oyster and that there is nothing I can't achieve if I put my mind to it, and I believed her. It is because she believed in me that I believe in myself. While I still have a ways to go, I wouldn't be who I am today without her.



# on their special day



## Dear Mom ...

#### BY LANCE CPL. NATALIA CUEVAS

Many people have trouble expressing their feelings; it's even harder when trying to tell your mom how much you love her. I send my mom flowers on Mother's Day, my sister makes her breakfast in bed, my brother buys her gifts and my 7-year old cousin hand makes a pink Mother's Day card for his mother.

No matter what is said or done, it will always feel like it's not enough. I could give her the entire world and it would never be enough.

What we feel for our moms is unconditional love that can't be properly expressed with words but we can try. We take them out for expensive dinners or clean the entire house for her, and yet it's still not enough. I have seen many different ways people celebrate mother's day, some are extravagant and some are simple, but each time no matter how much time or money we spent on gifts, my mom always has the biggest smile and sheds the happiest tears. The fact that we take time to express our love and appreciation means the world to her.

When I think about what "mom" means I think about coming home from a particularly stressful day at school to a homemade dinner. I think about being accepted for who I am. I think about my best friend.

My mom showed me how to respect others, be fair, be strong, and to love. I am who I am today because of my mom and I will always strive to be just like her.

# Mi Madre Linda

#### BY CPL. JULIO MCGRAW

Mother's day is a time to reflect on the one person who gave birth to you and raised you to be the person you are today. Unfortunately, I lost my birth mother and my father at a young age but by the mercy of who I call God, I was given a second chance and plenty of loving family members who stepped up to the plate to raise me through my formative years, leaving me blessed with more than one mother.

My birth mother, Violeta, loved me unconditionally and did what she could, based on our financial situation. She hiked mountains with me, a 12 pound baby, on her side to get to work as a school teacher in the Guatemalan country side. Sacrifice is an understatement to what that woman did to take care of me and my two siblings. Although she is no longer here, I know she is smiling down upon me. There is not a day that passes by that I don't miss her and wonder how proud she would be of me.

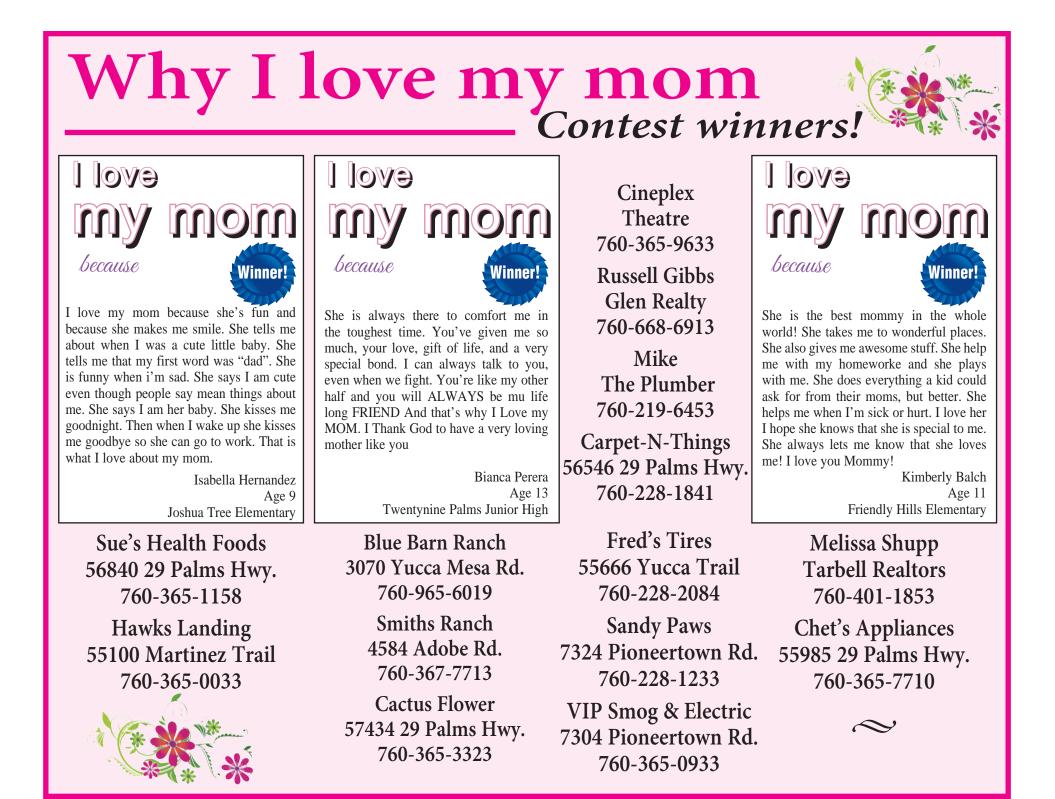
Four other women raised me after my mother passed away. The first was my grandmother Mama Concha. She took care of 15 people in our household ranging from two to 70-years-old, but still found time to take care of me and teach me to be a happy, loving and compassionate human being. That was a hard task in a poverty-stricken country where greed and selfishness were bad attributes that could be quickly learned. When my grandmother could not take care of me, my two aunts, Tia Gela (pronounced Hela) and Tia Gladys took time out of their busy lives sometimes travelling all day via bus to show me love and teach me right from wrong and how to be a resilient person physically and mentally.

I have had many mothers in my life, but the only person in this world that I have no qualms titling as such is my biological mother sister, Zoila. In the 1980's she immigrated to the United States and in 1999 when I was six-years- old, she adopted my brother and me. My aunt and uncle became my mom and dad and their selflessness to take care of two children, who were not their own, is a debt that can never be repaid.

My beautiful mother taught me to always work hard, stay humble and never forget where I came from. In a half-traditional Latin house hold and half-traditional American household, she never shied away from brutal honesty, yelling at me in Spanglish, and the occasional "valla baboso" when I screwed up, which translates to "That's what you get for being dumb."

I could sit here all day and rant about everything my mother taught me but in the words echoing Kevin Durant's NBA MVP speech, mom you're the real MVP. That amazing woman might not have been my birth mother but she gave me a second chance at life. She taught me, loved me and disciplined me as if I were her own child and in reality, I am. I will always be her Julito. I love you mama, happy Mother's Day y que Dios la bendiga.







Heart to Heart representatives accept a grant from Lisa Bargeron, left, Officers' Spouses' Club grant committee chairperson, May 4.

KURT SCHAUPPNER The Desert Trail

#### Officers' Spouses' Club From A1

Ranch Hall in February]," said Cherie Lewis, club president, OSC 29 Palms. "The money raised was supplemented by grant money from organizations such as American Friends of Our Armed Forces."

In addition to receiving monetary support from AFAF, a volunteer organization aimed at supporting service members, OSC raised money for the scholarships and grants via events held throughout the year and auctions conducted at their annual gala.

"We like to support organizations that support military families," Lewis added.

Organizations that received the grants were made eligible through the work they do to support Combat Center families. Local organizations, to include the city of Twentynine Palms, Little School of the Desert,





Melisa Vazquez, left, Twentynine Palms High School student, receives a scholarship certificate from Tracy Gilchrist, scholarships chairwoman, Officers' Spouses' Club, May 4. Vazquez plans to study clinical psychology at the university level after graduation.





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LANCE CPL. JUAN BUSTOS

U.S. Marines with III Marine Expeditionary Force, Alert Contingency Marine Air Ground Task Force (ACM) chain down equipment during an ACM drill at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, May 5. The ACM must be prepared to respond within 24 hours to crises throughout the Asian pacific region to mitigate crises, protect U.S. citizens, and territories, or counter threats to U.S. national interests as needed.



LANCE CPL. SEAN EVANS

A U.S. Marine applies camouflage paint to a Japanese local national during Fuji Friendship Festival at Camp Fuji, Japan, Saturday. The Fuji Friendship Festival is an annual event designed to enhance the strong relationships with the community, and gives community members an opportunity to view U.S. and Japan Ground Self Defense Force (JGSDF) military equipment and interact with U.S. and JGSDF personnel at Camp Fuji.





#### LANCE CPL. JACOB FARBO

CPL. JAMES GUILLORY

U.S. Navy F/A-18E Super Hornets from Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 115 and F/A-18F Super Hornets from VFA-102, with Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, conduct touch and go landings at Iwo To, Japan, formerly known as Iwo Jima, as part of field carrier landing practice, Monday.

A U.S. Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 265 conducts a level III flight demonstration during the 41st Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni Friendship Day at MCAS Iwakuni, Japan, May 5. Since 1973, MCAS Iwakuni has held a single-day air show designed to foster positive relationships and offer an elevating experience that displays the communal support between the U.S. and Japan. The air show also encompassed various U.S. and Japanese static aircraft displays, aerial performances and demonstrations, food and entertainment.



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Since 195

Vol. 61 B1



Learning about the

# Sphinx Moth's presence aboard the Combat Center

#### STORY BY LANCE CPL. NATALIA CUEVAS

rom the biggest Marines to the smallest insects, the Combat Center is home to many. All of the inhabitants, to include creatures like the Sphinx Moth, do their part for the installation. Since the beginning of Spring there have been many sightings of the insect in both its caterpillar and adult stages, leaving many to question its immense presence in the Hi-Desert. Unbeknownst to most, the moth is a large contributor to the Mojave Desert ecosystem.

"The Sphinx Moth's main job is to pollinate the flowers and be prey to predators," said Mary Lane Poe, biologist, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs. "The moth is a desert pollinator so a lot of plants would not survive with-

out them. They are also an important food source for a lot of the animals, particularly bats and small birds."

The Sphinx Moth, also known as the hummingbird moth, goes through four stages of development: egg, caterpillar, pupa or cocoon, and adult. Females can lay as many as 1,000 eggs on leaves. The eggs take two to three days to hatch into caterpillars and about eight weeks to become full grown caterpillars. After consuming as much fuel, or leaves, as possible the caterpillars will then go down into the ground to pupate or hibernate, as it metamorphoses from caterpillar to moth. The species can be found in many places around the globe, in hot and cold climates.

As caterpillars, they eat the leaves and stems of plants, their favorite being tomato and primrose plants. According to Poe, they eat so much that they would be able to wipe out an entire field of plants. A daunting premise to consider, however what they do in reality is greatly help the reproduction of local flora.

"If the Sphinx Moth disappeared the plant life would not have a way to pollinate and many would die out, there would also be a decline in the Sphinx Moths predator population," Poe said. "If we didn't have the moth then the ecosystem in and around our base, would be thrown off balance."

The Sphinx Moth primarily hides during the day and emerges at dusk or during the early morning hours. As adults, Sphinx Moths drink nectar from flowers. They go from flower to flower hovering over them and are often mistaken for hummingbirds which is from where it gets nickname. The moth can be found all over the base but they are mostly concentrated around plants. The moth's favorite plants are the big noticeable ones.

A common Sphinx Moth will go underground over winter as a pupa and hatch out in the early summer. In warmer or tropical regions, it takes only two to three weeks to hatch out of the

ground, which results in the production of multiple generation within a single year.

For more information on other local flora and fauna, visit www.nps. gov and select The Mojave Preserve or Joshua Tree National Park.



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For a map of the area or more information on Johnson Valley and the temporary closure, scan the QR code or visit our website: www.29palms.marines.mil/Staff/G5GovernmentandExternalAffairs/JohnsonValley



#### Sunsei Cinema

Friday, May 12 5:30 p.m.— The Boss Baby, PG 8:00 p.m.-The Fate of The Furious, **PG13** 11:00 p.m.— Ghost in the Shell, PG13

Saturday, May 13

8:00 p.m.-The Zookeeper's Wife, **PG13** 11:00 p.m.— Life, R

Sunday, May 14 12:00 p.m.— The Boss Baby, PG 3:00 p.m.— Smurfs: The Lost Village, PG 5:00 p.m.-The Zookeeper's Wife, **PG13** 8:00 p.m.-The Fate of The Furious, **PG13** 

Monday, May 15 6:30 p.m.— Going In Style, PG13

Tuesday - May 16 6:30 p.m.-The Zookeeper's Wife, **PG13** 

Wednesday, May 17 5:00 p.m.— Ghost in the Shell, PG13 7:00 p.m.-The Fate of The Furious, **PG13** 

Thursday, May 18 5:00 p.m.-Power Rangers, PG13 7:30 p.m.-Life, R

Friday, May 19 11:00 p.m.— Ghost in the Shell, PG13

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# Marine Corps tests AAV upgrades

#### STORY BY CPL. THOMAS MUDD

The Marine Corps tested an upgrade to the Assault Amphibious Vehicle aboard the Combat Center throughout the month of April.

Marine Corps Operational Test and Evaluation Activity Office conducted the testing through the AAV Reliability, Availability, Maintenance/Rebuild to Standard program which allows members of the military to fieldtest replacement parts and equipment. This enables the Marine Corps to remain prepared to respond to a wide range of potential adversarial challenges.

"We came out here to test an upgrade for the AAV by using it in an operational environment and with infantry integration," said Staff Sgt. David Billen, section leader, new equipment testing team, MCOTEA. "The test piloting gave us an idea of how the vehicles handle this terrain as well as gave the crew an opportunity to better understand the differences of the vehicles."

Infantry Marines from 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, rode in the upgraded vehicles which allowed for the vehicles to be tested with the same amount of weight and total personnel that would typically be utilized in an operation. The Marines who rode in the vehicles helped to determine its carrying capabilities compared to the older variant.

"The Marines went

up against an opposing force to best simulate a real operation," said Sgt. David Escudero, section lead, survivability upgrade assessment team, MCOTEA. "All the data that they collect while running these tests gives us the best idea about what to do with the vehicle in the future."

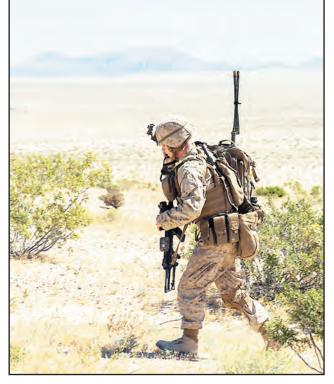
Throughout a 30-day trial period, the data the Marines from 2/4 and MCOTEA have been collecting will give the Marine Corps' leaders enough information to make future decisions on whether or not to use the upgrades.

The next step in the testing process will be conducted aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., and will test the AAV's amphibious capabilities.



CPL. THOMAS MUDD

Marines with 3rd Assault Amphibious Battalion prepare for a live fire exercise at Range 106 A aboard the Combat Center, May 4. Marine Corps Operational Test and Evaluation Activity Office conducted the exercise as part of operational testing used to compare an upgraded AAV to its old variant.



CPL. DAVE FLORES A Marine with 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment coordinates with his platoon as he advances to his objective in a movement to contact training exercise aboard the Combat Center, May 4.



Marines with 3rd Assault Amphibious Battalion in an assault amphibious vehicle and an M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank with 1st Tank Battalion provide security during a movement to contact exercise conducted aboard the Combat Center, May 4.



CPL. DAVE FLORES

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