



May 17, 2013

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS OBSERVATION POST

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Vol. 57 Issue 19

Marine makes mom, wife proud

David Vergun
Headquarters Marine Corps

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — “I don’t know what I’d do without my family. They’ve really been supportive of everything I do,” the 10-K hand-cycling racer said shortly after winning yesterday.

And in turn, Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Ronnie Jimenez, a wounded warrior and athlete at the 2013 Warrior Games at the U.S. Air Force Academy here, made his wife and mother proud and happy with his win. They said as much, cheering him on from the sidelines.

His time was 21:53, earning him the gold medal and motivating his Marine team.



DAVID VERGUN

Marine Staff Sgt. Ronnie Jimenez celebrates his 10K handcycling win at the 2013 Warrior Games with his wife, Patrice, shortly after crossing the finish line, May 13. His time was 21:53, earning him the gold medal and motivating his Marine team.

Taking the silver was Anthony Robinson from the Army team at 22.16, and the bronze went to Justin Gaertner, a Marine from the Special Operations team.

“This is the best Mother’s Day gift ever,” said his wife, Patrice, shortly after he crossed the finish line to the cheers of supporters. She added that their three children are equally excited with his win.

Jimenez suffered a spinal cord injury from a training accident and has post-traumatic stress disorder following multiple deployments to Haiti, Iraq and Afghanistan. The 14-year Marine veteran is currently in a Wounded Warrior detachment at Twentynine Palms, Calif., and is in the process of transitioning

See **GAMES** page A5

DOWN AND DIRTY



CPL. D. J. WU

[Top] Pfc. Dylan Murphy and Nicholas Reis, infantrymen, Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, spar during a Marine Corps Martial Arts Program session. The Marines practiced their grappling and their striking maneuvers.
[Above] Marines with 1/7 practice their MCMAP techniques at the MCMAP pit near the PFT course, Tuesday.



LANCE CPL. ALEJANDRO BEDOYA

Michael Hardin, owner of Hodad’s, a San Diego-based burger restaurant, spent the day at Littleton Chow Hall making burgers his way, Tuesday.

Hodad’s serves those who serve

Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
Combat Correspondent

Staff from Hodad’s restaurant, a burger joint based in Ocean City, Calif., and Combat Center food services fired up the grills at the Combat Center mess halls Tuesday. The staffs teamed up to serve burgers to Combat Center personnel for lunch and dinner.

They served lunch from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Littleton Mess Hall. They also served dinner from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Phelps Mess Hall.

“I have been the boss man of the restaurant since about 1984,” said Michael Hardin, owner of Hodad’s. “My employees make me look like a rockstar and when I get to bring my guys out

Coming out to see what the military really does on a day-to-day basis really opens my eyes.”

— Michael Hardin

to something like this, it is enormous. One of my biggest passions is to serve the people who serve our country.”

Hodad’s frequently travels to military bases to cook for service members. This is the second year Hodad’s has come aboard the Combat Center to serve. Combat Center personnel lined the mess hall eagerly anticipating the burgers known as the best on the West Coast.

Hodad’s burgers have been recognized by

See **SERVES** page A5



CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Caleb Barnhurst, 5, stepson of Petty Officer 1st Class Ray Wahl, psychiatrist technician, 7th Marine Regiment, plays with a watergun at the Combat Center’s Splash Park Wednesday.

DOD offers summer safety tips

Cpl. William J. Jackson
Combat Correspondent

The summer months are fast approaching. With that comes traveling, vacationing and a vast array of outdoor activities. The local area is also known for its close proximity to vacation and weekend hotspots like Las Vegas, San Diego, Los Angeles, Palm Springs and Joshua Tree.

Safety on the road is paramount and the Department of Defense is encouraging leaders to continue to hold their junior counterparts accountable.

“As you drive to and from vacation destinations, remember that 81 percent of the non-combat fatalities in 2012 took place over the summer,” said Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel in a press release. “Last summer, 80 service members died in motor vehicle collisions; 27 in 4-wheel vehicles, 47 while riding

motorcycles, four were pedestrians, and two were bicyclists. These fatalities occurred in spite of state laws and DoD policies requiring the use of seatbelts while in a car and protective gear while riding motorcycles and bicycles. An untold number of deaths resulted from fatigue - deaths preventable by proper trip planning and fatigue management while driving. All military leaders must emphasize how important it is for everyone in our DoD community to follow these simple precautions while traveling on our nation’s roads.”

To add to driving safety, the Combat Center is known for the seemingly unbearable heat during the summer. Temperatures will continue to rise while Marines and sailors continue to train in the harsh desert environment.

Virginia Korotenko, a recreational

See **SUMMER** page A5

Marine Corps celebrates Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month



COURTESY PHOTO

1st Lt. David Pham, executive officer, Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, will be featured in Marine Corps Recruiting Command’s Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month advertising campaign, “Warriors’ Education” scheduled to be released on May 8. Pham is one of two 2nd Marine Division officers to be featured in the campaign.

Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
Combat Correspondent

The United States is often referred to as the world’s melting pot. People from around the globe have come together in one nation, sharing customs and traditions. Among those who have impacted the United States are Asian-Pacific Americans.

Millions of men and women of Asian and Pacific-Islander descent have immigrated to the United States over the last 150 years. The month of May is when the nation recounts the ways Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have contributed to the growth and development of the United States.

According to Gunnery Sgt. Jesse Brown, the Combat Center’s equal opportunity advisor, Asian-Pacific Americans deserve recognition for the contributions they have made. They have made an impact economically and contributed patriotically within our military.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have fought in many of America’s major conflicts, and endured the same hardships as their fellow Americans.

“Embracing our cultural values in the military is a must for us,” said Brown. “It is one of the things that makes our military unique from others. The more brains we have contributing, the more ideas we will have to pursue.”

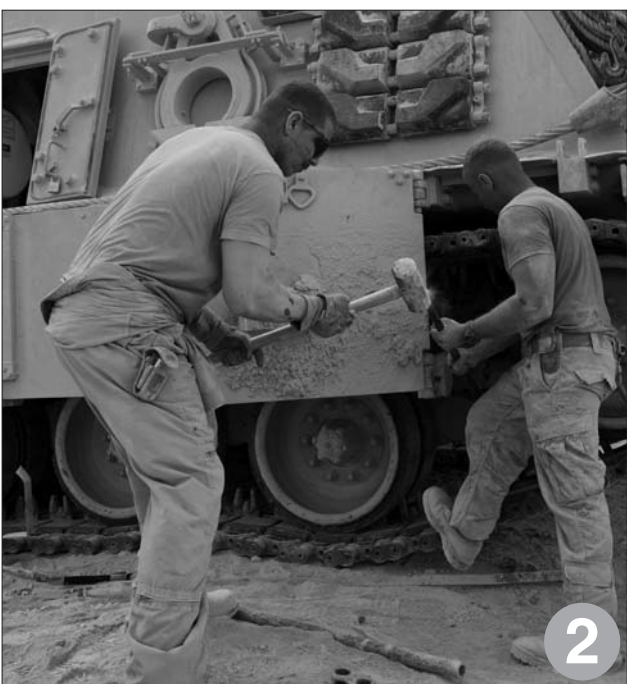
There have been many decorated Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the military. One of which is U.S. Army Col. Young-Oak Kim.

Kim was a highly-decorated combat veteran who fought in World War II and the Korean War. He served with 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and was a combat leader in Italy and France during World War II.

Kim spent half of his career as an engineer in the

See **HERITAGE** page A5

Faces in the Crowd



[1] Lance Cpl. Martin Cahill, right, ground guides Lance Cpl. Samuel Bagwell, Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, as he backs an M1A1 Abrams tank on Forward Operating Base Shir Ghazay, Helmand province, Afghanistan, May 7.

[2] Cpl. Anthony Address, left, and Sgt. Christopher Cannella, both tank mechanics from Milford, Conn., and Margate, Fla., respectively, both assigned to D Co., 1st Tanks, conduct routine maintenance on an M88A2 Hercules recovery vehicle.

[3] Sgt. Christopher Cannella, left, and Cpl. Wilmer Rivas, tank mechanics from Margate, Fla., and Lennox, Calif., respectively, both assigned to D Co., 1st Tanks, prepare a tank track while conducting maintenance on an M88A2 Hercules recovery vehicle.

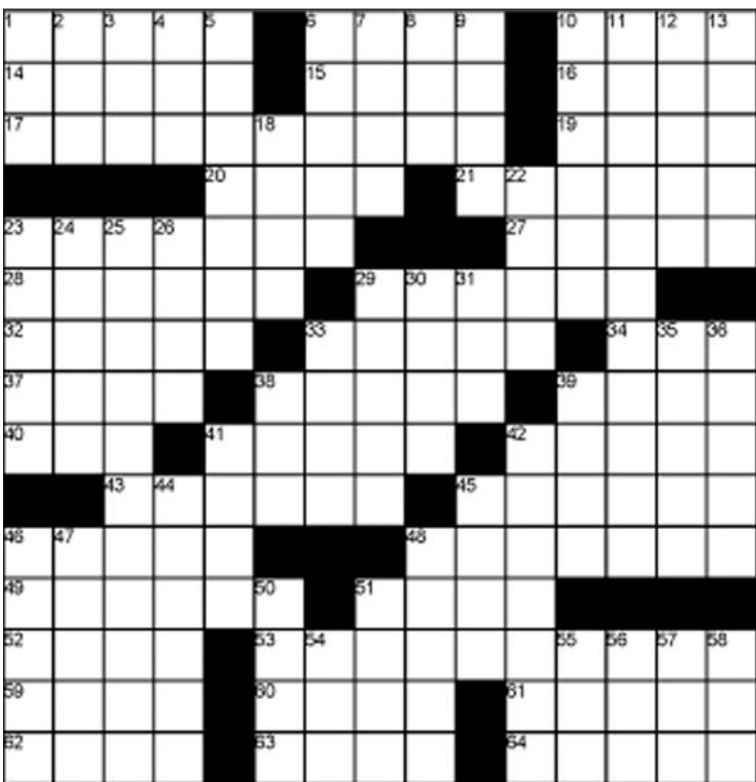
[4] Cpl. Wilmer Rivas is a tank mechanic from Lennox, Calif., assigned to D Co., 1st Tanks.



WATERY CONCLUSIONS

- ACROSS**
1. “Thou ___ not ...”
6. Invader of old Rome
10. Cyberjunk
14. “Look out ___!”
15. “Dancing Queen” pop group
16. “Beloved” writer Morrison
17. Turn-of-the-century decor
19. Safe havens
20. Zebras, to lions
21. Teensy
23. Part of a ship’s rigging
27. Stove feature
28. Goofs
29. Seles of tennis
32. Star’s rep
33. Fodder storers
34. Beatty of “Deliverance”
37. Talk back to
38. Bar fare
39. Lower-left phone button
40. Coast Guard officer below LTJG
41. Sweetie
42. Assault on Troy, e.g.
43. Puts up
45. Paintings on walls
46. Elks and Lions
48. Purse items
49. “Eh Cumpari” singer Julius

51. The middle-sized bear
52. Comics light bulb
53. French statesman nicknamed “Le Tigre”
59. Well-executed
60. Get jaded
61. Untagged?
62. Bearded beasts
63. Nostradamus, e.g.
64. On top of things
- DOWN**
1. Entrepreneur-aiding org.
2. Boating pronoun
3. ockpit datum: Abbr.
4. Actor Chaney
5. Divided in halves
6. Judge’s rapper
7. Do as directed
8. Pending, on a sched.
9. Fisherman’s take
10. Sign of bad reception
11. Blend of two words
12. Common sprain site
13. Silas Marner, e.g.
18. “The Hajj” author
22. Inflammatory suffix
23. Poke fun at
24. The Phantom’s instrument
25. Media news source
26. Princes, e.g.
29. Marathon’s 26+
30. Skin care brand



31. Nonverbal affirmation
33. Concrete ingredient
35. Sharp-eyed raptor
36. Vera Wang creation
38. Sun, personified
39. Knights’ titles
41. Greet the villain
42. Stephen Foster title girl
44. Maritime hazards in WWII
45. Silent performer
46. Hold tight
47. Burdened
48. Whip-cracker
50. Does something
51. “A ___ bagatelle!”
54. Fairway position
55. Moon jumper of rhyme
56. LAX posting
57. Tire filler
58. Beehive State native

See answers on page B6

SUDOKU 2907-M

	1		2		3	
	4		3	1	5	6
7		2	8	6		1
	7				6	8
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8			5	3	1	2
6	2		7	9		8
	5		4			6

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

In Oceanside:

- Angelo’s Kars, 222 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054
- Angelo’s Kars, 226 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054

In San Diego:

- Club Mustang, 2200 University Ave.
- Club San Diego, 3955 Fourth St.
- Get It On Shoppe, 3219 Mission Blvd.
- Main Street Motel, 3494 Main St.
- Vulcan Baths, 805 W. Cedar St.

In National City:

- Dream Crystal, 15366 Highland Ave.
- Sports Auto Sales, 1112 National City Blvd.

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

In Twentynine Palms:

- Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Rd.
- STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.
- K Smoke Shop, 5865A Adobe Rd.

In Yucca Valley:

- Yucca Tobacco Mart, 57602 29 Palms Hwy.
- Puff’s Tobacco Mart, 57063 29 Palms Hwy.

In Palm Springs:

- Village Pub, 266 S. Palm Canyon Dr.
- Whispering Palms Apts., 449 E. Arenas Rd.
- NYPD Pizza, 260-262 N. Palm Canyon Dr.

For the complete orders, but not off-limits, check out the Combat Center’s official website at <http://www.29palms.marines.mil>.

WHAT I’VE LEARNED



Juan

Houston, tank driver, 1st Tanks, 20

ISAIZ

> **I’m from Texas** and I’ve never been out to the West Coast. It is pretty awesome out here, I enjoy it. The desert reminds me of Mexico.

> **Twentynine Palms looks and feels** like where my family is from.

> **Even though there isn’t much** to do, at night you can look up and see all of the stars. In Houston, all you can see is city lights.

> **When I told my family** I wanted to join the Marine Corps, they just kind of looked at me and said, “Stop playing and go to college.”

PRIOR TO JOINING THE MARINE CORPS, ISAIZ WEIGHED 280 LBS. DURING HIS TIME IN THE DELAYED ENTRY PROGRAM, HE LOST MORE THAN 70 LBS.

> **It makes them proud because I actually** did something instead of staying home and bothering them every day.

> **When I decided to** join the Marine Corps, I wanted a job where I could get my hands dirty.

> **I didn’t choose tanks.** The contract I signed was combat support. There were many jobs I could get out of combat support and you can obviously tell by the name that they are all combat related.

> **I consider myself** lucky because I got tanks out of a contract where you have no idea what you’re going to be doing. All you know is that it is one out of a variety of different jobs and I feel like I got the best one.

> **I’m not the type of guy** that likes to work behind a desk. My ideal job was to be a chopper gunner but I ended up getting tanks.

> **When I found out I** got tanks I was very excited. I was anxious to work with such a beast of a machine.

> **The first time I got up** close to a tank I was in awe. I couldn’t believe I would be working with these tanks for at least the next four years of my life.

> **How can you not be excited** when you find out you’re going to be working with a machine that weighs 68 tons and is capable of reaching 60 miles per hour.

> **I was stuck in tank school** for awhile because we had too many Marines. While I was in holding, I got to do the driving simulator a good bit. It’s obviously not exactly like driving a tank but it gave me a taste of what was to come.

> **I noticed how big of a deal** camaraderie is right away. I am still in touch with buddies from tank school and I even work with some. The tank battalion is really small so even if you’re not in the same company, everybody kind of knows each other.

> **It feels pretty good to** know that if I stay in a long time, I’ll still be working with a lot of the same Marines I work with now.

> **It was pretty scary the first time** I drove a tank. I was very nervous, kind of the same way when you first drive a car. I was afraid I was going to mess up and hit something but if you hit something with this, you’re probably running straight over it.

> **I like driving a tank a lot,** it is very simple. Everything is labeled inside and if anything were to go wrong I would be the first to know.

> **Tank school is only** to make us trained as basic loaders and drivers. They try to put us through every job except tank commander at school.

> **Firing the main gun was** a rush. Seeing the round go down range is pretty crazy but I think I enjoy loading rounds more than actually firing them.

> **There is something about holding** a 120 millimeter round in my hands that gets my heart going. I think it is the fact that they are combustible and would explode if I were to drop it or hit anything.

> **When I was taking the** loaders test at school with fake rounds it was completely different. I would just try to get the main gun loaded as fast as possible. I would accidentally hit it against everything trying to load. You want to keep your firing time under seven seconds per round.

> **The first time I had to** load an actual round I was really worried. I just looked down at it and quickly realized, all of the lives of the crew were in my hands.

> **Being a loader is a hectic job** because you have to pay attention to the next command while handling a combustible round. You also have to be careful about your body placement after the round is loaded because once it is fired, the breach shoots back about a foot. If anyone gets in the way of that breach, or if it even clips their elbow, it will mess them up. On top of worrying about all of that, loaders are in charge of their own M240 Bravo machine gun and they are in charge of communications.

> **I don’t really have any plans** for my future in the Marine Corps. I am just taking it day by day and I will be a tanker until the day I don’t enjoy it anymore.

> **One day, I was driving** in tank school through the woods. It rained all that day and there was mud everywhere. There was a big puddle of mud on one of the routes we went on and every time someone went through it, it got deeper and deeper. I got cocky and drove as fast as I could through the mud and it went everywhere. It made it to where I couldn’t see anything so I kept going in the same direction and I ended up hitting a tree. The tank had a dent up but it knocked over the tree. I didn’t get in trouble because it was just an accident and apparently it happens all the time.

> **I have a lot of bruises** from tanks. Everything on a tank is hard. Just jumping onto the tank I bruise my knee or getting out of the driver’s seat I hit my head on the main gun.

> **There are a lot of guys** getting out in the company I’m in but they help me because I am the next guy to fill their shoes.

Interviewed by Lance Cpl. Alejandro Bedoya
April 26, 2013



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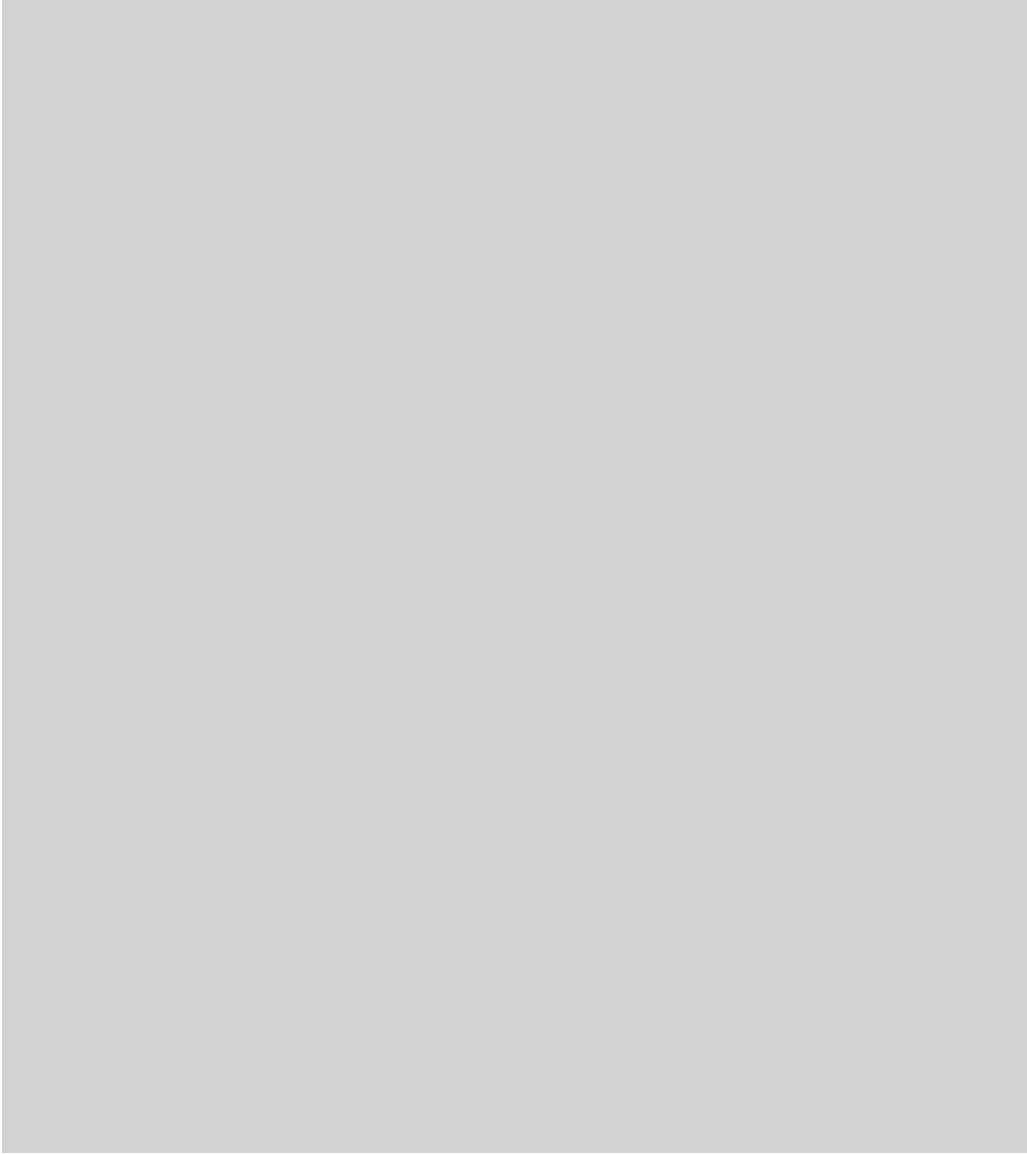
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Marines and sailors with Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, conduct egress training at the Combat Center's Battle Simulation Center to better prepare them for a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle rollover April 25.

Rollover training helps Marines, sailors stay safe

Story and photos by
Cpl. William J. Jackson

Marines and sailors with Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, recently conducted egress training at the Combat Center's Battle Simulation Center to better prepare them for a Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle rollover.

The MRAP Vehicle Egress Trainer is designed to familiarize Marines with being disoriented, upside down and give them the tools to egress out of the vehicle safely.

"What I'm looking for is not piling out of the doors," said 1st Lt. T.J. Hardy, executive officer, H&S Company, 3/7. "Once you exit that vehicle, I'm looking for initial accountability and assessment of everybody's medical status. After that, conduct perimeter security around the vehicle."

First, Marines are secured in the simulator wearing tactical gear, including Kevlar, flak jacket, knee pads and elbow pads. They were strapped into seat belts with their M16 A2 or M4 service rifles. The

release their seat belts while supporting their body weight and help fellow service members from their seats. The Marines continue to egress the vehicle and exit the sides, the rear, or the roof.

Hardy also told his Marines to stay alert and establish a base of fire in a perimeter position so the situation can be properly assessed.

"Last time I was here they assigned casualties for each vehicle," Lance Cpl. Edwin Gonzalez, armory custodian, H&S Company, 3/7. "The importance is definitely being ready for the worst case possible. It's just to prepare us and get us ready (for deployment)."

The proactive training helps bring awareness to the top-heavy nature of an MRAP. As the Cutting Edge Marines safely exited the overturned vehicle, they conducted five and 25-meter checks, looking for improvised explosive devices.

The Marines simultaneously set up a perimeter while helping simulated casualties and taking machine-gun fire.

The simulator requires physical and mental strength to break free from the restraints of seat belts, loose gear and other obstacles all while maintaining communication and getting passengers out safely, with-

out compromising security.

The training is a part of 3/7's predeployment preparation for their upcoming deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The MET training is unit-delegated and requires unit



Marines and sailors with Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment conducts egress training at the Combat Center's Battle Simulation Center to better prepare them for a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle rollover April 25.

operators to be at least the rank of sergeant. To learn more about operator qualifications or to schedule training call 830-4192.

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simulator spins, which disorients the crew and confuses them.

Once the simulated rollover stops, the crew must

GAMES, from A1

out of the Corps.

Jimenez said he has always loved sports and used to run ultra-distance events. Following his spinal cord injury, he added, doctors told him he'd never run again.

But he said a buddy, a Paralympian, encouraged him, with these words that inspired him to take on a new challenge: "You can do the same distance with your arms that you once did with your legs."

"And so I'm here," he said, adding that the Marine Corps has been very supportive of his recovery efforts.

His command lets him train in the hills of nearby Joshua Tree National Park. He also receives professional coaching help throughout the year. When he retires from the Corps, Jimenez said, he wants to cycle professionally and perhaps make the Paralympic team.

He said he will maintain contact with his fellow athletes, who are just like family, and that he will always remember the men and women he served with in the Corps.

Mary Ann, his mother, came to see him from Arizona and said her son makes her proud not only on Mother's Day, but every day.

As she wiped away tears of joy, she added: "He's just an awesome person. He'll give the shirt off his back to you if you need something. I'm also proud of all the Marines. They're all great.



LANCE CPL. COREY DABNEY

Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos and the Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Micheal P. Barrett, enjoy the company of Marines during the 2013 Warrior Games at the Air Force Academy.

SUMMER, from A1

assistant with the East Gym, says the number one thing to do is to stay hydrated when either working out or working in the sun. Wear lightweight, breathable clothing and be wary of black, which absorbs more sunlight.

"It's a big safety issue that Marines are aware of the heat that's coming," said Korotenko.

She also suggests training early in the morning, if possible. Wear sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat, which can reduce the temperature also.

"We all must do everything we can to be safer this summer," Hagel said. "Each of us must do our part to keep everyone around us safe off duty, as we do on duty. Fundamental military lessons of working together, exercising leadership, focusing on the mission, and having the courage to say no to a risky situation are all essential to enjoying the summer and returning to your units."



CPL. D. J. WU

Cole, 3, and his brother Jake, 5, sons of Capt. Chris Ashinhurst, company commander, Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, play at the Combat Center's Splash Park Wednesday.

Break for chow



CPL. ALEJANDRO PENA

EREDVI, HELMAND PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN - U.S. Marines assigned to the 42nd Battalion Georgian Liaison Team (GLT) 8, Regimental Combat Team 7, eat lunch while taking a break from daily operations on Combat Outpost Eredvi, Helmand province, Afghanistan, May 8, 2013. The Marines of the 42nd GLT-8 conducted a resupply and retrograde convoy to various outposts in their area of operation.

SERVES, from A1

CNN as one of the nation's top five burger joints. It was the only West Coast restaurant recognized. They were also recognized by the Travel Channel and the Food Network's Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives.

"My burgers have been the same since I started my position as the boss man of the restaurant," Hardin said. "I remember my parents would like to make smaller burgers and I would have to be sneaky and make big ones for my friends. They haven't changed ever since and we plan on serving great burgers like we always have."

The restaurant opened in 1969. The word 'Hodad' is a '60s term for a surfer who is always out on the beach. Their first location was on the beach at the end of Santa Monica Ave. in Ocean Beach. In 1991, after several moves, Hodad's opened at its present location on Ocean Beach's Newport Ave. In 2011, they opened their second location

HERITAGE, from A1

Army before being selected for the Army Infantry Officer Candidate School. He was then assigned to the U.S. 100th Infantry Battalion, a unit of mostly Japanese Americans from Hawaii. After serving as an infantry officer during World War II, Kim decided to leave the Army to start a self-service laundry facility. He was earning five times his salary as an Army captain at his new business but after the Korean War broke out, he decided to unselfishly leave the business behind and re-enter the ranks of the Army. Kim retired from the Army in 1972 after 30 years of service. He was awarded 19 medals including the Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars, three Purple Hearts, a Bronze Medal of Military Valor, a Légion d'honneur, a Croix de guerre, and the Korean Taeguk Cordon of the Order of Military Merit.

Colonel Young-Oak Kim is one of many Asian-Pacific Americans to make a difference in the United States. Whether it is the first Japanese immigrants setting foot on American soil in 1843 or Chinese immigrants putting the finishing touch on the of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, Asian- Pacific Americans make an impact on society.

at 10th & Broadway in downtown San Diego and in 2012 they opened a seasonal spot inside Petco Park for fans of the San Diego Padres.

According to Hardin, if he is not in one of the restaurants, he is out trying to make people happy by feeding them.

"Their burgers are off the hook and we are happy to have them here," said Eric Cameron, general manager, Littleton Mess Hall. "They give us a chance to step away from the rules and regulations of the mess halls and mix it up a little bit. Marines love when we add some extra flavor to the menu."

Hardin and the employees plan to continue serving service members around the nation and overseas.

"Coming out to see what the military really does on a day-to-day basis really opens my eyes," Hardin said. "After seeing what they go through I can really kiss the ground I live on and be fortunate for what I have. It is a huge reward for me to serve our military because saying thank you to our service members just isn't enough, it is an understatement."

A more present day Asian American decorated Marine is Staff Sgt. Ryan Lungerhausen. He was born in South Korea and enlisted in the Marine Corps in February of 2006. He finished his basic infantry training and his training with the advance infantry training battalion, a course that develops small unit leaders and advanced skills to empower Marines for service with the operating forces. He was then assigned to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment and served as a fire-team leader, training non-commissioned officers in combat operations. In 2007 he deployed to Fallujah, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He deployed again in 2009 with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit out of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. His personal decorations include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal. He currently serves as the staff non-commissioned officer in charge at recruiting substation Buford, Ga.

Throughout the nation's history, the Asian American and Pacific-Islander community continued to fight for the same rights the United States believes in.

"May is the month we can say thank you to this group of people," said Brown. "They deserve it."



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The Combat Center has its own Flickr photo and video streams. Find them at <http://www.flickr.com/thecombatcenter>.

LINKS helps families fit in

Cpl. William J. Jackson
Combat Correspondent

The military lifestyle integrates service members into a world of new customs, courtesies and acronyms. Some Marines and sailors may not consider the difficulty of incorporating their spouses and children into the military community.

However, the Lifestyles, Insight, Networking, Knowledge, Skills program helps guide families through the military lifestyle. The program gives families a look into the different aspects of life in the Marine Corps community, like how to read a leave and earning statement, the benefits and services aboard the Combat Center and moving entitlements.

The program began 16 years ago in Twentynine Palms as a way for spouses to mentor each other, and that guidance continues today. The volunteers have many backgrounds and levels of experience in the military lifestyle. The classes can also be held in Spanish to assist participants who may be more comfortable with that language.

“We are an introduction to the Marine Corps lifestyle,” said Amber Bilderain, L.I.N.K.S. program manager. “We teach Marine Corps history, tradition, rank structure, how to move and how to deal with deployment. It’s really just an intro to the whole lifestyle.”

Classes are held monthly and are open to Marines and sailors, their significant others and their children. A 40-person volunteer staff leads the light natured classes; some are even

military members or spouses themselves. During the classes, the group discusses how they fit into the community, resources for their family and the importance of taking positive steps in understanding the military life.

“What we do is provide a positive spin on how to make the most out of the life, how to make the most of Twentynine Palms and reasons to be proud of the military and the Marine Corps,” Bilderain said. “We like to instill a sense of pride in what our Marines do. Once you are proud of this lifestyle, it becomes a beautiful life; it’s definitely a great experience.

L.I.N.K.S. offers multiple programs for Marines, spouses, kids, teens, parents and couples. The volunteers often go out to individual units to spread information about the program’s capabilities.

“It’s a leadership tool,” Bilderain said. “If all of the information doesn’t pertain to you, it will pertain to one of your Marines. Whether you are single or married, as a young leader you can answer their questions when they need it.”

During a session, members and volunteers have the opportunity to meet other military couples, families and spouses.

“One way we define our success is if we go out after a session and we see two girls at lunch together the next day, it’s like victory,” Bilderain said. “For us it’s a very social program and it’s definitely an outlet for spouses. We provide childcare for our sessions and it’s a great way to get out.”

For more information on the L.I.N.K.S. program or to learn how to get involved, contact L.I.N.K.S. at 830-1696.



Gillian Mussleman, 7, daughter of Staff Sgt. Terrill Mussleman, operations chief, Battery K, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, watches friends race through a bouncy house during the L.I.N.K.S. CAX for Kids program April 25.



ADVENTURES BIKER DAVE

Story by D. J. Wu
Photos by Cpl. Ali Azimi

From golf, to SCUBA, and now motorcycles, I've always liked trying new things. I've wrestled with this decision for a long time. I think this is the way to expand my horizons and follow my dreams.



DJ Wu on the road^{*finally}

There's a mystique about motorcycles, a level of nonchalance and coolness that exudes from the rider and the bike. I think that's why most people like them. It looks cool, plain and simple.

I got my driver's license not too long ago. Toward the end of being 24 years old I finally decided it was time to get one. This is somewhat embarrassing, but keep in mind, I'm a city kid, who grew up in Boston. The most I ever needed to go was a few miles and if it was farther, I would take public transportation.

It was a little weird taking a test that a 16-year-old could take and pass in his sleep, but I had help. Good friends with their wealth of driving experience helped me learn the ins and outs of safe driving.

A means of personal transportation hasn't always been that important to me. I never had to drive. But if I had to choose a way to get around, it wouldn't be by car, it would be by motorcycle.

There's something about riders and how they see each other. They have their differences between those who ride cruiser and those that ride sport bikes but they will usually give a small wave when they see each other on the road. That's something about the culture is very attractive to me. They choose motorcycles because they love riding not because it's practical or better than driving a car. It's more fun and looks cool. Just thinking about it has me hooked and, for me there's no turning back. I want to be part of that culture and I know where I'll need to start. I decided to start with something that I already did well, shopping.

I've been shopping around for the right motorcycle for weeks — I'm still a bit confused. Before I get too deep into it, I want to be sure of

what I'm getting into. My gut tells me to jump straight in, but I have to go with my head on this one. I need to know what's going on before I take on this endeavor for the sake of both my health and wallet; it's more expensive than I thought it would be. In my case, things usually are.

Shopping for a motorcycle and accessories, might be actually be more fun than learning to ride. There's just so much to look at. From jackets, helmets,

As much as the instructors say "You'll ride better if you relax," it's a lot harder to relax when you really want to be good at it.

I wasn't and I needed more time. Some people just do.

gloves, boots and never mind the bike itself. I've always been a fan of retail therapy. Just imagining what I'd look like on this new rig is inspiring. It's all part of the fun.

I've never actually ridden a motorcycle. One time I was on vacation to China with my family and I got a ride from a family friend. I was seven so the finer details are a bit foggy. The experience and the feeling of being on a bike is what stayed with me. It was exhilarating. I remember doing a lot of bicycling as a kid and the movement of it felt natural. It gets into you. There is just something about it that gets in your skin. The instructors understand it.

The Combat Center's Basic Riders Course is where I went to put my plan into action. I learned a lot in those classes. I learned about how a bike works, how to ride and how to ride safely. Plus it's required to take the course if you plan to ride on base, so it's something that I really did have to do. The first day of the course is strictly classroom instruction. Most find this step boring and tiresome. People in the class could be veteran riders, just needing the certification to ride on base, guys like me, who have never ridden a motorcycle before, or somewhere in the middle. Regardless of experience we all want to ride.

The next day of BRC was actually a lot harder than I thought it would be. Like many things in life, I understand it in theory, application is another story. There was something that wasn't just clicking for me. As much as the instructors say "You'll ride better if you relax," it's a lot harder to relax when you really want to be good at it.

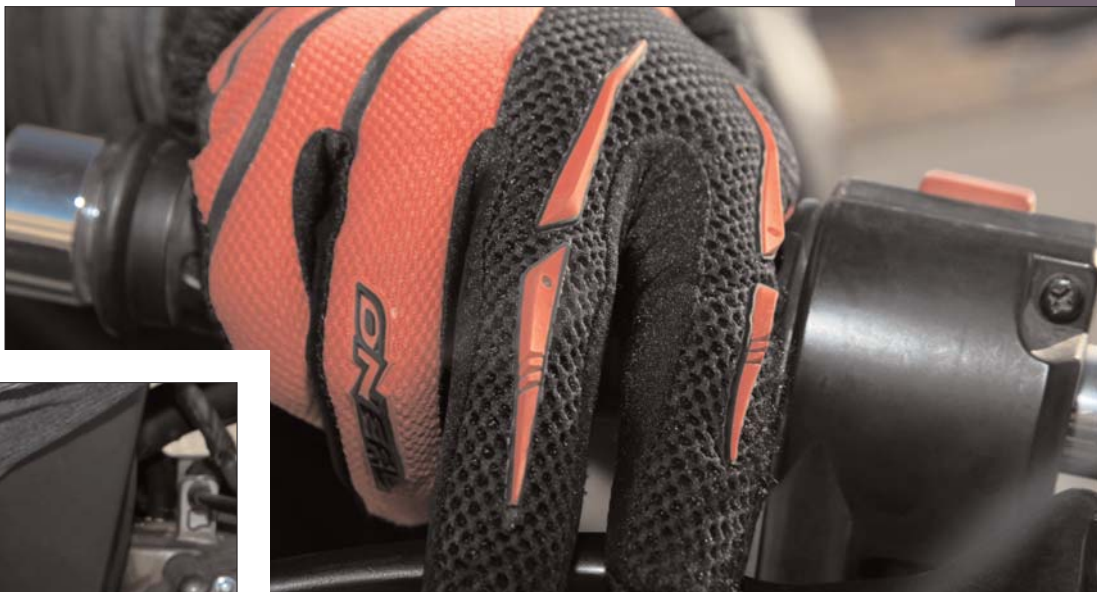
I wasn't and I needed more time. Some people just do.

Basic Rider Course does take it slow. They want all their students to learn the proper way to ride and form good habits. You'd think with no experience I would be able to absorb it all in, unfortunately that's not the case. I'm sure it'll all work out. There's a lot that goes into the whole process than just learning, like purchasing, financing, and just the logistics of it all.

BRC taught me a lot of important fundamentals and put me on the right track to getting my motorcycle license. You'll be hard-pressed to find a driving instructor that is as happy with their job as a motorcycle instructor. They teach the right way to ride because they're passionate about it.

I'm determined to be a motorcycle rider and I often dream of the road ahead of me, both metaphorically and literally. I dream of where it will take me and how far I'll go. I have plans to ride it all across the country. I'll zigzag my way across America, just me and my bike. I think that's what a lot of bikers see, endless possibilities. They do it for the freedom of the ride and that's how I want to feel.

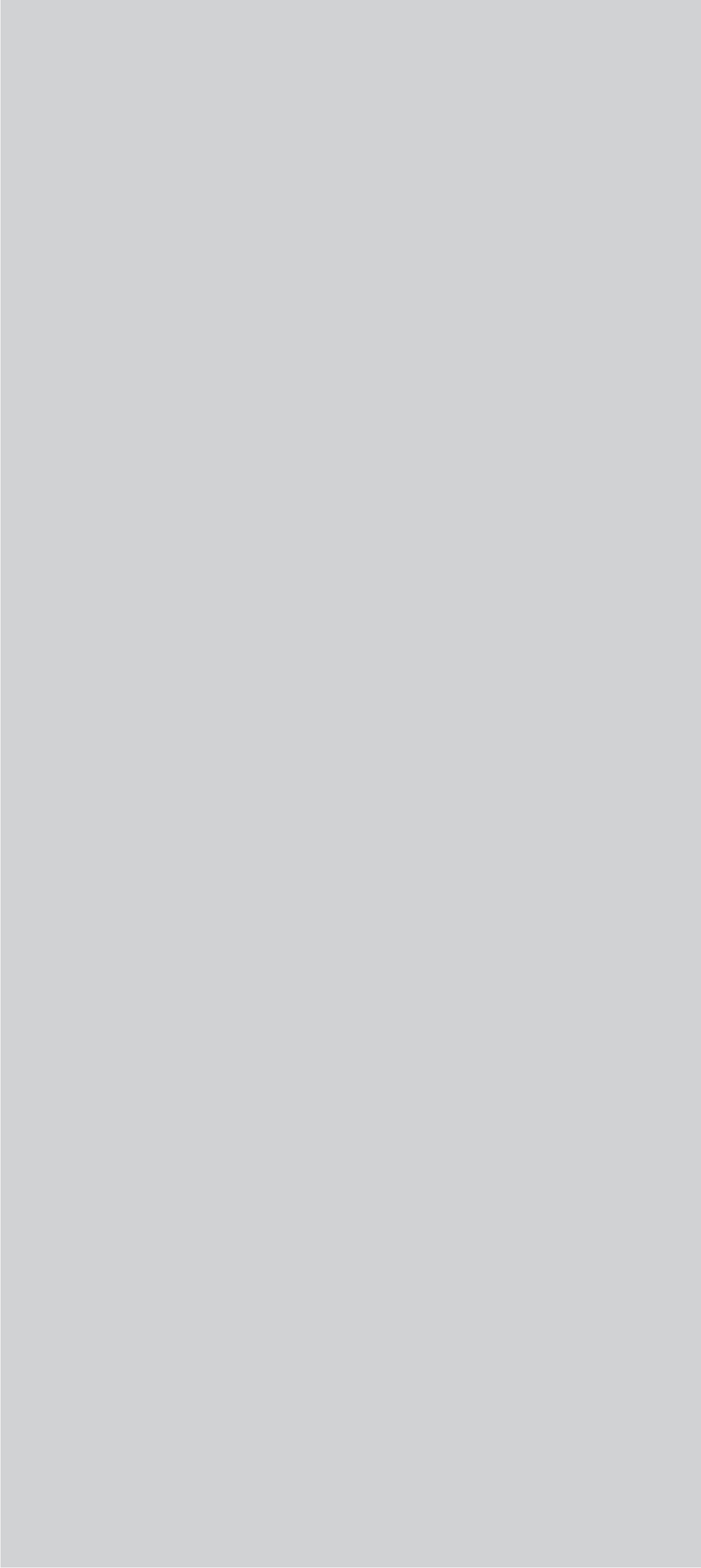
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SGT. JACOB H. HARRER

Lance Cpl. Luis Roman-Garcia, landing support specialist, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, and Cpl. Bradley J. McGill, motor transport operator, CLR-1, man a security outpost during Exercise Desert Scimitar in the Combat Center's training area, May 2.



CLR-1 supports Desert Scimitar

Cpl. Laura Gauna
1st Marine Logistics Group

Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, returned home after supporting one of the unit’s largest exercises at the Combat Center, from April 29 through May 5.

The exercise, Desert Scimitar 13, was a division-sized exercise that brought together approximately 4,500 Marines from 1st Marine Division and 1st MLG for a week of live-fire combat maneuvers at the Combat Center’s Rainbow Canyon Training Area.

“First Marine Division is practicing their infantry skills and utilization of all assets,” said Capt. Sarah Culbertson, assistant operations officer, CLR-1, 1st MLG. “I am amazed at the amount of work these Marines put in.”

This is the first time in ten years the exercise was performed. This year’s scenario was designed for Marines to help a simulated nation retain its sovereignty from its northern communist counterpart.

“We are practicing offensive and defensive operations against a simulated enemy to practice skill sets that can be later used in combat,” added Culbertson, a native of Chicago. “As CLR-1, we are ensuring 1st Marine Division has the logistical combat service support they need to continue their fight.”

The unit was there to provide both general and direct support to 1st Marine Division’s live-fire exercise with all subordinate elements including Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 5 and 7. They provided the division with ammunition, food, water, fuel, transportation, security and communications.

The exercise assessed, validated and improved CLR-1’s ability to provide support to 1st Marine Division and strengthened the CLR’s expeditionary core capabilities.

“This training was designed to meet mission essential tasks,” Culbertson added. “It ensured we were rehearsing and reinforcing those tasks that we will use in combat, so the first time we encounter a scenario such as this isn’t in combat.”

One of the largest resources CLR-1 provided was maintaining a logistical combat operations center, where they commanded and controlled the battlefield to ensure each unit was properly taken care of.

“Logistics drives operations,” said Staff Sgt. Julio Sandoval, training chief, CLR-1, 1st MLG, and a native of Sabinal, Texas. “It is such an important piece of the puzzle. It’s the heartbeat of operations.”

Upon arrival, Marines immediately set up tents, communications, power generators, showers, laundry facilities, a field kitchen, computer systems, satellites and antennas.

Often working 20-hour days, Marines ensured all logistical needs were met. They trekked several miles through the desert sun, providing thousands of gallons of water and fuel a day to fellow Marines.

“Twentynine Palms is one of the most realistic training areas we have,” Culbertson said. “It really gives the Marines a better understanding of what we would need to do in a real-life scenario.”

As the exercise came to an end, Sandoval said success was clear.

“The involvement of the Marines and of the leadership was key to our success,” Sandoval said. “Everyone was heavily engaged in this exercise and that involvement motivated each and every Marine to push hard. It was a real accomplishment in my eyes.”

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