

THE CLIMB

Marines scale rocks at national park

By Pfc. Medina Ayala-Lo
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JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK — The sun shone brightly over a mountainous landscape as one by one, Marines ascended the rock face. As they climbed higher, they looked for natural grooves in the rock to better anchor them on their way to the top. Joshua Tree Uprising in association with Mil-Tree, a nonprofit organization, hosted a rock-climbing event for Marines at Joshua Tree National Park Sunday.

"The rock climbing can sometimes be scary but it's the safest form of climbing," Sue Cram, owner and lead guide for Joshua Tree Uprising, said.

"We are all 25-plus-year climbing veterans and we do this full-time. So when people want to come out here, it's as safe as it can possibly be."

The Single Marines Program hosts events like this to allow Marines access to the surrounding areas of Twentynine Palms.

"It helps people who come from a lot of different places who don't really know (many people) on base and gives them an opportunity to meet new people and have a good time," Pfc.

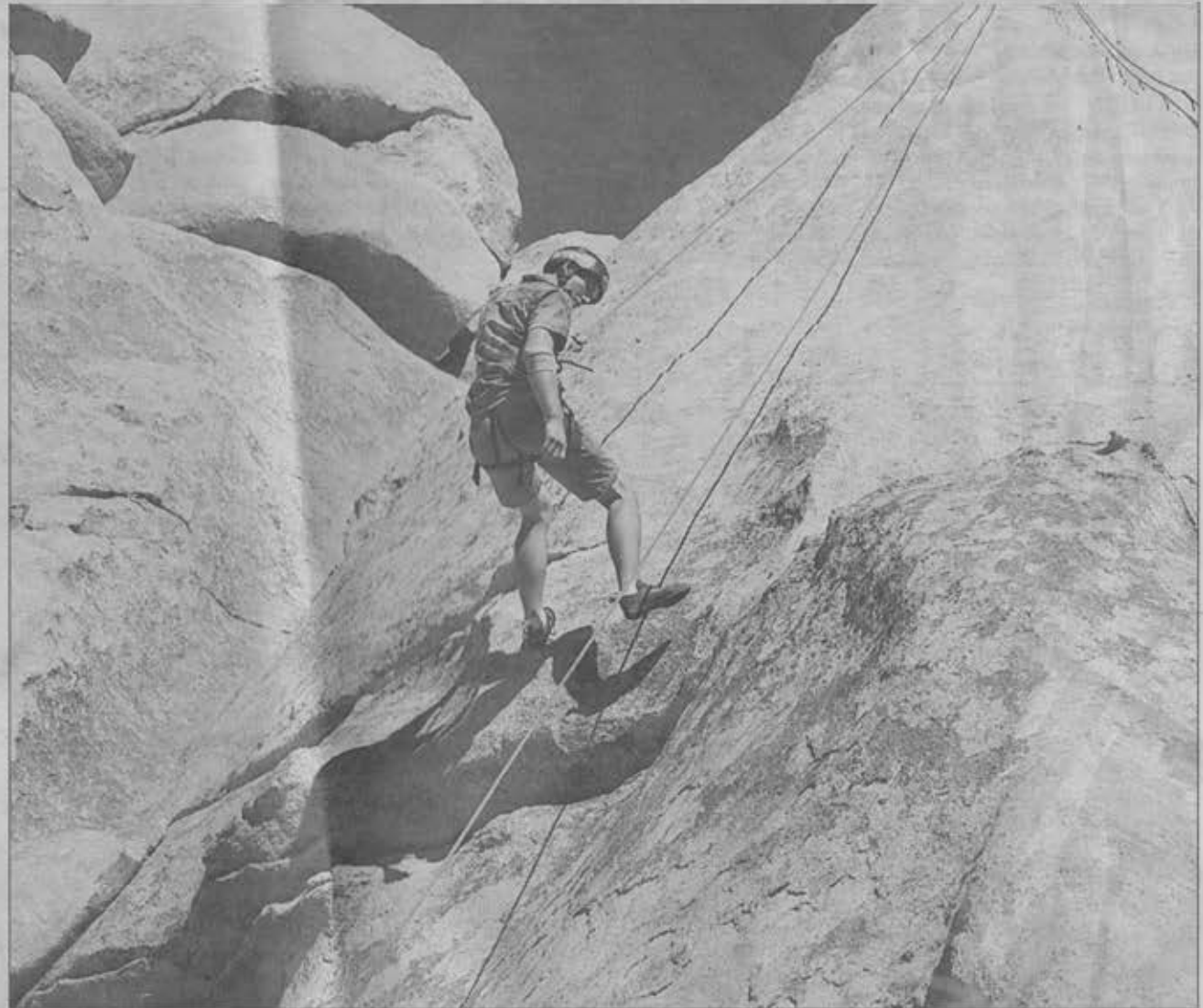
Michael Trout, a student at the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, said.

"I think it's important for them to have access," Lance Cpl. Niccolo Bonomo, a recreation attendant, said. "They don't have to be so grounded, and these events give them a chance to go out and mingle, or meet some of the folks out in town."

Joshua Tree Uprising was founded in 1999 and its reach spans to military organizations all over the country. Cram founded the organization in hopes of giving people an opportunity to explore their surroundings and experience Joshua Tree National Park. This is the second event she has hosted with the Single Marine Program.

"We were fortunate enough to be able to work with the military," Cram said.

"We got in touch with Penny Moore and offered this opportunity for people to come out to Joshua Tree National Park and do something that can be very (fun). Our support group is so strong, even if you're frightened of heights, it is just amazing to be able to come out."



Lance Cpl. Niccolo Bonomo, a recreation attendant with the Single Marine Program, descends a rock face during a rock-climbing event for Marines at Joshua Tree National Park Sunday.



Pfc. Kristen Jenkins, a student with the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, ascends a rock face at Joshua Tree National Park Sunday. Marines were able to participate in the event thanks to the efforts of Joshua Tree Uprising and Mil-Tree, a nonprofit organization.