III MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE AND MARINE CORPS INSTALLATIONS PACIFIC

OKINAWA MARINE

FEBRUARY 10, 2012

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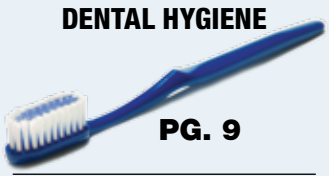

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Cobra Gold 2012 begins

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Judith Beth Cefkin, deputy chief of mission, U.S. Embassy Bangkok, speaks during the opening ceremony for Exercise Cobra Gold 2012, at Wing One Royal Thai Airforce Base, Nakhon Ratchasima, Kingdom of Thailand, Feb. 7. CG 12 improves the capability to plan and conduct combined-joint operations, building relationships between partnering nations and improving interoperability across the Asia-Pacific region.
Photo by Lance Cpl. Dustin March

Artillery Marines arrive

Pfc. Nicholas S. Ranum
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

HIJUADAI TRAINING AREA, OITA PREFECTURE, Japan — Marines and sailors with 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, arrived in the Hijudai Training Area Feb. 1-3 to conduct Artillery Relocation Training 11-4.

The regiment, part of 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, conducts four artillery relocation training sessions annually at five different locations in mainland Japan to maintain proficiency in its primary mission of providing artillery fire to maneuver units.

The first part of the exercise involves the planning, embarkation, reception, staging, onward movement and integration of personnel and equipment at the designated port of debarkation.

3rd Bn., 12th Marines, convoyed from Camp Hansen and loaded its vehicles and

see **HIJUDAI** pg 5

Lance Cpl. Marcel M. Hatter, uses a front-end loader to remove a seawall near Torii Beach Feb. 3. Hatter is a heavy-equipment operator with 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force. *Photo by Sgt. Rebekka S. Heite*

9th ESB removes seawall

Sgt. Rebekka S. Heite
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

TORII STATION — Marines with 9th Engineer Support Battalion and soldiers from U.S. Army Garrison Torii Station removed a 120-meter-long seawall near the Torii Beach shoreline Jan. 30 - Feb. 6.

"The mayor of Yomitan, the fishing companies, the local national populace, and the Army base commander all want the seawall to be

see **SEAWALL** pg 5

Marines rehearse for Operation Freedom Banner

Lance Cpl. Michael Iams
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

CAMP KINSER — Marines representing each element of the Marine air-ground task force gathered to discuss and simulate the embarkation and debarkation process to and from the Republic of Korea during a card exercise here Feb. 1.

The purpose of the CardEx is to plan, train and demonstrate the concept of offload operations through explanations by the arrival assembly operations group, said Lt. Col. Michael J. Pelak, the AAOG operations officer with G-4, logistics, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

"The exercise is called a CardEx because we use cards to represent the elements (of the MAGTF) during the demonstration," said Pelak. "This will help us get accountability and see

see **MAGTF** pg 5

See The Source inside for the upcoming House of Laughs!

Finding right way to express love

Stacy Roark

In the U.S., Valentine's Day is advertised with images of heart-shaped boxes of candy, flowers, cards, romantic dinners – it is usually associated with men and women giving tokens of their love.

As the holiday approaches, I think about the different traditions common in the U.S.

Some of us will reminisce about elementary school, with cartoon valentines and boxes of multicolor sugar hearts that read "Be Mine."

For many of us it is an adult holiday dedicated to romance, but others focus on heart-shaped pancakes for breakfast and stuffed animals for their children. Still, other people do not give it much thought at all.

In Japan, the traditions are a bit different. Valentine's Day is considered an occasion for women to indicate their feelings by giving chocolates to the men in their lives. There are "giri choko," inexpensive chocolates to give to co-workers and acquaintances, "honme choko," expensive or even hand-made chocolates for romantic partners, and lately there has been an increased trend in "tomo choko," chocolates given to female friends.

No worries, ladies; White Day, March 14, is the holiday for men who have received chocolates to return the favor, and they are often expected to repay two or three times what they were given.

If we were to continue to explore the Valentine's Day traditions of different countries and cultures, we would find even more diverse traditions – from Norfolk, where a character called "Jack Valentine" leaves sweets for children at the back door of houses, to Lithuania, where it is common to put stickers on the faces and clothing of friends or relatives.

The one universal certainty is that there are many different ways to express love and affection. Some approaches, however, may be in direct conflict with one another.

Our expectations shape our perceptions of other people's actions. Imagine the American woman expecting to be wooed and romanced Feb. 14, whose male partner is expecting handmade chocolates. Or, imagine the individual who looks forward to Valentine's Day, shopping and planning an evening of love and romance, only to find that their partner does not really give Valentine's Day much thought at all, or finds it silly and commercial.

These scenarios could end in so many different ways, from laughing about mismatched expectations to hurt feelings.

The abundance and variety of experiences that individuals bring to relationships are a part of what make them worthwhile. We enrich each other's lives by sharing our differences and supporting our similarities.

With workshops that explore communication strategies, personality styles and the unique bonds forged within the military lifestyle, Marine Corps Family Team Building is here to help couples discover the process that is right for them.

Readiness and Deployment Support offers the "Strong Military Couples" workshop for couples recently reunited after a deployment. It provides a forum for couples to assess their recent deployment experiences in an effort to further strengthen their relationship. Couples will learn about the affect of reintegration on a relationship, assess the level of their relationship satisfaction, and leave with communication tools and resources for them to use to strengthen their relationship.

The Life Skills program offers a wide variety of classes to enhance relationships, including "The Five Love Languages," which explores the oftentimes different ways we recognize and show love, and "Happily Ever After," a class for newlyweds to enhance and strengthen their relationship.

The Lifestyle Insights Networking Knowledge Skills program provides the opportunity for couples to further explore the military lifestyle together. The Japanese Spouse Learning Series offers classes on couple's communication with a focus on navigating cultural expectations.

Roark is the L.I.N.K.S. trainer with Marine Corps Community Services.

Check out what we have to offer and call 645-3689 to register for one, two or all of them! A workshop and dinner:

Life Skills:
The Five Love Languages
February 14, 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Happily Ever After
February 16, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Couples Communication & Connection
February 28, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Japanese Spouse Learning Series:
Couples Communication
February 28, 9 a.m. – noon
Readiness & Deployment Support:
Strong Military Couples
February 23, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
L.I.N.K.S.:
L.I.N.K.S. for Couples
September 8, 8:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

AROUND THE CORPS

Marine Sgt. DeJesus Gardner throws a jab at Army Sgt. Marvin Carey during the finals of the 2012 Armed Forces Boxing Championship at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 3. Gardner won the match 14-13. Gardner fights for the Marine Corps in the 201-pound weight class. The Pentagon Channel covered all the action for its Armed Forces Boxing series, set to air March 9.
Petty Officer Second Class Elliott Fabrizio

Marines and sailors with Combat Logistics Battalion 24 and Company C, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, push a Killer Tomato, a target used for shooting at sea, off the side of the ship, Feb. 3. The Marines and sailors spent the day off the coast of North Carolina firing M240B medium machine guns and M249 squad automatic weapons from internally transportable vehicles during the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit's certification exercise with Amphibious Squadron 8 scheduled Jan. 27 to Feb. 17.
Photo by Sgt. Richard Blumenstein

Lance Cpls. Matthew Scofield, left, and Jarrett Hatley rest next to military working dog, Blue, after clearing compounds with Afghan National Army soldiers during Operation Tageer Shamal. Scofield is an automatic rifleman, and Hatley is an improvised explosive device detection dog handler with 3rd Platoon, Company L, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. *Photo by Cpl. Reece Lodder*

OKINAWA MARINE

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Camp Foster
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NORTHERN BUREAU
Camp Hansen
DSN 623-4224

SOUTHERN BUREAU
Camp Kinser
DSN 637-1092

Squadron achieves 90,000 mishap-free flight hours

Lance Cpl. Alyssa N. Hoffacker
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION FUTENMA — Four Marines with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, flew the final mission required to help the squadron surpass 90,000 mishap-free flight hours late last month, earning accolades for the squadron.

While only four Marines with the squadron were on board the aircraft when this milestone was reached, they all agree the achievement was only possible with the support of the entire squadron.

Since March 27, 1972, the squadron has not had a single class "A" mishap. A class "A" mishap is defined by the Department of Defense as a fatal or disabling injury to personnel or if an aircraft is destroyed. If the aircraft damages equal or are greater than $1 million, it is also considered a class "A" mishap.

"H&HS was able to receive this award because of the professionalism demonstrated at all levels within the squadron," said Maj. Justin Reetz, the director G-3, Aviation Branch for Marine Corps Installations Pacific. "Flying 90,000 hours without a single mishap is only possible when the command, aircrew and maintenance are all dedicated to a culture of safety and professionalism. It shows how serious the squadron is when it comes to safety."

The accomplishment was not only recognized by H&HS, but by the entire 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and the Marine Corps, which the squadron supports, said Lt. Col. Sean P. Patak, a co-pilot on the flight and the executive officer of Marine Wing Support Group 17, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

"It's an honor to fly with a squadron with such a remarkable history in not only safety, but also supporting 1st MAW and (III MEF) operational support airlift needs," said Patak.

Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron recently surpassed 90,000 mishap-free flight hours earning it an award for safety. Since March 27, 1972, the squadron has not had a single class "A" mishap. H&HS is part of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Marine Corps Installations Pacific. H&HS operates the UC-35 aircraft shown above. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Alyssa N. Hoffacker*

The professionalism and dedication is not seen in just the Marines, but also in the others employed in the squadron, according to Gunnery Sgt. Paul M. McLaughlin, the flight operations and ground training chief with the squadron.

"Without the superior maintenance from our civilian contractors over the past 40 years … this 90,000-hour milestone would have never been reached," said McLaughlin.

Commanders of 1st Marine Aircraft Wing units and their respective sergeants major walked the streets of Okinawa during a liberty stroll Feb. 3 to better understand how their Marines enjoy their time off. "This provides (commanders) an opportunity to see what their Marines are doing out on liberty," said Col. Dean Patterson, commanding officer of Marine Air Control Group 18, 1st MAW. "It gives me insight into what our Marines do. To be a more effective leader, that's something I need to know."

Photo by Lance Cpl. Mike Granahan

Commanders stroll for insight during liberty hours

Lance Cpl. Mike Granahan
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

CAMP FOSTER — Commanding officers of 1st Marine Aircraft Wing units and their respective sergeants major walked the streets of Okinawa during a liberty stroll Feb. 3 to get a closer look at how and where their Marines enjoy their time off.

The liberty stroll allowed commanders to better understand the liberty environment by viewing it from the perspective of their Marines.

Information gathered during the stroll gives commanders first-hand knowledge of popular local hang-outs and behavioral patterns, which increase their ability to make accurate decisions regarding alcohol consumption and liberty policies, said Lt. Col. Joseph E. Rupp, the commanding officer of Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 1, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

"This provides (commanders) an opportunity to see what their Marines are doing out on liberty," said Col. Dean Patterson, commanding officer of Marine Air Control Group 18, 1st MAW. "It gives me an insight into what our Marines do. To be a more effective leader, that's something I need to know."

The liberty restrictions currently in place were instituted due to past liberty policy violations, but by seeing how Marines are respecting the rules, commanders can possibly advocate on their behalf for fewer restrictions, said Rupp.

"From what we saw, the Marines conducted themselves professionally," said Patterson. "Hopefully that's the message we're getting across, that you can be out in town and enjoy what Okinawa has to offer, but do it professionally."

Regardless of liberty policies, it is important for all service members to keep in mind that they are important to continuing good relations with the surrounding communities.

"Restrictions have been imposed on Marines because we are in a host country," said Sgt. Maj. Scott D. Hamm, the squadron sergeant major for Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262, Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st MAW. "Marines that go out on liberty have the faith of their command to act accordingly. Every Marine is an ambassador whether they realize it or not."

BRIEFS

POWER AND WATER OUTAGES

Several locations on Camp Foster will experience temporary power outages from Feb. 14-16 as part of an ongoing project.

Camp Foster's Kishaba Terrace Housing will experience temporary water outages from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Feb. 15 and 21 as part of replacement work of the water main.

MARINE CORPS POST OFFICE HOURS OF OPERATION OVER HOLIDAY WEEKEND

In recognition of Washington's Birthday, Marine Corps Post Offices will observe the following hours of operation:

Feb. 18: Normal hours; parcel pick up and retail services are available from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Feb. 19: Closed
Feb. 20: Closed
Feb. 21: Normal hours; parcel pick up is available from 8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., and retail services are available from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Feb. 22: Closed

FAMILY CARE PLAN WORKSHOPS

Marine Corps Family Team Building is hosting Family Care Plan Workshops from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Feb. 15 on Camp Kinser and March 14 on Camp Courtney. This free workshop is available for service members and their spouses.

Family Care Plans are required for all Marines with dependents, and MCFTB is available to help families be prepared. Register by calling 645-3689.

SPOUSE EDUCATION NIGHT

Spouses interested in taking college courses can join the MCCS Lifelong Learning for Spouse Education Night Feb. 15 from 5-7 p.m. at the Camp Foster Education Center.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet with representatives of the education center, as well as contracted colleges and universities to learn what classes and degrees are available. Information on funding will also be available.

No registration is necessary for this free event. For more information, contact 645-7160.

HAPPILY EVER AFTER WORKSHOP

The Marine Corps Family Team Building is hosting the Happily Ever After Workshop at building 5677 on Camp Foster Feb. 16 from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

This workshop is designed for newlywed couples who want to improve their communication skills, skillfully solve problems together and preserve their commitment and friendship. It is free and open to all active-duty members and their spouses.

For more information, contact 645-3689 or visit www.mccsokinawa.com/mcftb.

TO SUBMIT A BRIEF, *send an e-mail to okinawamarine.mcbb.fct@usmc.mil, or fax your request to 645-3803. The deadline for submitting a brief is noon Friday. Okinawa Marine reserves the right to edit all submitted material.*

Red Cross scam circulating

Scam targeting military families on rise

Pfc. Ian M. McMahon
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

CAMP FOSTER — Bogus calls from people claiming they are Red Cross representatives have been targeting military families recently on Okinawa.

Service members should be aware of scam artists claiming to be representatives of the Red Cross, informing military families that their spouse, son or daughter has been injured while deployed.

"The scammer will then call again and inform the family member the Red Cross needs a donation to help pay for transportation of the injured individual to get home or to Germany for follow-on treatment," said Capt. Daniel J. Burton, the operations officer for the Provost Marshal's Office, Headquarters and Service Battalion, Marine Corps Base Camp Butler.

Recently, there has been one specific case involving a Marine participating in training on the island, said Burton.

According to the Red Cross website, the scam was first reported in 2008.

If targeted by one of these "representatives," immediately contact local law enforcement personnel, as well as a unit representative or unit family readiness officer, said Burton.

"Red Cross will never ask you for personal information, nor will they contact you to notify you of an injured family member," said Burton. "Never give out personal information over the phone or internet."

The Red Cross will only contact military members and dependents in response to an emergency message sent to them by the family and would only notify the families in person using their chain of command, according to their website.

Seeking legal counsel can also help when targeted by potential swindlers.

"If an active-duty service member is a victim of the scammers, they can come into legal and we can advise them on a course of action," said Staff Sgt. Erick C. Heimerl, the legal assistance chief for Combat Logistics Regiment 37, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

Legal representatives will be able to provide a list of attorneys victims can work with to put out a fraud and scam alert, said Heimerl.

Most attorneys will work for free against scammed military members, he added.

Service members can help protect themselves and their families from this and other scams by keeping personal information safe though the application of operational security.

"Be careful what you post on social networking sites too," said Burton. "The easiest way for scammers to get personal information on deployed family members is through the internet."

Additionally, do not post information about active members' actions, whereabouts or personal information anywhere online.

For more information about this issue and what to do if targeted, visit the Red Cross website at www.americanredcrossokinawa.org.

Military Saves Campaign Proclamation signed

Maj. Gen. Peter J. Talleri signs the Military Saves Campaign proclamation on Camp Foster Feb. 1, announcing February as Military Saves Month. The Military Saves Campaign is a social marketing campaign to persuade, motivate and encourage military families to save money every month and to convince leaders and organizations to be aggressive in promoting automatic savings. Though the military community normally focuses on financial readiness during Military Saves Week, Feb. 19-26, service members on Okinawa dedicate the entire month of February to financial health. Talleri is the commanding general of Marine Corps Installations Pacific and Marine Corps Base Camp Butler. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Courtney G. White*

HIJUDAI from pg 1

gear at Naha Port. The chartered ship, provided by the government of Japan, then traveled to Oita Port where it was met by 3rd Bn., 12th Marines, personnel to conduct reception, staging, onward movement and integration.

"The embarkation involves moving personnel, quadcons, vehicles, howitzers and other gear to the port and then loading it onto the ship," said Staff Sgt. Erik R. Myers, the battalion logistics chief. "It involves motor transportation, embarkation specialists and pretty much every Marine and sailor in the battalion."

Upon arriving at Oita Port, Marines and sailors with equipment and motor transport assets engaged in a 1.5-hour convoy to the Hijudai Training Area. The equipment ranged from cleaning supplies to M777A2 howitzers loaded onto flatbed trucks.

"The unit has one of the largest footprints out there," said Gunnery Sgt. Raoul P. Sheridan, the battery gunnery sergeant for Hotel Battery. "There are more heavy weapons than a heavy weapons company, more seven tons, more Humvees and the six giant howitzers."

Marines with Hotel Battery are briefed about their convoy route at Oita Port, Japan, Feb. 3. Afterward, the Marines drove their vehicles to the Hijudai Training Area as part of Artillery Relocation Training 11-4. The briefing covered their route, safety issues and actions to take if they became separated from the convoy. Hotel Battery is assigned to 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, through the Marine Corps' unit deployment program. *Photo by Pfc. Nicholas S. Ranum*

Motor transport Marines conducted route reconnaissance and then provided a detailed convoy brief about the travels to the training area, said Myers.

RSOI is a lengthy process, but the Marines of 3rd Bn., 12th Marines, completed it without a hitch. They showed they were capable of moving their equipment from home station to port, ship to foreign port and then convoying the gear to a remote location in order to get the training underway.

Planning for RSOI is essential to the artillery relocation training program, said Myers.

The logistics planning and coordination on the front end of any training program is what enables the personnel and equipment to arrive on time. This allows the battalion to remain proficient and operationally ready to accomplish its primary mission of providing all-weather, artillery fire support to maneuver units.

The training will include 10 firing days between Feb. 10-22.

SEAWALL from pg 1

removed due to the change in current, causing erosion," said 2nd Lt. David A. Padgett, project officer-in-charge, 9th ESB, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force. "If the seawall is not removed, the adjacent beach will continue to erode."

The seawall was put in place eight months ago in an effort to provide erosion control, said Gunnery Sgt. Chitty Phouthapadith, project staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge, 9th ESB. "The reality is; it was an eyesore, and it did not control erosion," he added.

The best thing to do was to get 9th ESB, Support Company, to expediently and safely remove it, he said.

Before starting operations, a precautionary hazardous material spill boom was put in the water around the seawall in the event of an oil leak, said Padgett. There were no environmental issues during the operation, he added.

After ensuring the boom was properly anchored before each evolution, two heavy-equipment operators moved the large cobblestones, which made up the seawall, to the beach during low tide.

They moved almost 200 buckets of rock from the seawall to the beach on their second night of operations, said Lance Cpl. Marcel M. Hatter, heavy-equipment operator, 9th ESB.

"We got a lot accomplished that night," said Hatter.

The nighttime low-tide was usually lower than the daytime low-tide, giving 9th ESB additional time to work, he explained.

Working around the tide tables, on sand and in salt water is not an everyday experience for the heavy-equipment operators of 9th ESB.

Removing the seawall has been a great training opportunity for the Marines, said Padgett.

"It beats moving quadcons and pallets on a (heavy equipment or motor transport) lot," he added.

Training and experience was not the only benefit gained through the project, said Padgett.

"The operation demonstrated the friendship and cooperation between the U.S. military and local population," Padgett said. "When we agree on a course of action we can achieve anything."

MAGTF from pg 1

the transfers of the equipment to and from the AAOGs."

While planners were hashing out details using computers, maps, data tables and slide presentations, Marines simultaneously operated in mock staging areas using cards and scanners.

"This exercise is (held) to train the Marines and operators in preparation for Operation Freedom Banner," said Gunnery Sgt. Kenneth A. Roberts, the maritime prepositioning force chief with the III MEF G-4, Logistics. "It will help them learn about MPF and how to execute it correctly."

The Marines discussed how to load and unload vessels used to transport the equipment to and from the Republic of Korea, as well as the process of what to do upon arrival.

During the exercise, the Marines also discussed the execution process that will take place once the Marines arrive in Korea, the position of each element and the distribution of equipment across the country, said Capt. Brogan C. Issitt, the operations officer for 3rd Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 35, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III MEF.

Marines also planned how to keep track of equipment to be used and a breakdown of day-to-day processes to continue throughout the exercise.

"We reviewed current operations, equipment associated with the operation and the III MEF enhanced offload requirement," said Pelak.

The most challenging part about the exercise will be working together with each element in offloading and moving the equipment in a safe manner, according to Issitt.

Marines and sailors categorize shipping labels in their respective arrival assembly operation elements and distribute them among each element of the Marine air-ground task force during the card exercise at Camp Kinser Feb. 3. The Marines and sailors ran through the scenario of how the process will be executed on arrival to Korea for Operation Freedom Banner. The Marines are with 3rd Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 35, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III MEF. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Michael Iams*

"We have made valuable progress in this exercise, teaching the Marines (about the) MPF and how to communicate between each section," said Roberts. "It's a great learning experience and can be used as a reference when the Marines are actually executing the operation."

There was a lot of forethought and planning put into the brief, so execution in country can run even better than expected, said Gunnery Sgt. Greggory D. Jenkins, operations chief, 3rd Supply Bn.

"We put a lot of time and work into this," said Pelak. "The more we iron out now, the more we are able to make it run smoothly."

Sailors rush a simulated casualty to a landing zone during casualty evacuation drills with casualty evacaution corpsmans in Ban Chan Krem training area Feb. 7. The sailors are with shock trauma platoon, attached to Combat Assault Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force. *Photo by Sgt. Brandon L. Saunders*

Combined-

Lance Cpl. Ronald K. Peacock
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

CAMP SURANAREE, KORAT, Kingdom of Thailand — "Now the auspicious moment has arrived … I would like to declare the combined-joint Exercise Cobra Gold 2012 open." These words were spoken by Gen. Sakol Sajjanit, deputy chief of Royal Thai Defense Forces, who took part in the opening ceremony which officially began Exercise CG 12.

Cobra Gold is an annual, multinational combined-joint training exercise held throughout the Kingdom of Thailand. It is the United States' largest multilateral exercise in the

Petty Officers 2nd Class Erwin Robillos and Kyle Hill hand out toothbrushes and toothpaste to elementary school children in Banmi District, Lop Buri province, Thail are providing the needed medical and dental care at three sites determined by the Royal Thai government to treat those affected by the flooding caused by mo civic action project is part of Cobra Gold 2012, an annual, multilateral exercise providing unique and dynamic training opportunities for participating military building between militaries and local communities *Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Karen Persons*

-joint Exercise Cobra Gold 2012 begins

Asia-Pacific region and offers more than 20 participating countries critical training opportunities to improve interoperability in conducting multinational operations.

"I would like to thank the United States government and the United States armed forces, especially the United States Pacific Command, for co-hosting this year's exercise, as well as all personnel, organizations and participating countries for their sacrifice and devotion in making this exercise possible," said Sajjanit.

This year's Cobra Gold is in its 31st iteration. CG 12 demonstrates multinational commitment to allied forces in the Asia-Pacific region and focuses on regional partnership, prosperity and security commitments in the region.

Events during the exercise include a computer-simulated command-post exercise, field training operations, and humanitarian and civic assistance projects that increase the standard of living for the Thai people in surrounding communities.

"Cobra Gold is much more than just an exercise," said Lt. Gen. Kenneth J. Glueck Jr., commanding general of III Marine Expeditionary Force. "We have a challenging two weeks in front of us that will build relationships between partnering nations and improve the interoperability for forces across the range of military operations."

Participating nations in CG 12 include the United States, Kingdom of Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and the Republic of Korea.

"We are very proud of our alliance with Thailand and our alliances and partnerships throughout Asia," said Judith Beth Cefkin, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy Bangkok. "These relationships, based on friendship, common goals and mutual respect make Cobra Gold the vital and vibrant exercise it is today."

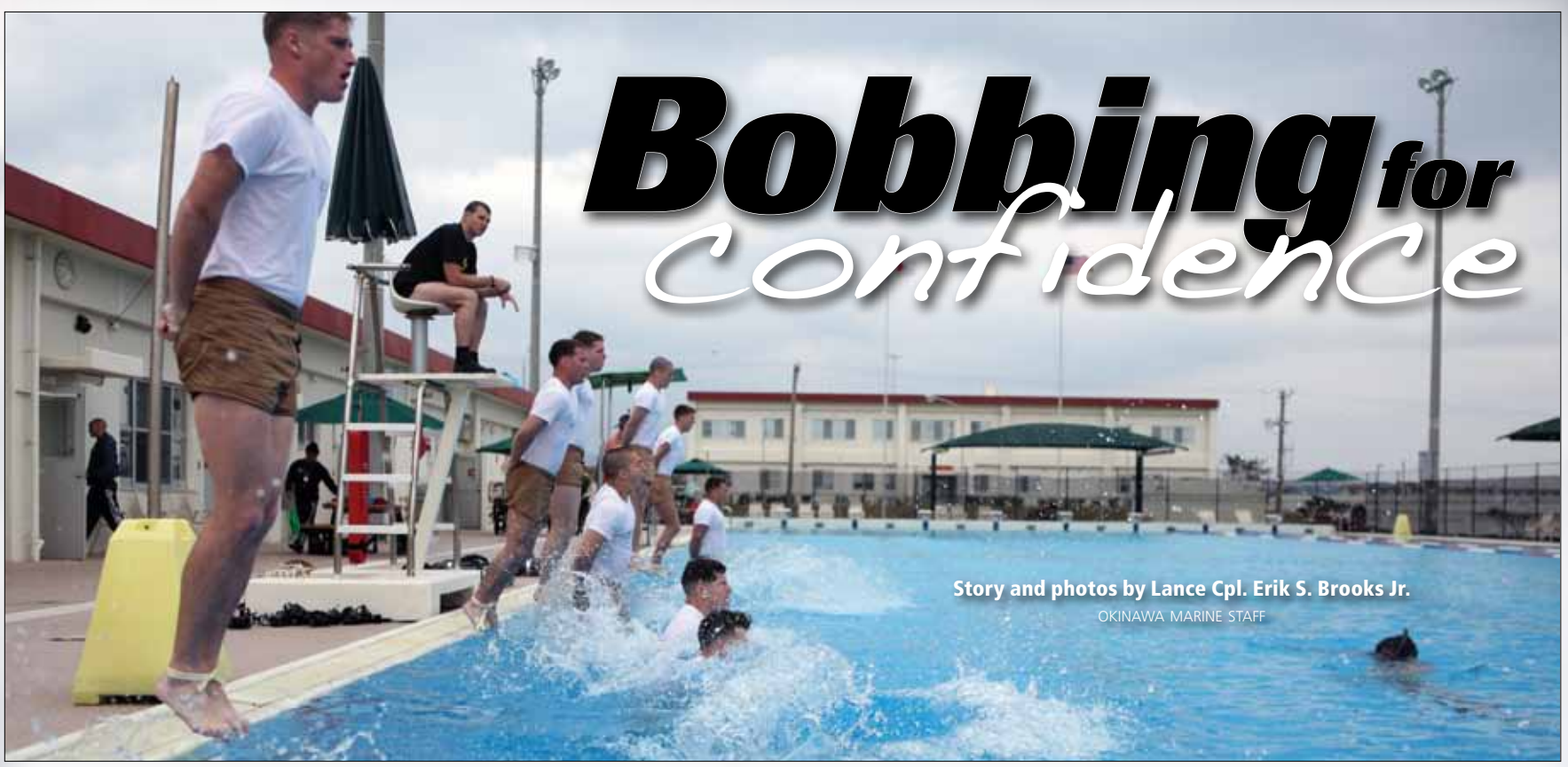
Glueck's closing remarks challenged exercise participants to avoid complacency and to maximize their efforts during this exercise to accomplish the goals set forth.

CG 12 is taking place throughout the Kingdom of Thailand with events concluding Feb. 17.

land, Jan. 31. U.S. and Royal Thai armed forces
onsoon rains during October 2011. This dental
partners, while also promoting relationship

A Malaysian soldier, bottom, and U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Roxanne Seng measure the foundation for a multipurpose building at the Wat Chalheamlap Temple School in Chonburi, Thailand, Jan. 17, as part of CG 12. Seng is with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 40. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Carl Payne*

Royal Thai Navy Chief Petty Officer 1st Class Nopporn Singpet, left, explains to Cpl. Elizabeth Annand how to construct wood frames on a multipurpose building at the Ban Khunsong School construction project Jan. 31. The school is being built as part of CG 12. *Photo by Cpl. Jessica Olivas*



Bobbing for confidence

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Erik S. Brooks Jr.
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

Reconnaissance Marines enter the water with their ankles bound and hands clenched tightly together during the initial stage of a proficiency screening at the aquatics center on Camp Schwab Feb. 2. The screening was conducted to determine which of the Marines are prepared to go to the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Diving School in Panama City, Fla. The Marines are with 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

Recon Marines float to top with skill, determination

The students lined up shoulder-to-shoulder at the edge with their ankles bound and hands clenched tightly together. After asking permission they plunged into the bone-chilling water.

This was the initial scene during a proficiency screening of Marines with 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, at the aquatics center on Camp Schwab Feb. 2.

The screening process is designed to determine if the reconnaissance Marines are prepared for the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Diving School in Panama City, Fla.

"Our job here is to take six Marines out of the 16 and send them on to the school," said Master Sgt. Roger S. Smith, the battalion training chief. "We are not going to send anyone who is not yet ready for the course."

After leaping into the depths of the pool, the Marines performed the action they call bobbing.

Bobbing is when Marines take a large breath at the surface of the water. They then exhale immediately, causing them to sink to the bottom of the 12-foot pool. From there, they push forward in an upward direction toward the surface. This is completed with hands and feet bound by rope.

During the screening, the bobbing was executed for five minutes.

"The bobbing exercise is designed to have the Marines practice controlling their breathing," said Smith.

After the bobbing drill, the Marines transitioned into an exercise which required them to surface and remain afloat. The Marines were allowed to execute any swim technique needed to stay afloat. The drill was performed for two minutes.

"This is hard for some people who are not naturally buoyant," Smith said. "The students needed to find out what worked for them to stay afloat."

Following the float, the Marines swam 100 meters using a dolphin kick to propel themselves through the pool. The dolphin kick required Marines to thrust themselves through the water without using their arms or kicking with their feet, said Smith.

When the Marines returned to the deep end of the pool, they executed a front and back-flip underwater.

After successfully completing the flips, the Marines were required to conduct the bobbing drill five more times before the next test.

"The bobs between exercises allows the Marines to catch their breath and get focused mentally," said Smith.

Next, the students attempted to recover a mask located at the bottom of the pool, using only their teeth. Because their feet were still bound and hands still clenched together, teeth were their only option.

The screening process concluded with tank treading.

The Marines strapped air tanks to their backs and donned fins and scuba masks. After leaping back into the water, the Marines were required to tread water for five minutes. This time, they were allowed to use both their hands and feet.

This was the final test for some Marines before attending dive school. Others had to continue training and repeat the process to gain entry into the school later in the year.

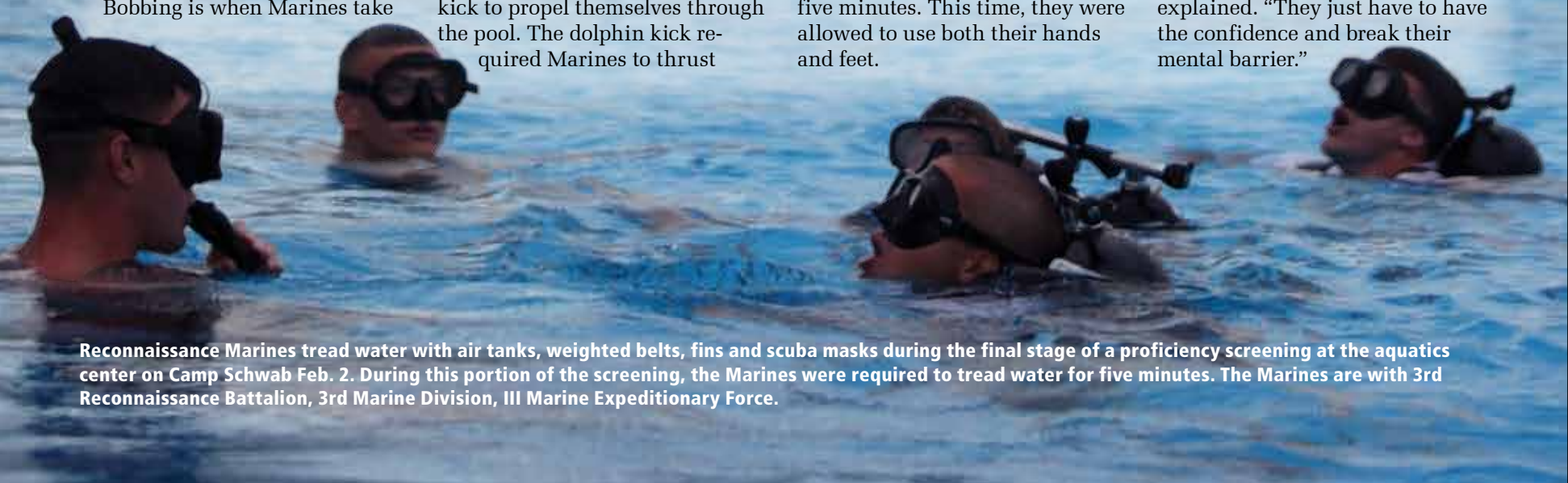
"This screening is hard for some of the Marines because some of them have never been introduced to the test," said Sgt. Thomas M. Vigen, an amphibious reconnaissance team leader. "This provides great introduction and training for the Marines."

One of the main focuses for the instructors was to build water confidence, said Smith.

"The Marines have to get past that mental barrier," said Smith. "After they can get past that, they can accomplish the course."

The other focus was for the instructors to see and know that the Marines they are sending to the dive school have the skills and ability to pass the class, said Vigen.

"Most Marines can fight farther than they think they can," Vigen explained. "They just have to have the confidence and break their mental barrier."



Reconnaissance Marines tread water with air tanks, weighted belts, fins and scuba masks during the final stage of a proficiency screening at the aquatics center on Camp Schwab Feb. 2. During this portion of the screening, the Marines were required to tread water for five minutes. The Marines are with 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

Zukeran students brush up on dental hygiene

"What's that yellow stuff that gets on people's teeth?"

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Alyssa N. Hoffacker
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

"Will mints whiten your teeth?"

"What did you learn at school today?" is typically answered by the average elementary student with "math, science, or history." For students of Zukeran Elementary School, they can answer that question with "to brush and floss our teeth twice a day!"

Sailors and civilian personnel with 3rd Dental Battalion visited the school on Camp Foster Feb. 2 in support of the American Dental Association, which designates February as National Children's Dental Health Month.

The presentation focused on the importance of oral hygiene, how to properly clean teeth and foods that are both good and bad for your teeth.

"This was very informative, and the kids definitely learned a lot," said Cynthia Hamada, a kindergarten teacher at the school.

The students were very engaged throughout the presentation, taking part in activities and asking many questions.

"Will mints whiten your teeth?" and "Are the sugars in apples bad for your teeth?" were some of the questions asked by the students in a third-grade class.

Using oversized false teeth, the sailors and civilian personnel showed the children how to properly brush and floss. After that, they taught with a more hands-on approach by using ribbon as floss and crumpled paper as food particles, while students imagined themselves as teeth to help understand the basics of flossing.

"It's great to come here and teach," said Lt. Maria Sanchez, a dentist with the battalion, part of 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force. "This is a fun learning environment that they are comfortable in, which makes it easier for them to understand. Kids are like sponges and will soak up information if they're given the opportunity."

The ADA encourages communities about the importance of oral health by sponsoring events like these throughout the U.S., said Sanchez. This year's National Children's Dental Health Month's theme is "Rock Your Smile."

The dentists gave the kindergarten and first-grade students oral health exams, looking for signs of cavities or other dental issues and then gave the students a referral paper for their parents.

3rd Dental Bn. will visit more elementary schools on Camps Foster, Lester, Kinser and Courtney throughout the month.

"I really hope that oral hygiene becomes a part of the regular curriculum for schools just like health is a part of their curriculum," said Sanchez. "Going to the dentist shouldn't be seen as a negative thing. It really is something good."

"Are the sugars in apples bad for your teeth?"

Kindergartners act out how to properly floss during a presentation at Zukeran Elementary School on Camp Foster Feb. 2. The students pretended the green ribbon was floss, crumpled paper was food, and imagined themselves as teeth.

A student practices how to properly brush teeth at Zukeran Elementary School on Camp Foster Feb. 2. Sailors and civilian personnel with 3rd Dental Battalion visited the school to give the students a presentation on dental hygiene as part of National Children's Dental Health Month. Personnel with 3rd Dental Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force, spoke about the importance of brushing and flossing twice a day, seeing a dentist twice a year, and which foods are good and bad for your teeth.

"I am an NCO dedicated to training new Marines and influencing the old. I am forever conscious of each Marine under my charge, and by example will inspire them to the highest standards possible. I will strive to be patient, understanding, just, and firm. I will commend the deserving and encourage the wayward. I will never forget that I am responsible to my Commanding Officer for the morale, discipline, and efficiency of my Marines and their performance will reflect an image of me."

- Noncomissioned officer creed

Maj. Gen. Peter J. Talleri shares a few words with the Marines after meritoriously promoting Sgt. Yarimel Gomezmelendez Feb. 2. Gomezmelendez is the quality assurance noncommissioned officer-in-charge with the Installation Personnel Administration Center for Marine Corps Base Camp Butler. Talleri is the commanding general of Marine Corps Installations Pacific and Marine Corps Base Camp Butler.

Exemplary Marine earns second meritorious promotion

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Daniel E. Valle
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

The Marine Corps noncommissioned officer creed is a reminder to those who wear the rank of an NCO that they are leaders of Marines. For Sgt. Yarimel Gomezmelendez, the quality assurance noncommissioned officer-in-charge with the Installation Personnel Administration Center for Marine Corps Base Camp Butler, it is something that allows her to set the example for her Marines.

"When I was a lance corporal and went on the meritorious promotion board, I knew I was ready because I prepared myself by making sure I had more to offer than the rest of my peers," said Gomezmelendez.

Eight months after being meritoriously promoted to the rank of corporal, Gomezmelendez again competed in another meritorious promotion board to pick up the rank of sergeant, a rank known by many Marines to be the backbone of the Corps.

"I did the same on the meritorious promotion board to pick up sergeant that I did to pick up corporal," she said. "I made sure I had the most (Marine Corps Institute courses) completed, the highest (Marine Corps Martial Arts Program) belt, (Physical Fitness Test), (Combat Fitness Test), the most volunteer hours, training and Marine Corps knowledge."

Gomezmelendez once again surpassed her peers and was promoted to the rank of sergeant Feb. 2 at Camp Butler.

"If you are a well-rounded Marine – if you take that extra step to stand out and show that you are ready for that next rank – then you can win," said Gomezmelendez.

Gomezmelendez is known for pushing her Marines to better themselves as well, according to Lance Cpl. Amber L. Patrick, a personnel clerk with the IPAC.

"She's been a Marine that any other Marine would look up to and try to emulate," said Patrick. "She knows her (job) well and makes sure to pass down as much knowledge as she can."

Although she won her second meritorious board by pushing herself to exceed all standards, Gomezmelendez thanks her leadership for her success.

"I have been really blessed," she said. "This was all possible because of my leadership and the trust they have in me. It makes me feel good to know that my superiors have that faith in me to get the job done, and they feel I am ready for the responsibility."

Sgt. Yarimel Gomezmelendez receives her sergeant chevrons during her promotion ceremony at the flag pole outside of the Marine Corps Installations Pacific Headquarters on Camp Foster Feb. 2. This is the second time Gomezmelendez has been meritoriously promoted in her career.

In Theaters Now

FEBRUARY 10 - 16

FOSTER

TODAY One for the Money (PG13), 6 p.m.; Contraband (R), 9 p.m.
SATURDAY Happy Feet Two (PG), noon; The Muppets (PG), 3 p.m.; The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1 (PG13), The Sitter (R), 9 p.m.
SUNDAY Big Miracle (PG), 1 and 4 p.m.; The Sitter (R), 9 p.m.
MONDAY Contraband (R), 7 p.m.
TUESDAY The Sitter (R), 7 p.m.
WEDNESDAY Happy Feet Two (PG), 7 p.m.
THURSDAY Big Miracle (PG), 7 p.m.

KADENA

TODAY The Sitter (R), 6 and 9 p.m.
SATURDAY One for the Money (PG13), noon and 3 p.m.; The Sitter (R), 6 and 9 p.m.
SUNDAY One for the Money (PG13), 1 and 4 p.m.; The Sitter (R), 7 p.m.
MONDAY One for the Money (PG13), 7 p.m.
TUESDAY The Sitter (R), 7 p.m.
WEDNESDAY The Sitter (R), 7 p.m.
THURSDAY Red Tails (PG13), 7 p.m.

COURTNEY

TODAY Big Miracle (PG), 6 and 9 p.m.
SATURDAY Arthur Christmas (PG), 2 and 6 p.m.
SUNDAY Red Tails (PG13), 2 and 6 p.m.
MONDAY Arthur Christmas (PG), 7 p.m.
TUESDAY Closed
WEDNESDAY Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close (PG13), 7 p.m.
THURSDAY Closed

FUTENMA

TODAY Immortals (R), 6:30 p.m.
SATURDAY Big Miracle (PG), 4 and 7 p.m.
SUNDAY New Year's Eve (PG13), 4 p.m.; Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol (PG13), 7 p.m.
MONDAY Red Tails (PG13), 6:30 p.m.
TUESDAY-THURSDAY Closed

KINSER

TODAY The Sitter (R), 6:30 p.m.
SATURDAY Happy Feet Two (PG), 3 p.m.; Immortals (R), 6:30 p.m.
SUNDAY Jack and Jill (PG), 6:30 p.m.; The Sitter (R), 6:30 p.m.
MONDAY Closed
TUESDAY Closed
WEDNESDAY Big Miracle (PG), 3 and 6:30 p.m.
THURSDAY The Sitter (R), 6:30 p.m.

HANSEN

TODAY Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close (PG13), 7 p.m.
SATURDAY Red Tails (PG13), 6 and 9 p.m.
SUNDAY Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close (PG13), 2 and 5:30 p.m.
MONDAY Big Miracle (PG), 6 p.m.; The Sitter (R), 9 p.m.
TUESDAY Big Miracle (PG), 7 p.m.
WEDNESDAY The Sitter (R), 7 p.m.
THURSDAY One for the Money (PG13), 7 p.m.

SCHWAB

TODAY Red Tails (PG13), 7 p.m.
SATURDAY New Year's Eve (PG13), 5 p.m.
SUNDAY The Three Musketeers 2 (PG13), 5 p.m.
MONDAY-THURSDAY Closed

THEATER DIRECTORY

CAMP FOSTER 645-3465
KADENA AIR BASE 634-1869
(USO NIGHT) 632-8781
MCAS FUTENMA 636-3890
(USO NIGHT) 636-2113
CAMP COURTNEY 622-9616
CAMP HANSEN 623-4564
(USO NIGHT) 623-5011
CAMP KINSER 637-2177
CAMP SCHWAB 625-2333
(USO NIGHT) 625-3834

Movie schedule is subject to change without notice. Call in advance to confirm show times. For a complete listing, visit www.shopmyexchange.com.

SINGLE MARINE PROGRAM EVENTS

For more information or to sign up, contact the Single Marine Program at 645-3681.

SMP NEW REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING - FEB. 13
• All new SMP representatives are requested to attend the training Feb. 13 at 3 p.m. at the SMP Main Office in building 5674 on Camp Foster.

SOUTHERN HILLS ICE SKATING TRIP - FEB. 20
• Sign-up deadline is Feb. 15. The bus will leave Camp Foster Field House at 11 a.m. and MCAS Futenma Semper Fit Gym at 11:20 a.m.

DISCOVER GOLF - FREE GOLF LESSONS
• Taiyo Golf Course is hosting free golf lessons for Single Marines and sailors the first and third Fridays of every month from 9-11 a.m. Participants must meet at the SMP office on Camp Foster by 8 a.m. Limited seats are available.

Mention of any company in this notice does not constitute endorsement by the Marine Corps.

Japanese phrase of the week:

"Nihongo wa wakarimasen. Eigo de onegaishimasu"
(pronounced: knee-hone-go wa wa-car-e-mah-sen A-go dē oh-ne-guy-she-mas)

It means:
"I don't understand Japanese. Please speak English"

CHAPLAINS' CORNER

Change can happen but, it cannot happen accidentally. It must be deliberate and involve commitment.

Becoming person of virtue

Navy Lt. Rick Bristol
CAMPS HANSEN AND SCHWAB CHAPLAIN

I recently spent a few days with a group of Marines during a CREDO unit Marine retreat. During the retreat, the topic of ethics was discussed. This included the use of hypothetical situations. I have conducted these discussions many times; and from the start, the participants always give the "right" answer. It does not matter the situation. From prostitution and human trafficking to alcohol abuse and sexual assault, Marines universally say how they would never make the obviously wrong choice.

Then I ask the next question. "What would the average Marine do?" That is where the answer changes. The selfish answer comes out. Then I asked these Marines an even harder question. "How do you get the average Marine to make the 'right' choice?" This is the true challenge for officers, staff noncommissioned officers, NCOs and the Marines themselves.

Morality and virtue are inside-out kinds of things. Because of this briefs, threats or punishments do not significantly affect behavior. They attack symptoms but not the causes of bad behavior. We can help set someone's moral compass, but it cannot be done quickly or easily. It begins with a truth: Virtues are not natural or common.

That is why being virtuous is valued. It must be learned, practiced and tested. People are automatically focused on self-gratification. It is more difficult to focus on the gratification of others. The process requires time and attention. When we look at Boot Camp, we see the transition of a recruit becoming a Marine in about 13 weeks. Change can happen, but it cannot happen accidentally. It must be deliberate and involve commitment.

As individuals we must all choose to be more virtuous. We must continually choose to put others before self if we are ever to become men and women of character. Getting involved in activities which focus on the less fortunate is a great way to start. This can include work in soup kitchens, missions, non-governmental organizations, or community relations projects, to name a few. Such is the path that helps develop the character necessary for more personal fulfillment, success and satisfaction in life.

FOR UPCOMING SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICES AND EVENTS FOR ALL MARINE CORPS BASE CHAPELS, CALL 645-2501 OR VISIT WWW.MARINES.MIL/UNIT/MCBJAPAN/PAGES/AROUNDMCBJ/CHAPEL.ASPX