

OKINAWA MARINE

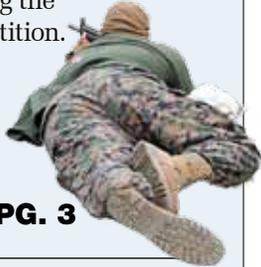
FEBRUARY 3, 2012

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Marines join local community members at the 35th Annual Ginowan City Traffic Safety Campaign Relay Run.

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Mutual support agreement signed

Lance Cpl. Matthew J. Manning
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

CAMP HANSEN — The Marine Corps Base Camp Butler Fire Department, in conjunction with local fire departments, renewed an agreement enabling joint fire fighting capabilities, during a ceremony at the Camp Hansen Fire Department Jan. 30.

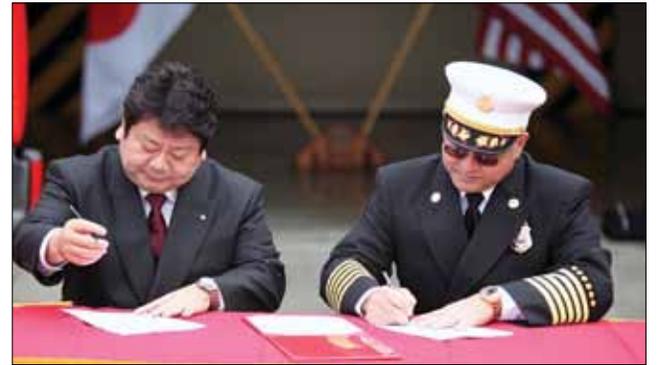
The local fire departments included Kin Town, Onna Village and Ginoza Village.

This was the first time

in more than 25 years the agreement had been renewed.

The agreement will allow the local fire departments or MCB Camp Butler to request assistance from one another in case of an emergency. This greatly increases the force that can respond to an emergency and potentially save more lives and reduce property damage if a disaster occurs. The agreement enhances the good relations between

see **FIRE** pg 5



Tsuyoshi Gibu and Scott Minakami sign a mutual support agreement at the fire department on Camp Hansen Jan. 30. The agreement is a proactive step to prepare the fire departments of Kin Town and Camp Hansen for any emergency. Gibu is the Kin Town mayor, and Minakami is the fire chief for the Marine Corps Base Camp Butler Fire Department. Photo by Lance Cpl. Matthew J. Manning



U.S. Marine Pfc. Anthony Essenmacher, left, and Royal Thai Marine Chief Petty Officer 1st Class Pothin Nuamthong, an engineer, dig a foundation for a Ban Khunsong School classroom as part of Exercise Cobra Gold 2012, in Chanthaburi, Thailand, Jan. 16. Essenmacher is a combat engineer with Marine Wing Support Squadron 172, Marine Wing Support Group 17, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force. Photo by Cpl. Jessica Olivas

Thai, US engineers construct school foundation, friendship

Army Staff Sgt. Karen M. Person
122ND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OPERATIONS CENTER

BAN WANG LAM KHAO, Kingdom of Thailand — Thai service members united with U.S. Marines to construct a new building for the Ban Lang Khao Elementary School in Ban Wang Lam Khao, Saraburi province, Kingdom of Thailand.

The Marines, part of Marine Wing Support Squadron 172, Marine Wing Support Group 17, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force, and Royal Thai Armed Forces personnel are conducting the humanitarian and civic assistance project preceding the official kickoff Feb. 7 of Exercise Cobra Gold 2012.

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31st MEU departs for CG 12

Cpl. Jonathan G. Wright
31ST MEU

OKINAWA, Japan — Elements of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit departed Okinawa en route to the Kingdom of Thailand Jan. 25 to participate in Exercise Cobra Gold.

During the exercise, members of Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, and portions of Combat Logistics Battalion 31, will complete a variety of amphibious operations.

CG 12 is an annual multinational, multiservice exercise, hosted by the Kingdom of Thailand and developed in coordination with the United States.

“The Marines are chomping at the bit to go and are ready to leave Okinawa and start touring the Pacific and executing our mission,” said Lt. Col. Kevin A. Norton, commanding officer of BLT 1st Bn., 4th Marines. “During the exercise we’ll be

see **MEU** pg 5

Celebrating heritage betters humanity

Staff Sgt. Christopher S. Crabb

February is Black History Month — a time to bring attention to the struggles and accomplishments that have affected the African-American community in the past.

During this time, some may ask, "Why do we have a special month set aside for Black History?"

The idea for an observance honoring the great contributions of African-Americans started with the establishment of Negro History Week. It was proposed by Carter G. Woodson, a black historian known by many as the father of black history.

As we know, history tends to repeat itself when we fail to learn from our mistakes. This is where Black History Month comes in with an answer to the problem. It can teach us much of what is needed to bridge the gap amid racially constructed communities and gives us all the opportunity to recognize the contributions African-Americans have made to America.

In 1915, Woodson and the Rev. Jesse E. Moorland co-founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Their goal was to research and bring awareness to the largely ignored, yet crucial role African-Americans played in American and world history. The following year, Woodson published and circulated his findings in *The Journal of Negro History*. He founded the publication with the hope that it would dismiss popular mistruths. He also hoped to educate African-Americans about their cultural background and inspire them with a sense of pride in their race.

The son of former slaves and the second African-American to receive a degree from Harvard University, Woodson came to understand the value of education.

He also felt the importance of preserving one's heritage and, with his passionate avocation, the fraternity Omega Psi Phi created Negro History and Literature Week in 1920. In 1926, Woodson moved to change the name to Negro History Week. The month of February was selected for the celebration as a way to honor of the birth of two men whose actions

drastically altered the future of African-Americans: Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. President who issued the Emancipation Proclamation was born Feb. 12, and Frederick Douglass, one of the nation's foremost abolitionists was born Feb. 14.

Woodson died April 3, 1950, but his work continued on with the celebration of Negro History Week which was adopted by cities and organizations across the country. This observance proved especially important during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, a time when the inhumane and unequal treatment of black people in America was being challenged and overturned.

During the black power movement of the 1970s, racial pride and the significance of collective cultural values were emphasized. This prompted the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History to change Negro History Week

to Black History Week.

Black History Week became known as Black History Month in 1976.

Black History Month is now recognized and widely celebrated by the entire nation on both academic and commercial levels. The ASALH continues to promote, preserve and research black history and culture year-round. This year's theme "African-Americans and the Civil War" honors the efforts of people of African descent to destroy slavery and inaugurate universal freedom in the U.S. The theme, chosen by the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History urges all Americans to study and reflect on the value of their contributions to the nation.

I strongly encourage everyone to take an afternoon to attend an observance. It doesn't have to be about your nationality or background. Observances are open to everyone. We have the benefit of learning and growing through our mistakes. We should not abandon this opportunity to better ourselves. Contact your unit's equal opportunity representative to learn more.

Crabb is the equal opportunity representative for Combat Logistics Regiment 37.

"We have the benefit of learning and growing through our mistakes. We should not abandon this opportunity to better ourselves."

Staff Sgt. Christopher S. Crabb

AROUND THE CORPS



Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta announced that he is taking the F-35B short-takeoff/vertical landing aircraft off probation a year ahead of schedule. The variant achieved all test flight and point requirements ahead of schedule, successfully completed ship trials onboard the USS Wasp, tested Mission Systems Block 1B software, and accomplished 268 vertical landings. The Marine Corps is slated to buy 340 F-35B models, and 80 F-35C models. The F-35B STOVL, shown above, will replace the USMC AV-8B Harrier. *Courtesy photo*



Cpl. Jason Misener, second from left, walks with an interpreter and Afghan National Army soldiers after examining the soldiers' targets during a weapon calibration exercise at the ANA noncommissioned officer academy on Forward Operating Base Delhi, Afghanistan, Jan. 25. Misener is a rifleman with the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Embedded Training Team. The ANA soldiers are with 2nd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps. *Photo by Photo by Cpl. Reece Lodder*



Japanese Soldiers with the Western Army Infantry Regiment, Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, conduct amphibious training at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, Calif., Jan. 22. The JGSDF are at NAB Coronado to participate in Exercise Iron Fist alongside the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit. Boats are one of many amphibious means the Marine Corps uses to move troops ashore in an expeditionary manner. *Photo by Cpl. John Robbatt III*

OKINAWA MARINE

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NORTHERN BUREAU

Camp Hansen

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Camp Kinser

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Winner, 2010 DoD Thomas Jefferson Award
Best Tabloid Format Newspaper

Sights aligned on Far East Division Matches

Staff Sgt. Ken Melton

OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

CAMP HANSEN — Marines from various units throughout the Pacific competed in the Far East Division Matches Jan. 13 to Feb. 3.



Marines from the Pacific region use telescopes to look for shot groups during the annual Far East Division Matches at Camp Hansen Jan. 31. During the marksmanship competition, shooters compete for individual medals as well as unit trophies.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Ken Melton

The competition serves as a starting point for Marines who can go on to compete at the national and international levels.

“We use these competitions to recruit for the Marine Corps Shooting teams that compete worldwide,” said Gunnery Sgt. Christopher R. Stephens, head coach of the U.S. Marine Corps rifle team and commandant of the Marine Corps’ representative for the Far East Division Matches. “If anyone wins a medal here they automatically receive an invitation to the Marine Corps championship later this year.”

Established in 1901, the purpose of these matches is to enhance the marksmanship proficiency and combat readiness of the Marine Corps.

“Every Marine’s a rifleman; battles are won by the guy carrying a rifle,” said Stephens. “This competition shows you the importance of the fundamentals of marksmanship.”

The competition is organized into two parts: individual matches, where shooters compete for medals authorized for wear on their uniforms; and team matches, where teams compete for a unit trophy.

“There is no second, third or fourth place. So whoever wins the trophy takes home the glory,” said Stephens.

To participate in the rifle matches, a shooter must meet the minimum qualification of rifle sharpshooter and must be given permission by their respective command to dedicate three weeks of their time toward the training.

“It’s not limited to just good shooters but anyone who wants to come out and learn with permission from their command,” said Stephens.

During the competition, shooters fire both the M16A4 service rifle and M9 pistol and complete coaches’ course training.

“There isn’t a better place to learn (marksmanship),” said Gunnery Sgt. Larry J. Arnold, a competitor and the detachment chief for civil affairs, III Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group, III MEF. “When you have so much experience and knowledge you can always learn from it no matter how well you normally shoot.”



“My data book is filled with little reminders of what I need to do, like ‘Trust your sights!’” said Gunnery Sgt. Larry J. Arnold, the detachment chief for civil affairs, III Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group, III MEF. Arnold is one of 145 Marines competing in this year’s Far East Division Matches.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Ken Melton

When firing, the rifle Marines shoot from the standing position at the 200-yard line, the sitting position from the 300-yard line and the prone position from the 500-yard line.

The pistol course is fired with one hand from the 25-yard line for several different stages of firing.

“You have to have mental management,” said Arnold. “If you don’t have it you can fall apart. The better it is the better you shoot.”

Mental stress is not the only challenge these Marines can face while competing. They know it is a chance to use these shooting skills that can benefit them in a combat environment. This is something intramural sports do not come close to, according to Sgt. Jonathan E. Shue, a competitor and machinist with Marine Aviation Logistic Squadron 36, Marine Aircraft Group 24, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

“This is one of the only intramural sports that actually reflects combat training,” said Shue. “All the other sports are fun and a great way to build camaraderie, but this makes Marines better all around.”

The competition concluded today and an awards ceremony is scheduled to take place at the Camp Hansen’s Theater at 1 p.m.

Foreign officers visit Camp Courtney for exchange

Lance Cpl. Matthew J. Manning

OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

CAMP COURTNEY — Sixty Officers of the Japan Self-Defense Force Joint Staff College visited here as part of the Japan Observance Exchange Program Jan. 25.

The purpose of the JOEP is to allow members of both the U.S. Marine Corps and JSDF to share techniques and tactics, strengthening camaraderie and interoperability with each other.

“The officers were all O-6 and above,” said Maj. James M. Nixon, the JOEP officer for III Marine Expeditionary Force. “We hold about 50 of these exchanges a year where they come out and (we) give them a command brief on the III Marine Expeditionary Force.”

Opportunities like this allow the participants to share knowledge with each other, allowing a better working relationship in the event they need to operate together in a real-world situation, said Nixon.

“When we are put together in a (bilateral) task force like we were in Operation Tomodachi, we can spend more time focusing on the operation,” he said.

Since the Japan Joint Staff College is not exclusive to the JSDF, officers from other countries were present as well.

“We get a mix of nationalities depending on the different schools that come out,” said Nixon. “This time there were two officers from India. The rest were in the Japan Ground, Air or Maritime Self-Defense Force.”

The visit consisted of a command brief presented by Nixon followed by a presentation given by Brig. Gen. Craig Q. Timberlake, the commanding

general, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, III MEF.

Timberlake talked about his firsthand experience working with the JSDFs in Sendai during Operation Tomodachi, said Nixon.

“He also talked about how the Marine Corps and the United States military operate in a joint-type of environment,” he said.

This was an important portion of the exchange because the Japanese are moving more towards a joint environment in their military community, according to Nixon.

Following Timberlake’s presentation, the general answered questions the visiting officers had.

“Today, I learned the Marine Corps has a great ability to deploy Marines and equipment and the ability to implement this deployment capability,” said Col. Yoshinoeu Sasaki, a pilot with the JASDF. “I also learned about Operation Tomodachi and I was able to see the goodwill the Marine Corps has to those who are in need.”

The speed and effectiveness the Marines with III MEF showed when responding to the earthquake and tsunami last year was the basis of many of the questions asked during the brief.

“I was impressed at the Marine Corps speed of operation; how quickly Marines arrived to help after the earthquakes last year,” said Capt. Touri Sasaki, a gunnery officer with the JMSDF. “I think the Marine Corps has a ‘Samurai Spirit.’ This spirit was shown when the Marines first arrived for Operation Tomodachi when they offered a silent prayer for the victims of the disaster.”

“I would like to see more interaction between the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the Marine Corps,” he said. “Working together will make us better.”

BRIEFS

USNH REDUCED SERVICES FEB. 6

The U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa will have reduced services Feb. 6.

Routine medical and administrative business will be limited. Emergency care will still be available in the Emergency Department. Pre-existing clinic and surgical appointments will remain as scheduled for the day.

For more information, contact the appropriate clinic or the USNH Public Affairs Office at 643-7294

BE AWARE OF RED CROSS SCAM TARGETING MILITARY FAMILIES

The American Red Cross' Office of Investigations, Compliance and Ethics warns of a scam targeting military families.

The scam is initiated when a telephone call is received from an individual who identifies themselves as a representative of the Red Cross and informs the victim that their deployed military member has been injured. They then ask for personal identifying information on the service member. In other instances, they have asked for donations. This is a scam and should be reported immediately to your local law enforcement agency.

Additionally, military family members are urged not to provide any information regarding the service member. Use caution when using social media and do not provide sensitive information on military member's activities, location or personal information as it pertains to training or deployment.

American Red Cross representatives will only contact military members and dependents directly in a response to an emergency message initiated by family members. The American Red Cross will work with the service member's chain of command to notify family members in person.

Additionally, the American Red Cross does not contact anyone if a deployed military member has been injured while serving overseas. Any notification of injury will be conducted by the military member's unit.

For more information, contact your unit of Family Readiness Officer.

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT SEMINAR

The Kadena Chapel Protestant Community is sponsoring a marriage Enrichment Seminar on Feb. 4 from 8:30-11 a.m. at the Kadena Officer's Club. A breakfast buffet will be provided.

RSVP by e-mailing daniel.call@kadena.af.mil. A limited number of couples can attend. Reservations are first come, first served.

SHROVE PANCAKE DINNER

The Kadena Chapel is hosting a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Feb. 21 at Chapel 3. There will be dinner, along with crafts and games for children.

For more information, e-mail anna.frank.ctr@kadena.af.mil or call the chapel office at 634-1288.

TO SUBMIT A BRIEF, send an e-mail to okinawamarine.mccb.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.

New policy minimizes MMA injuries

Lance Cpl. Brianna Turner

OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

CAMP FOSTER — III Marine Expeditionary Force and Marine Corps Installations Pacific leadership signed a policy letter Jan. 19, outlining the procedures required for Marines and sailors to safely participate in off-duty mixed martial arts competitions.

The policy letter, III MEF/MCIPAC Policy Letter 1-12, states that participating in off-duty events is authorized, however, there are a series of steps a Marine or sailor must take to ensure their safety.

Commanders must conduct an operational risk analysis and apply operational risk management assessments before authorizing Marines and sailors to participate in MMA competitions, according to the new policy.

The assessments must include, at a minimum, the skills, fitness and experience of the Marine or sailor requesting to participate in the competition, event rules, and if the activity is officially sanctioned by a recognized MMA governing authority. A list of personal protective equipment used during the competition is also required in the assessment. Other requirements include location of the nearest medical facility, command notification procedures in the event of an injury and local laws that may impact the sponsorship or participation in



III Marine Expeditionary Force and Marine Corps Installations Pacific Policy Letter 1-12 was signed Jan. 19. This letter outlines the steps Marines and sailors must follow in order to participate in off-duty mixed martial arts events. Photo by Pfc. Mike Granahan

MMA type events and activities.

"It is important to be aware of possible injuries so you know what to look for," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Tyler J. Wharton, a hospital corpsman with the Camp Foster Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Therapy Clinic. "Anterior cruciate ligament and medial collateral ligament injuries are common in MMA because of leg locks, and head trauma is common due to grappling."

Participating in MMA can be very beneficial for service members as long as they are taking the proper safety precautions.

"Marines and sailors should be given the opportunity to compete outside of the military because as young service members get involved in MCMAP, they are introduced to the

different types of martial arts that build the program," said Gunnery Sgt. Christopher J. Kessler, a martial arts instructor trainer and a coach for the Military Alliance Fight Team. "Competing in off-duty competitions gives them a chance to further explore specific genres, as well as continually keeping service members combat ready."

While Kessler believes Marines and sailors should be able to participate in martial arts competitions, he agrees that safety is paramount.

"Completing proper ORM and ORA is crucial because safety is always the main concern regardless of what we are doing," said Kessler. "The Marine Corps is a constantly ready force, so it is important to avoid injuries whenever possible."

Summit provides open forum for future



U.S. Consul General Raymond F. Greene speaks to III Marine Expeditionary Force commanders during a commanders' summit at the Ocean Breeze Club on Camp Foster Jan. 30. The purpose of the summit was to provide a venue to discuss current issues, future developments and improvements throughout the MEF and Marine Corps Installations Pacific. Photo by Lance Cpl. Mike Granahan

FIRE from pg 1

Camp Hansen and Kin Town.

"It is important to work together in the case a natural disaster strikes us, as the camp is so close to us in the community. I am glad that the agreement is being renewed," said Tsuyoshi Gibu, Kin Town mayor.

The agreement will also improve public safety by improving the planning and communication between the two fire departments, said Col. David P. Olszowy, the Camp Hansen commander.

"We will have joint training exercises in the future with the two departments at the Camp Hansen joint training facility," Olszowy said.

Gibu said he hopes there will be an exchange of knowledge and improved friendship as a result.

"The communication channel with Camp Butler Fire Department has been there for a fire, but the emergency response and rescue operation are now added," said Naoyuki Igei, chief of Kin District Fire Department Headquarters. "This will enhance cooperation at the time of a natural disaster." The agreement will give us opportunities for joint training that will lead to equipment updates and morale building. We will be able to work together on emergency response and rescue operations during natural disasters."

A recent example of this partnership occurred when the Marine Corps Base Camp Butler Fire Department provided support to the Chatan Fire Department during an off base fire in the Diawa Electrical Warehouse last October.

The updated agreement was expanded to include multiple disaster scenarios.

"It has expanded the focus of the agreement," said Olszowy. "In the past it just dealt with fire fighting, but the Great East Japan Earthquake taught us that tsunamis and earthquakes also need to be included."

Olszowy said the new agreement is more comprehensive, including plans for fire fighting, disaster relief, search and rescue, as well as medical services.

The response time to a crisis will also be decreased by this agreement.

"If there is a fire on Camp Hansen, the Kin Town fire department will come to assist the firefighting efforts," said Olszowy. "We get mutual support from Camp Schwab and Camp Courtney, but they can take 30 to 45 minutes to get here. The Kin Town fire department is literally right around the corner and can be here in less than five minutes."

Olszowy said the new agreement enables the Camp Hansen fire department to respond to situations in Kin Town as well.

"I think this agreement is the first step in a more comprehensive disaster relief plan for the island of Okinawa and the different municipalities that are here," said Olszowy. "What I hope is that we were able to learn lessons from the tsunami up on (mainland Japan) and develop plans for evacuation in the event of another disaster."

The previous agreement limited the joint effort between the two fire departments to a few events.

"Until now, only in case of fire they would work with each other," said Gibu. "From today on, they can now also support each other in any emergency situation."



Marines with Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, are transported aboard amphibious assault vehicles to the amphibious dock landing ship USS Tortuga from Camp Schwab Jan. 26. In February, elements of the 31st MEU, including BLT 1st Bn., 4th Marines, and portions of Combat Logistics Battalion 31, will participate in the multilateral training exercise Cobra Gold 2012 in the Kingdom of Thailand alongside military participants from the Kingdom of Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, Singapore, Republic of Korea, the United States and representatives from approximately 20 additional countries. Photo by Cpl. Garry Welch

MEU from pg 1

conducting our normal MEU missions, which are amphibious raids, amphibious assaults, helicopter assaults, small-boat raids and humanitarian disaster relief operations."

Aboard various Navy ships with Amphibious Squadron 11, including USS Tortuga, the Marines and sailors are underway to execute the multinational events the MEU is used to. For some, however, this is their first MEU deployment and, for even fewer, their first deployment ever.

"At first I was disappointed that my first deployment wasn't going to be combat and that I was going to be on ship doing exercises for three months," said Lance Cpl. Cosmo Peters, a machine gunner with Company A, BLT 1st Bn., 4th Marines. "However, after talking to some of my seniors, I realized that although it's not a combat deployment, it's beneficial how it further prepares us for a combat deployment and builds better ties with our allies."

The 31st MEU is scheduled to participate in various multilateral raids and evacuation exercises



Marines with Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, 31st MEU, board the amphibious dock landing ship USS Tortuga Jan. 25. Elements of the 31st MEU, including BLT 1st Bn., 4th Marines, and portions of Combat Logistics Battalion 31, are scheduled to participate in the multilateral training exercise Cobra Gold 2012 in the Kingdom of Thailand. Photo by Cpl. Jonathan G. Wright

during the exercise alongside military forces from the Kingdom of Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, Singapore, Republic of Korea, the United States, and representatives from other countries. Members of the MEU will also conduct multiple community outreach programs, including the renovation of public schools and providing children with school supplies.

Other nations that have been invited to participate in the exercise as part of

the multinational planning augmentation team include Australia, France, Canada, the United Kingdom, Bangladesh, Italy, India, Nepal, Republic of Philippines and Vietnam.

After this, we'll be able to conduct raids with fellow Marines from other partner nations and allies, said Peters.

"When I come back I will be better educated to pass my knowledge down to any new Marines in the unit—a cycle that continues," Peters said.

SCHOOL from pg 1

Hosted by the Kingdom of Thailand and supported by the U.S. military, CG 12 is an annual, multinational exercise designed to increase regional peace and stability.

Marine engineers are learning a great deal from their Thai counterparts, said Sgt. Joshua Sheets, a civil affairs noncommissioned officer with the Civil Affairs Detachment, III Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group, III MEF.

The site was chosen based on genuine need for improvement, according to Sheets, who said Ban Wang Lam Khao is not a popular tourist destination and does not have much Western influence. Nevertheless, the Marines are building rapport with the elementary students and local community.

The project in Ban Wang Lam Khao is one of six humanitarian and civic assistance projects being conducted throughout Thailand as part of CG 12.

U.S. service members are working side-by-side with military personnel from the Kingdom of Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Japan.

Other nations that have been invited to participate in the exercise as part of the multinational planning augmentation team include Australia, France, Canada, the United Kingdom, Bangladesh, Italy, India, Nepal, Republic of the Philippines and Vietnam.

CG 12 also incorporates a command-post exercise and a field training exercise. CG 12 is scheduled to officially begin with a ceremony Feb. 7 and conclude Feb. 17.

Okinawa blooms with cherry blossoms

Lance Cpl. Courtney G. White

OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

The streets of Nago Central Park were filled with music as members of the III Marine Expeditionary Force Band serenaded the attendees of the Nago Cherry Blossom Festival.

Every year cherry trees begin to bloom, and from January to February visitors from the island as well as tourists from off island come to appreciate the awe of spring.

The first cherry trees on the island of Okinawa were planted by school children in 1928 at the Nago Castle site. Since then, school children have planted cherry trees annually — now an estimated 20,000 trees cover the area.

Nago, the largest city in the northern part of Okinawa, is best known for the earliest “sakura,” Japanese for cherry blossoms, and “hanami,” Japanese for

cherry blossom viewing in Japan.

Nago hosts the Nago Cherry Blossom Festival annually in Nago Central Park, attracting more than 270,000 people.

Entertainment for the festival varies each year. Past festival highlights have included cultural performers, such as taiko drummers and Eisa dancers.

This year’s entertainment was provided by the III Marine Expeditionary Force Band.

“The festival was a great experience because it put the Marines on display within the community and shows a softer side of the Marine Corps,” said Cpl. Eric N. Gonzales. “It felt great to be able to experience the Okinawan culture with its community members.”

The band performed really well, said Mayumi Uenishi, a spectator at the event.

“The festival was a good opportunity for those who do not get to go to a concert to hear their music,” said Uenishi.

In addition to the entertainment, the streets were filled with food vendors and carnival games.

“The food at the cherry blossom festival is impeccable,” said Chris D. Majewski, lead tour guide with MCCS Tours+. “There is everything from lamb to jerk chicken. It is one of the better festivals on island for food.”

The millions of pink blossoms create an incredible backdrop for all the festivities, said Majewski.

“The blossoms are only in bloom once a year,” said Majewski. “You have to be aware of their season of bloom if you are interested in seeing them.”

The hanami is a tradition which dates back hundreds of years and represents the end of winter and the beginning of spring and new life.

Though the Nago Cherry Blossom Festival took place late last month, the cherry blossoms are usually in bloom for about two weeks in early February depending on the weather.



Attendees of the Nago Cherry Blossom Festival walk along the path to the Nago Castle on Jan. 28. Photo by Lance Cpl. Courtney G. White



Members of the III Marine Expeditionary Force Band perform at the Nago Cherry Blossom Festival in Nago Central Park, Okinawa, Japan, Jan. 29. “We invite many people to perform for us, but the III MEF Band stands out because they look nice in the gorgeous uniform and play well,” said Satoru Mandai, director of Nago Junior Chamber. “They heighten the festive mood, so we asked them to play first (at the Sunday stage performance).” Photo by Hiroko Tamaki



Cherry Blossom Festival walk up site to view cherry blossoms
Photo by Courtney White



Cherry trees blossom near the Nago Castle site Jan. 28. Nago hosts the annual Nago Cherry Blossom Festival in Nago Central Park attracting more than 270,000 people. Entertainment for the festival included carnival games, food vendors, floral displays, karaoke competitions and performances by the III Marine Expeditionary Force band.

Photo by Lance Cpl. Courtney White



ON RAPPET

Kubasaki cadets descend cliff to ascend in life

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Mike Granahan

OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

“Snap, wrap, snap, lock — Move to the edge and get into a good, tight ‘L’ position, look over your right shoulder, say your last name ‘on rappel’ ... Go!”

These were the commands given to more than 40 cadets from Kubasaki High School’s Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps, who had the unique experience of participating in a rappel-training package offered at the Jungle Warfare Training Center in Camp Gonzalves.

Prior to executing the 70-foot rappel, cadets were given periods of instruction on knot-tying, preparing an improvised seat harness, safety and proper procedures for executing a descent.

After instruction, the students were qualified to serve as a belay for fellow cadets.

“The purpose of doing this is to instill confidence in the cadets and (develop) abilities to overcome challenges,” said retired Capt. Kenneth Gipson, senior Marine instructor for the program. “Coming down this large (cliff) is a challenge.”

Gipson emphasized that these types of confidence-building exercises are exactly what the MCJROTC is all about.

MCJROTC is not intended to be a recruiting program for the Marine Corps, said Gipson, whose responsibility it is to ensure lessons taught in the program extend far beyond the classroom.

Specifically, the program aims to develop character, leadership and civic responsibility.

Many of the students said the experience was fun.

“Everyone got some good experiences out of (this training), and it was a good time,” said cadet Jesse Tarker.

Tarker is one of thousands of students in more than 250 schools currently enrolled in the MCJROTC program, which challenges its participants to learn from their experiences, like rappelling, while in the program and apply them to real life.

Most of the students, like cadet Auston B. Cole, can’t wait to get the opportunity to do it again.

“It’s a great confidence builder,” said Cole. “I can’t wait to come back next year.”

A Cadet from Kubasaki High School’s Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps rappels down a cliff face at the Jungle Warfare Training Center at Camp Gonzalves Jan. 31.



Cadets from Kubasaki High School’s MCJROTC unit are given a period of instruction on tying an improvised seat harness during a rappel training package offered at the JWTC at Camp Gonzalves Jan. 31.

Marine applies JROTC lessons in Afghanistan



Sgt. Xuchill Laput, a regional fuel farm site manager with Bulk Fuel Platoon, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, checks the oil level in a pump aboard Forward Operating Base Whitehouse, Afghanistan, Jan. 18. The battalion is part of 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force, but is currently assigned to 2nd Marine Logistics Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force. Photo by Cpl. Katherine M. Solano

Cpl. Katherine M. Solano
2ND MLG (FORWARD)

From a young age, Sgt. Xuchill Laput, a fuel farm manager with 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), never really considered another option beside joining the military.

While he originally enlisted to become a combat engineer, over the years, Laput has come to appreciate the importance of being a bulk-fuel Marine. He recognizes that almost every mission requires fuel, and it is up to the Bulk Fuel Platoon to keep that mission motoring.

Laput says his interest in the military was solidified by one man in particular: his Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps instructor in high school, retired Senior Chief Petty Officer Mark Williams. While attending Lincoln High School in Stockton, Calif., Laput stayed involved with the JROTC program and says he learned so much from it. To this day, he continues to

return to visit his mentor.

"I grew up without a strong male figure," began Laput. "(Williams became) that figure for me in a lot of ways. He didn't tell me what to do, but he gave me advice on how to do the right thing, even in hard situations."

It is this lesson that Laput says has carried over most throughout his Marine Corps career, in general and as a bulk-fuel specialist. He says that everyone, not just Marines, should wake up in the morning with a goal to do the right thing throughout the day. This attitude carries over into his daily routine, which has led to Laput's appointment as the regional site manager.

Laput stressed the fact that every morning at the fuel farm, he and his Marines wake up early and go through an extensive checklist of all of the equipment.

He further explained the checklist procedures to include walking every inch of the fuel lines looking or searching for leaks and tears, checking valves, cleaning filters and ensuring

logbooks are accurate. While these procedures do not necessarily need to be done every day, the habit solidifies Laput's belief in doing the right thing.

The fact that Laput strives to do the right thing leads to other favorable attributes like leadership by example.

"I can't expect my Marines to do the checks and keep the farm up if I don't get up early and do it with them," Laput said.

His dedication to maintaining high standards at the Forward Operating Base Whitehouse fuel farm led his leadership to give him more responsibility. More specifically, Laput is now a manager of not one, but four fuel farms in the area. He says he intends to implement the same routine to keep military specifications and environmental regulations up to code at all four sites.

"The Marine Corps has taught me to make do with what you have," Laput concluded. "I'm going to take care of all the Marines (at each site). In turn, they will take care of the fuel farms."

Family visit leads to history lessons, reminiscing past

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Brianna Turner
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

A vacation in Japan, visiting with his family, and reminiscing about the past is what Ron Maines had planned when he came to Okinawa. What he found while taking a stroll down memory lane, however, was not what he expected.

While visiting Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Maines found four CH-46E helicopters he flew during Vietnam – he even has the serial numbers to prove they are the same aircraft.

Maines, a former captain in the Marine Corps, was a member of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 164, part of Marine Aircraft Group 16 in Vietnam.

Forty years later, Maines' son, Navy Lt. Mark T. Maines, is the chaplain for Camp Kinser. As part of the visit, Mark thought it would be nice if he arranged for his father to be able to look at the aircraft on the air station. Neither thought they would find the same helicopters Maines senior flew decades ago.

"I didn't expect them to still be flying. They were manufactured in 1966. It's great to see that they are still around," said Maines.

Seeing the old helicopters gave Maines the opportunity to reminisce about his past.

"Seeing my old (CH-)46s made me feel young again," he said. "It reminded me what it was like to be in the Marine Corps, and it makes me very proud."



Ron Maines, a former Marine captain, shares stories about his experience during Vietnam with staff noncommissioned officers and officers at Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262 at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma Jan. 20.

Ron Maines, left, and his son, Navy Lt. Mark T. Maines, right, stand with a CH-46E helicopter that Ron flew during Vietnam at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma Jan. 20.

After finding his old helicopter, now being used by Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262, Maines met with staff noncommissioned officers and officers from the squadron to share a few of his stories and experiences from Vietnam.

"It's great to know that this air station has such a deep history," said Capt. Michael D. Bryant, the maintenance material control officer for HMM-262, Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

The trip not only had Maines reflecting on his past, but it served as a way for he and his son to bond.

"This was a very special moment for my dad,"

said Mark. "It's great to share this cultural history together and have this military connection."

After leaving the military in 1972, Maines joined the Mission Aviation Fellowship for 12 years, where he flew single-engine Cessnas on church missions and for the government. He then became self-employed as a strategy consultant for businesses while still flying his personal plane.

In 2008, after 40 years and 7,000 hours of flight, Maines gave up flying.

"I now have a boat and nine grandchildren," he said. "It's not quite as fast but if I run out of gas, I'm in much less trouble."



Runners take off during the first leg of the 35th Annual Ginowan City Traffic Safety Campaign Relay Run Jan. 28. Marines based on Marine Corps Air Station Futenma participated in the competition, finishing 4th overall. Photo by Lance Cpl. Mike Granahan

Marines run with community for fun, safety

Lance Cpl. Mike Granahan
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

As runners gathered at the starting line, each competitor leaned forward anticipating the sound of the starting pistol, preparing to leave poor traffic awareness in their dust.

This was the scene as Marines from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma participated in the 35th Annual Ginowan City Traffic Safety Campaign Relay Run Jan. 28.

"This is an opportunity to come together and interact with

the common goal of promoting traffic safety," said Elena Takaho, the community relations specialist for MCAS Futenma.

Fifty-five teams participated in the race, which drew more than 900 participants.

"Everyone was happy to see us," said Lance Cpl. Tony Keys, an aviation communication technician with Marine Tactical Air Command Squadron 18, Marine Air Control Group 18, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force. "This is my first year participating, and I'll be happy to do it again next year."

The event is held annually to promote traffic safety and to help prevent driving under the influence, said Satoshi Miyagi, the executive committee member for the event.

Runners were required to abide by all traffic laws including stopping at all crosswalks when required. There were local volunteers posted at certain crosswalks directing traffic to facilitate safety during the run, said Sgt. Maj. Brent L. Cook, MCAS Futenma sergeant major.

Runners competed in the 14-kilometer relay race circling MCAS Futenma. Each leg of

the race was approximately 1,000 meters. Once competitors finished their section of the race, they passed a yellow sash to their teammates to continue the relay.

"Getting to see the interaction (between Marines and members of the community) is really heart-warming and beautiful," said Takaho.

The Marine team placed 4th overall in the competition. Regardless of the outcome, the interaction and theme of traffic safety awareness was the real winner of the competition, said Takaho.

Marines, families learn basic Japanese during free class

Pfc. Nicholas S. Ranum
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

Learning the Japanese language presents various difficulties and opportunities to both Marines and their families.

The difficulty of the language notwithstanding, learning Japanese provides service members and their families with opportunities to enhance their cultural awareness, communicate more efficiently, and to make interactions with local community members even more pleasant.

Basic Japanese classes are offered through the Marine Corps Community Services Personal Services Center. The classes are taught by bilingual volunteers and are offered on all Marine Corps facilities.

"Learning and using Japanese while in the local community creates a positive impression of our service members and their families, as it tells our Okinawan neighbors we respect their culture and want to learn more about it," said Joseph R. Cassidy, the program manager with Family Programs and Resources at the PSC.

The ability to communicate with Okinawan hosts, allows for easier transactions to take place in-town and on U.S. military installations.

"Knowing some Japanese enables a far greater understanding of what is available off



Michiko Urasaki, a community relations specialist with the Personal Services Center, volunteers her time to teach a Japanese language class at the Personal Services Center on Camp Foster Jan. 26. Basic Japanese classes are offered through the Marine Corps Community Services Personal Services Center. The classes are taught by bilingual volunteers and offered on all Marine Corps facilities. Photo illustration by Pfc. Nicholas S. Ranum

base, but it also allows service members and their families to interact and communicate more effectively," said Cassidy. "It also helps with meeting and making friends in the Okinawan community."

The act of making friends with Okinawans improves the U.S. service members image and allows for neighbors to communicate easier. Learning Japanese makes that more attainable, according to Michiko Urasaki, a community relations specialist with the PSC.

"I feel it makes them more comfortable to venture off base and explore what the local community has to offer, particularly the shopping and eating venues," said Urasaki. "It also allows them to interact and talk with their neighbors, especially if they live off base and helps them learn more about the Japanese and Okinawan cultures."

To learn more about Japanese language classes offered, contact the Camp Foster PSC at 645-2104.

In Theaters Now

FEBRUARY 3 - 9

FOSTER

TODAY Red Tails (PG13), 6 p.m.; Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close (PG13), 9 p.m.
SATURDAY The Muppets (PG), noon; Joyful Noise (PG13), 3 p.m.; Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close (PG13), Immortals (R), 9 p.m.
SUNDAY The Muppets (PG), 1 p.m.; Joyful Noise (PG13), 4 p.m.; One for the Money (PG13), 8 p.m.
MONDAY Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close (PG13), 7 p.m.
TUESDAY The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1 (PG13), 7 p.m.
WEDNESDAY The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1 (PG13), 7 p.m.
THURSDAY One for the Money (PG13), 7 p.m.

KADENA

TODAY Arthur Christmas (PG), 6 p.m.; New Year's Eve (PG13), 9 p.m.
SATURDAY Arthur Christmas (PG), noon and 3 p.m.; Red Tails (PG13), 6 and 9 p.m.
SUNDAY Arthur Christmas (PG), 1 p.m.; Red Tails (PG13), 4 and 7 p.m.
MONDAY Red Tails (PG13), 7 p.m.
TUESDAY Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close (PG13), 7 p.m.
WEDNESDAY Contraband (R), 7 p.m.
THURSDAY Contraband (R), 7 p.m.

COURTNEY

TODAY One for the Money (PG13), 6 and 9 p.m.
SATURDAY The Muppets (PG), 2 p.m.; The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1 (PG13), 6 p.m.
SUNDAY Contraband (R), 2 and 6 p.m.
MONDAY The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1 (PG13), 7 p.m.
TUESDAY Closed
WEDNESDAY Red Tails (PG13), 7 p.m.
THURSDAY Closed

FUTENMA

TODAY The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1 (PG13), 6:30 p.m.
SATURDAY One for the Money (PG13), 4 and 7 p.m.
SUNDAY The Muppets (PG), 4 p.m.; The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1 (PG13), 7 p.m.
MONDAY Contraband (R), 6:30 p.m.
TUESDAY-THURSDAY Closed

KINSER

TODAY War Horse (PG13), 6:30 p.m.
SATURDAY Arthur Christmas (PG), 3 p.m.; War Horse (PG13), 6:30 p.m.
SUNDAY Arthur Christmas (PG), 3 p.m.; New Year's Eve (PG13), 6:30 p.m.
MONDAY Closed
TUESDAY Closed
WEDNESDAY One for the Money (PG13), 3 and 6:30 p.m.
THURSDAY Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close (PG13), 6:30 p.m.

HANSEN

TODAY New Year's Eve (PG13), 7 p.m.
SATURDAY Contraband (R), 6 and 9 p.m.
SUNDAY New Year's Eve (PG13), 2 p.m.; A Very Harold & Kumar Christmas (R), 5:30 p.m.
MONDAY One for the Money (PG13), 6 and 9 p.m.
TUESDAY One for the Money (PG13), 7 p.m.
WEDNESDAY New Year's Eve (PG13), 7 p.m.
THURSDAY Red Tails (PG13), 7 p.m.

SCHWAB

TODAY Contraband (R), 7 p.m.
SATURDAY The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1 (PG13), 5 p.m.
SUNDAY In Time (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.

BATTLE SITES TOUR - FEB. 10

- Learn about the Battle of Okinawa during a tour of the island. Visit significant battle sites to include the Kakazu Ridge, Japanese Naval Underground Headquarters, Peace Prayer Park and the Camp Kinser Museum. Bus will leave Camp Foster Fieldhouse at 7:10 a.m. and MCAS Futenma USO at 7:45 a.m. Sign up deadline is Feb. 7.

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 Friday of every month from 9-11 a.m. Participants will 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:

Count from 1-10

“ichi, ne, san,
yon, go, locu,
nana, hachi,
que, jiew.”

(pronounced:

e-chi, knee, sahn,

yon, go, ro-ku,

nah-nah, ha-chi,

k-you, j-ew)



CHAPLAINS' CORNER

We need to be able to have a strong sense of identity and know who we are in order to be able to stand firm.

Personal identity key to success

Lt. Rodney Weaver
MACG 18 CHAPLAIN

“Bam! I’m a Styrofoam cup, yo.” If you have watched American Forces Network you have probably seen the commercial with the two aluminum cans promoting recycling. The conversation goes something like this: “Bam! I’m a Styrofoam cup, yo.” “Mikey what are you doing?” “I’m a Styrofoam cup, yo.” “Get that thing off your head. You look ridiculous!” “But I’m a Styrofoam cup, yo.” Mikey, the little aluminum can is not happy with who he is and is trying to be something he is not. His friend helps him to realize that recycling is the right thing to do.

For some people it is difficult to be on Okinawa. Most of us are far from friends, family and home. Okinawa is probably very different from what most of us are used to. We are definitely not in Kansas anymore.

Because of the differences, some of

us may try to be something we are not. No, I’m not talking about people wearing Styrofoam cups on their heads. The differences I’m talking about are making poor choices and getting into situations that compromise who we are.

In other words, we need to be able to have a strong sense of identity and know who we are in order to be able to stand firm. One anchor that can help us to be strong is our faith. It can be easy to get away from your faith, but I would like to challenge each of you to learn and know what you believe and to grow deeper in your faith.

You can also look to our core values of honor, courage and commitment as a source of strength and guidance.

Often, when we try to be something different than who we are, we lose sight of our core values, and stray from our faith. If you are having a hard time I would like to encourage you to talk to your chaplain. No matter what your faith, your chaplain will be able to assist you.

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