

IWAKUNI APPROACH

Issue No. 18 Vol. 4 | Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan



Strong Man Competition | P. 12

LANCE CPL. JENNIFER PIRANTE

Ryan Menzies, 191-and-over men's weight grow division competitor, madly pulls the rope during the Humvee pull during the Iwakuni Strongman Competition at the Penny Lake field here April 30. Menzies carried 280 pounds during the farmer's walk across 100 meters, 26 7-ton tire flips, 41.53 seconds on the iron cross, 14 reps during the steel log press, and 24.21 seconds during the Humvee pull competition.

Purple heart regulations changed

Capt. Patrick Boyce
DEPUTY PAO M&RA

A decision last month by the commandant of the Marine Corps will allow more Marines and Sailors who served with Marine commands in combat to receive the Purple Heart for mild traumatic brain injuries (mTBI) or concussions. Under the Marine Corps' revised criteria announced in Marine Administrative Message (MARADMIN) 245/11, the Marine Corps will no longer limit the award of the Purple Heart for mTBI/concussions solely to those cases where the Marine lost consciousness.

According to Lee Freund, head of Military Awards Branch at

Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, the purpose of this new MARADMIN is, "To get the word out on the commandant's decision to revise the previous Purple Heart criteria for mTBI [and] to inform Marines and sailors serving with Marine commands in combat of the basic rules for determining Purple Heart eligibility for all types of wounds or injuries."

MTBI/concussions, which can be caused by a blast or blow to the head, will now qualify for the Purple Heart if a medical officer makes a disposition that the Marine is "not fit for full duty" for more than 48 hours due to the persistent signs, symptoms,

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Senior enlisted Bat says goodbye to heavy-hearted squadron

Cpl. Claudio A. Martinez
IWAKUNI APPROACH STAFF

The former Combat Logistics Company 36 first sergeant reported for duty as the Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242 sergeant major during a relief-and-appointment ceremony at the VMFA(AW)-242 hangar here May 6.

Sgt. Maj. Michael J. Pritchard replaced Sgt. Maj. Steven L. Brown, who is slated to become the station's senior enlisted advisor to Col. James C. Stewart, station commanding officer, during a relief-and-appointment ceremony scheduled for June 17.

Although Brown has only served as the VMFA(AW)-242 Bats' sergeant major for nine months, his impact on the squadron has been apparent to everyone within the unit.

"He has done some amazing things in this squadron in the last nine months," said Lt. Col. Richard E. Petersen, VMFA(AW)-242 commanding officer. "To be able to take his experience and pass that on, to not only the staff noncommissioned officers and the younger enlisted Marines, but also to the officers — to mentor them and teach them how to be better officers and Marines; he's done a great job."

As testified by the squadron's statistics, its readiness has remained one of the best in the Pacific Theater since Brown took post as the Bats' sergeant major. Since he came aboard, the squadron has flown more than 2,794.6 hours with approximately 1,910 sorties and, according to several Marines in the squadron, morale has been

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NMCA, peers recognize NCO leaders with award

Lance Cpl. Jennifer Pirante
IWAKUNI APPROACH STAFF

Marines of Combat Logistics Company 36 had a reason to celebrate leadership when two of its noncommissioned officers were presented with Navy and Marine Corps Association Leadership awards here April 29.

Members of the Navy and Marine Corps Association select peer-nominated service members every year to receive the leadership awards. The leadership awards exist to recognize outstanding service members of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

Maj. Andres H. Caceres-Solari, CLC-36 commanding officer, presented Sgt. James C. Dixon, CLC-36 refrigeration and air conditioning technician, and Sgt. Adislao A. Bibanco, CLC-36 automotive organizational mechanic, with large eagle statues in front of a squadron formation on behalf of unwavering dedication to the Marine Corps as platoon sergeants.

"The best thing about these two Marines is that they can operate independently," Caceres-Solari said. "I can easily put Sgt. Dixon and Sgt. Bibanco in charge of our entire maintenance section and forget about them; I don't have to supervise because I know they are going to do very well."

The awards Dixon and Bibanco received were signed by the III Marine Expeditionary Force commanding general, placing recognition on a high platform for getting the job done.

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CHAPLAIN’S CORNER

‘From a mother’s perspective’

Jennifer Baker
GUEST COLUMNIST

Editor’s note: Jennifer Baker is a guest writer this week for the Chaplain’s Corner.

You have almost made it through a trip to the Marine Corps Exchange with your children without tears or screams. You are in line to check out, feeling pretty good about yourself, when the kids suddenly spot a treat they must have.

Your face starts to get hot; you can feel your heart beating a little faster as you think of what could happen next. Then it comes, “Mom, can I have this treat? Dad, I have been so good.”

The moment the word ‘no’ comes out of your mouth, you brace yourself for the blow out of tears, kicking, screaming, throwing, and all eyes on you.

How embarrassing. If you don’t have kids yet, maybe you can remember a time you were kicking and screaming on the floor and embarrassing your parents.

I think it is safe to say we all have a few of those memories.

Those moments make you wonder why you decided to have another child, or they make you start to think if anyone would notice if you just slipped out the door and left your child there for someone else to claim.

But, they’re yours, and you love them. In fact, even after a few of those embarrassing scenes, I am still proud to call my kids mine.

I am so glad I get the chance to raise them and watch them grow into adults. I am so proud to call my children Bakers.

So, it doesn’t surprise me to read in Hebrews that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters and God is not ashamed to call us his children.

If we are willing to claim him as God, he is more than willing to claim us as his.

I embarrass God all the time. I give him many reasons to wonder why he made me, or to check for the closest exit.

Instead, he picks me up off the floor, maybe gives me a little whack on the butt, and walks side by side with me, teaching me how to behave.

He reminds me others are watching me and watching how I react to the hardships of life.

He is the perfect parent, teaching by example, always ready to give instruction when I need it and comfort when I need it.

I don’t like to say no to my children. I wish I could give them everything they ask for.

Sometimes it is easier to say yes.

But, I know that is not the best thing for my children and it will not make my life easier in the long run.

My children need to learn what they want isn’t always what they need. It is not always the best thing for them.

So, just as it is hard for us as parents to say no to our children sometimes, we should remember that it must be hard for God to say no to us sometimes.

He has our best interest at heart.

He desires the absolute best for us and sometimes that means saying no to our desires.

But, it is easier to accept when we know he loves us and is proud to call us his children.



LANCE CPL. CHARLIE CLARK

KADENA AIR BASE, Japan — Cpl. Keith A. Fleming, a Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 533 embarkation/logistics specialist, steps off the KC-130 that transported him and the rest of VMFA(AW)-533’s main body here from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, May 4. As an embarkation/logistics specialist, Fleming helped transport all of the gear VMFA(AW)-533 needs to complete its training during deployments.

Hawks soar into Okinawa to prep for joint service training

Lance Cpl. Charlie Clark
IWAKUNI APPROACH STAFF

KADENA AIR BASE, Japan — The main body for Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 533, an F/A-18 Hornet squadron based out of Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C., landed here May 4 in preparation for the Marine Division Tactics Course.

MDTC is a graduate level course for pilots to improve their efficiency in the air-to-air arena. This course is significant because it is the first time MDTC has been conducted in the Western Pacific.

“As a unit deployment program squadron, we aren’t available for the opportunity to get this kind of training while deployed,” said Lt. Col. George B. Rowell, VMFA(AW)-533’s

commanding officer.

The Unit Deployment Program is a program set up by the commandant of the Marine Corps and is focused toward deploying units to the Westpac for periods of approximately six months.

Marine Aircraft Group 12 is hosting VMFA(AW)-533’s training while in Westpac. With

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More Marines with concussion or mild brain injury qualify for Purple Heart

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or findings of impairment from the concussion, provided the disposition was made within seven days of the event.

This change is retroactive to the start of the Global War on Terrorism, which began Sept. 11, 2001.

The two basic eligibility requirements for award of the Purple Heart established in executive order and Department of Defense regulations remain unchanged: the wound or injury must be the result of direct or indirect enemy action and must have required treatment by a medical officer at the time of the wound or injury.

However, MARADMIN 245/11 provides revised criteria by which Marine commanders will apply the second of these eligibility requirements to cases of mTBI/concussion where the visible signs and symptoms of the severity of the injury may not be apparent. “Very mild concussions that resolve quickly without prolonged impairment will not qualify for the Purple Heart,” said Freund.

Prior to release of the MARADMIN, an mTBI/concussion only qualified for the Purple Heart if there had been an observed loss of consciousness (LOC). As explained in the message, recent medical research has shown that an mTBI/concussion without LOC can result in more serious brain impairment than earlier believed. Symptoms of mTBI/concussion can include headaches, intolerance of sunlight, temporary amnesia and decreased cognitive functions.

MTBI/concussion is a physical injury, caused by the inflammation of brain tissue that can have long-lasting effects if not diagnosed and managed properly.

“We’ve learned a lot more about mTBI and concussions during the last six months,” said Freund.

According to Cmdr. Dave Tarantino, director for clinical programs for Marine headquarters’ health services, traumatic brain injury is divided into three categories from most to least severe: severe or penetrating, moderate and mild. Severe or penetrating TBI and moderate TBI have previously qualified for the Purple Heart because those injuries require evacuation to a medical treatment facility where the injury can be treated by a medical officer. However, there are no definitive medical tests to diagnose mTBI or determine its severity.

“In order to assess mTBI and concussions, corpsmen and medical officers rely on a combination of history, physical examination, clinical signs and symptoms and other findings,” said Tarantino.

DoD guidelines in effect in the combat theater for the last year require that any service member who is involved in a potentially concussive event must be placed under a 24-hour period of observation to determine if they have suffered an mTBI/concussion. That period of observation can be extended if the member exhibits signs or symptoms of an mTBI/concussion. However, evaluation by a medical officer or assignment to administrative light duty solely for the purpose of observation or screening will not be considered justification for the Purple Heart.

If a medical officer determines that the Marine is “not fit for full duty” for a period greater than 48 hours due to signs, symptoms, or findings of impairment from the mTBI/concussion caused by enemy action, then the injured Marine’s command will indicate that information in the remarks section of the Marine’s Personnel Casualty Report.

In some cases, the Marine’s final disposition may not be known when the initial PCR is released. Additional medical information can be included in supplemental PCRs.

Given the natural resilience of the brain, combined with proper diagnosis and management, most Marines who have suffered from mTBI/concussion recover fully and experience a very high return to duty rate, explained Tarantino.

Marines, to include veteran Marines, whose medical record contains documentation that a prior mTBI/concussion was caused by enemy action since Sept. 11, 2001 -- meeting the revised criteria -- may submit a reclama through their original chain of command at the time of injury.

“The Marine Corps will continue to maintain the importance of the Purple Heart Medal at the same level as when it was first approved for combat wounded Marines during World War II,” said Freund.

Marines should refer to MARADMIN 245/11 for specific award criteria and reclama submission information. Reclamas can be scanned and emailed to hqmc.manpower.ph_mTBI_reclama@usmc.mil or sent via regular post to Commandant of the Marine Corps (MMA), Headquarters Marine Corps, 3280 Russell Road, Quantico, VA, 22134-5103.

NCOs receive leadership awards by peer nomination

LEADERSHIP FROM PAGE 1

“I got it just for doing my job,” Dixon said. “At the time I was submitted for the award, I was the maintenance platoon sergeant. Our job is just to make sure the Marines get fed, get done what they need to get done and make sure we get Marines to take up volunteer opportunities.”

Dixon and Bibanco also held billets as shop chiefs of their respective departments where much of their day in and day out consists of leadership, mentorship and management of junior NCOs and enlisted personnel.

“It caught me by surprise,” said Bibanco. “Not a surprise because I didn’t think I was a good leader, but to actually get it, it feels awesome. It goes to show hard work and dedication, doing what you were told, doing what you were taught, pays off in the long run.”

Dixon and Bibanco received many congratulations from fellow Marines due to their contributions, which have gone in to improving the unit as a whole, whether on deployment or in garrison. Both sergeants set the example and set a high standard by which fellow Marines are expected to follow. “Receiving the award here in front of all the Marines, it’s incredibly valuable to be able to show if you work hard, you will be rewarded,” Caceres-Solari said. “It’s a way to say thank you and show that they are on the right course.”

Caceres-Solari said he has no doubts about the sergeants’ abilities to continue upholding the Marine Corps’ standards of conduct while they go on to carry out deployments in environments like Afghanistan, where their leadership and dedication will really be put to the test.

“It’s the fact they are able to work independently and make

sound decisions,” Caceres-Solari said. “By sending these Marines off to do great things, other sergeants will also have a chance to step up to the plate.”

Dixon and Bibanco have shown their leadership potential during prior Western Pacific exercises such as the annual Amphibious Landing Exercise conducted to increase readiness and develop professional relationships between the U.S. and Republic of the Philippines.

“I expect for them to do great things in the Marine Corps,” Caceres-Solari said. “I expect for them to become great staff NCOs and to build great Marines. I have full confidence in both of them. I am very happy to have worked and deployed with them.”

Dixon and Bibanco said they continue to strive to be the prime examples of Marine Corps leadership like their leaders have been for them during their career.

VMFA(AW)-242 Bats receive new sgt. maj.

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through the roof.

“He knows the Marines,” said Petersen. “He knows them inside and out. He knows what makes each one of them tick. He knows how to make a group come together to be a cohesive unit. I’ve never really seen anything like it. It’s been a pleasure to work with him.”

Brown has served with aviation squadrons for the majority of his career. He served here with the Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 212 Lancers from 1999 to 2004. It was during that time he walked the halls of the same barracks the Bats occupy today.

Brown applied his own past experiences as an aircraft maintainer during his tenure as the VMFA(AW)-242 sergeant major. They were experiences he felt aided his decision making within the squadron.

“I’ve tried to apply all the lessons that I’ve had because I was lucky enough to have come from this community and have tried to pass that on to (these Marines),” said Brown. “We’ve been able to take a five-hour job and make it about 40 minutes long. That’s how I think I’ve been able to impact some of what happens (in the squadron).”

Brown said he feels he understood the big picture of what the squadron did better because he used to be the young Marine working on the aircraft and putting in the long hours while being soaked in fuel and hydraulic fluid.

Many of the Bats were aware of Brown’s past experiences and believed it served to better connect him with them. His leadership style, which Brown describes with the phrase, “use trust but verify,” has seemed to have worked for the Marines.

“Since he got on board, morale has been 100 percent,” said Staff Sgt. Jason M. Adcock, VMFA(AW)-242 section 2 chief. “Everybody loves working for him. He understands because he used to be a powerline guy. Me, I’ve never been around F/A-18s before but he has. This is his community, so he understands the woes of the lance corporals out on the flight line all day long, sweating in the heat of the sun because that’s what he used to do.”

Several of the Marines who have served in the Corps for years had much to say about Brown.

“He is awesome,” said Adcock. “He is one of the best sergeants major I’ve ever worked with in my entire life.”

Brown’s impact on the Bats was even apparent with the officers.

“He is the number one sergeant major I’ve ever had the chance to work with,” said Petersen. “Not only as a lieutenant colonel, but all the way back to when I was a young captain jumping in the squadron.”

Brown has been serving with the Marine Corps since Aug. 6, 1987.

May Promotions

H&HS

Lance Cpl.
Sanchez, Travis M.
Thompson, Jordan E.

Cpl.
Davis, Allan B.

Sgt.
Penn, Justin M.

Master Gunnery Sgt.
Miller, Don R.

MWSS-171

Lance Cpl.
Bruner, Kyla A.
Crammond, Joshua D.
Espinozachaves, Elizabeth
Gale, Garrett E.
Tsosie, Elwood

Cpl.
Defreitas, Anthony L.
Mitchell, Miranda L.
Perry, Thomas M.
Scott, Desmond E.
Weisenberger, Ethan S.

VMFA(AW)-242

Cpl.
Burkholder, Bennett L.
Gonzalezperez Alma, Y.
Knepper, Jeremiah C.
Schrupp, Nathaniel D.

Sgt.
Daley, David A.
Passantino, Michael D.
Thompson, Gage V.

CLC-36

Cpl.
Cadre, Manuel D.

Sgt.
Chavez, Nelson P.

MAG-12

Lance Cpl.
Bell, Katherine L.

Cpl.
Cieza Jr., Wilfredo

MALS-12

Pfc.
Garcia III, Alejandro J.

Lance Cpl.
Alvarez, Sem D.
Peterson Jr., Leon
Weekley, Joshua D.
Ruiz, Alberto

Cpl.
Bankson, Lucas A.
Hester, Isiah W.
Leal II., Daniel F.
Marquez, Gabriel M.
Martinez, Chris J.
Perkins, Jesse J.
Robinson III., Harold R.
Thomas-Boyd, Shaikh R.

Master Sgt.
Boyer, Shannon A.

Detachment B

Cpl.
Hernandez, Joseph P.

Pistol qualification prepares sailors for overseas deployments, combat readiness

Lance Cpl. Kenneth K.
Trotter Jr.
IWAKUNI APPROACH STAFF

Robert M. Casey Medical and Dental Clinic sailors recently completed their pistol qualification at the Indoor Small Arms Range here April 27-29.

The sailors qualified with the M9 service pistol at distances of 3-, 5- and 7- yard line.

Pistol qualification for naval personnel is not required.

“As Marines, we take marksmanship for granted,” said Sgt. Daniel M. de Carvalho, ISAR operations chief. “Qualifications for sailors are a little bit different. I had to qualify them according to their guidelines.”

Operational Navy instruction 3591.1E has differing guidelines dealing specifically with small arms qualification for sailors.

According to the instruction, Naval personnel are given three days to qualify.

The need for the sailors being qualified was not merely for the sake of being qualified.

“In the event of an emergency, they can help in the situation,” said de Carvalho.

Certain participants already had experience firing with a sidearm.

Navy Lt. Andreas Stiller, a Branch Health Clinic nurse, had prior experience with a pistol during his 10-year stint in the Army.

“Basically, it’s the same as Marines,” said Stiller. “There’s a quick draw and reload. The only big difference is that there’s a kneeling portion in the qualification.”

The pistol qualification takes on particular significance and a serious tone



Navy Lt. Beverly J. Torres, a Robert M. Casey Medical and Dental Clinic staff nurse, zeroes in on a target at the Indoor Small Arms Range here April 27 during pistol qualifications. The course was offered over a three-day period and trained sailors on pistol grip and stance in relation to distance.

during a combat tour.

Not all who are overseas are trained on a pistol as on a rifle.

“I’ve never handled a pistol,” said Navy Lt. Beverly J. Torres, BHC staff nurse.

“I’ve always wanted to qualify just in case I ever deploy. Besides the medical aspect of our jobs, we want to be able to lend combat support in case the need arises.”

The number of sailors present to

participate in the qualification was drastically smaller than first anticipated.

“We try to disseminate to the sailors through the various chief petty officers on station,” said de Carvalho. “We’re trying to get as many as 35 to qualify the next time we have an event such as this.”

For those who were not able to attend this pistol qualification, there will be another held sometime within the coming year.

Service members, station residents find peace through Zen medetation, Buddhist scripture

Lance Cpl. Jennifer J. Pirante
IWAKUNI APPROACH STAFF

Japan is abundant in cultural experiences and historical sites, which may be new to many service members and station residents.

It might be difficult to experience them all in just one two-year tour, but not far from Iwakuni is a spiritual journey waiting to be discovered by those who have yet to experience it.

Approximately 20 service members and station residents spent their Sunday morning exploring the rich culture of Japanese Buddhism during an Information, Tours and Travel trip to the Kofukuji Temple in the Onomichi area of Hiroshima.

The Kofukuji Temple, which belongs to the Rinzai school of Zen, is located at the foot of an island in the Seto-inland Sea, muralled in the background by mountains, green forests and ancient pagodas. The Koji Temple, a famous three-tiered pagoda also towers over the village.

Many museums are also scattered among the area, filled with folklore and historical artifacts, which paint a picture of a time when Setoda seaport was once a vital shipping port for the commerce of salt.

The Kofukuji temple is just a short quarter-mile walk from the seaport. Its surroundings are decorated with citrus grapefruit and orange trees. They could be smelled along the path.

Upon arrival, stone lanterns, sculptures and shrines stood carefully placed in the yard, aged with time.

As the group walked up the pathway, beneath an archway to the entrance of the temple, Tadahisa Teshima, a Buddhist monk dressed in a black robe, welcomed and invited everyone to remove their shoes. His Buddhist name was Joshun, he said.

Before meditation, it is common to burn incense and, in Buddhism, it is an avid part of the ritual, Teshima explained.

Participants lined up and lit a stick of incense before taking a seat on two pieces of cushion décor to experience the art of Zazen, the practice of sitting meditation.

“Practicing Buddhism requires a lot of discipline,” said Teshima. “It requires a lot of concentration.”

Once settled, Teshima instructed everyone to fold the top cushion in half and sit comfortably, spine extended with hands and legs folded with careful posture. The meditation was divided into two sessions, each 10 minutes with a break in between the two.

“It was very relaxing,” said Lance Cpl. Crystal Weaver, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron administrative specialist. “I was able to relieve a lot of stress by just being able to focus on one thing instead of so many.”

For those who experience trouble clearing their mind and finding inner peace, the Buddhist culture provides a few methods to help remedy this inner conflict.

During meditation, Teshima rang a sharp, sustaining bell, or Dorje, which is meant to symbolize the “thunderbolt of enlightenment.” It serves as an abrupt change in human consciousness and is designed to help the meditator focus, Teshima said.

The bell rang four times at 2-and-a-half-minute intervals during each 10-minute session.

The seemingly gentle monk also walked around with a flat wooden stick called kei-saku. Upon silent request, meditators received three whacks, intended to remedy sleepiness or lapses of concentration.

“The meditation was hard,” said Seaman Annabel Rendon, H&HS logistics specialist. “One-on-one time with yourself takes a lot of discipline to be in Zen, but I could hear birds in the background, which helped me relax.”

After the meditation session, the group practiced the art of Buddhist scripture writing. Given a piece of paper and a calligraphy marker, the group had 20 minutes to practice their best Kanji while tracing the most popular of Buddhist scriptures, The Heart Sutra.

The scripture is made of 14 Shlokas, or verses, composed of 32 syllables. Making a handwritten copy of a sutra is called “Shayko.”

The Heart Sutra is simple and important to the Buddhist religion, said Teshima. The purpose is to copy each character with deep and careful concentration during each stroke.

Buddhist scripture is significant to the Buddhist religion, but in order to train with proper discipline, it becomes a way of life.

“You’re training all the time,” said Teshima. “You must always pay attention to yourself and what you are doing. You need to throw away your ego so you can follow the teachings, but that doesn’t mean you have to lose our personality.”

As a monk, Teshima said his schedule is very busy. He wakes up every day at 4 a.m. to complete chores and clean around the temple. His day is filled with frequent meditation sessions and a dedication to the discipline of the Buddhist religion. Everything he does, from the way he approaches life to the way he eats his meals, is done purposefully and with care.

The group got a taste of Teshima’s way of life when they were treated to a small-portioned vegetarian lunch. Meal setting is strategically prepared by horizontally aligning three bowls, sequential in size.

Hot white rice was scooped and served in the largest bowl. Everyone treated themselves to miso soup, which was poured into the medium-sized bowl and in the smallest bowl, everyone was served two slices of pickles, one of which was to be saved for later.

Everyone was instructed to join their hands in a sort of prayer as the monk calmly begged for alms on behalf of the group.

“First, let us reflect on our own work and the effort of those who brought us this food,” Teshima began to chant.

In Buddhist religion, meals such as this are eaten in complete silence. Meals are a time to consciously reflect on the food nourishing the body.

At the end of the meal, it was time to clean the bowls. To do this, everyone was instructed to pour warm



water into the biggest bowls. A small portion of this water was then poured into the smallest and middle-sized bowl. The slice of pickle, which had been set aside prior, was used the clean the bowls one by one.

It is also Buddhist tradition to eat the remaining slice of pickle, drink the water and dry the bowls with cloth. Nothing is wasted. Nothing is spared.

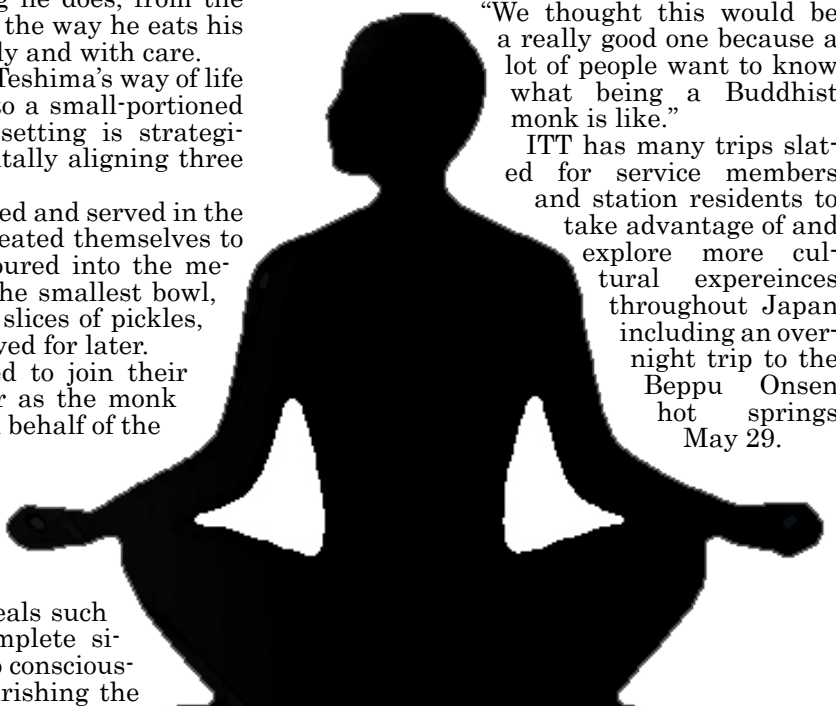
“I was very surprised by the attention to detail,” said Rendon. “I loved it. This is the best thing I have done in Japan so far.”

“We thought it would be a good idea for people to experience something different,” said Taka Takeda, ITT tour guide.

“We thought this would be a really good one because a lot of people want to know what being a Buddhist monk is like.”

ITT has many trips slated for service members and station residents to take advantage of and explore more cultural experiences throughout Japan including an overnight trip to the Beppu Onsen hot springs

May 29.



Marines receive training in precision

Cpl. Claudio A. Martinez
IWAKUNI APPROACH
STAFF

Several station airframe and powerline mechanics attended a Fleet Readiness Center Southwest Naval Air Station North Island Hole Quality Course at the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12 airframes warehouse here April 28 – Monday.

Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242 and MALS-12 Marines attended the course to learn the proper way to drill a hole in an aircraft to apply screws and fasteners.

“The process of drilling a hole is more than just taking a drill and making a hole,” said Gunnery Sgt. Hayden Vesprey, MALS-12 Airframes division chief. “There’s actually a process, especially when you drill holes on multi-million dollar aircraft. If you drill one hole the wrong way, it can damage the aircraft, and the aircraft will be down for awhile.”

The Marines attended the weeklong course for eight hours each day. They learned the in-depth math, measurements and precision necessary to drill holes into the aircraft to help lengthen

the aircraft life expectancy. “The hole has to be perfect,” said Vesprey. “It has to be right and precise, especially when we have to replace rivets and studs. They have to know the precise procedures to replace those parts.”

During the course, the Marines learned the process involved in properly lubricating their drill bits and how to drill at a true 90-degree angle into aluminum, titanium and steel. The Marines also learned how to read blueprints and the procedures to install and remove fasteners without damaging the metal. The course tested the Marines’ mathematical abilities with several written exams.

“I’m hoping they will be better off with their new skills (after completing the course),” said Edgardo Abellar, FRCSW NAS North Island Hole Quality Course technical instructor. If the students learn the necessary skills in drilling a hole, they will help to prolong the life and safety of the aircraft whenever they work on them, he added.

The Marines received a metal plate during the course on which they were required to install 61 fasteners of different sizes, head

styles and diameters without causing any damage to the plate.

“This is technical training,” said Abellar. “You really need to focus on what you’re doing when you’re repairing a part.”

If the Marines don’t drill the holes perfectly, cracks around the imperfect holes can grow and potentially rip the metal into pieces, Abellar said.

The technical training the Marines received during the course presented them with more in-depth information on drilling than they originally received at their military occupation specialty schools.

Cpl. Lemuel M. Cardinoza, a MALS-12 airframes aviation structural mechanic and course participant, has been working in his MOS for more than three years.

“I didn’t know half of what I’ve learned from this course,” said Cardinoza. “I’ve been learning a whole bunch of new stuff I didn’t know.”

Cardinoza said he feels confident that once he passes what he learned to his junior Marines, it will help prevent improper maintenance being done on the aircraft they work on.

Safety, precision and longevity of the aircraft were constantly on the Marines’ minds as they went through the training. The effectiveness of what they were learning, what they would be able to do with their new skills wasn’t lost on them.

“(The training) will improve safety,” said Cardinoza. “It will make the components aboard the aircraft last longer. Also we will no longer have to send certain parts out for repair. We’ll be able to drill the holes we need right here.”

Although powerline mechanics don’t normally work directly with drills to bore holes into aircraft, they inspect them daily to ensure they are safe for flight.

Lance Cpl. Cheska Salen, a VMFA(AW)-242 powerline mechanic and course participant, said she probably won’t be drilling much as a powerline mechanic but she will be able to apply some of the principles she’s learned during the class whenever she inspects the aircraft. She has a better idea of what mistakes to look for, Salen added.

This is the first time the class has been taught here to MALS-12 and VMFA(AW)-242 Marines.



CPL. CLAUDIO A. MARTINEZ

A Marine adjusts his flat leg divider to accurately measure the distance between two holes he plans on drilling into a metal plate he was given during a Hole Quality Course at the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12 Airframes' warehouse here May 4. During the course, the Marines learned the process involved in properly lubricating their drill bits and how to drill at a true 90-degree angle into aluminum, titanium and steel.



CPL. CLAUDIO A. MARTINEZ

Lance Cpl. John R. Hermanski, a Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242 airframes mechanic and Hole Quality Course participant, drills a hole into a metal plate he was given during a Fleet Readiness Center Southwest Naval Air Station North Island Hole Quality Course at the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12 Airframes' warehouse here May 4. The technical training the Marines received during the course presented them with more in-depth information on drilling than they originally received at their military occupation specialty schools.



CPL. CLAUDIO A. MARTINEZ

Lance Cpl. Cheska Salen, a Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242 powerline mechanic, marks a metal plate where she plans to drill holes during a Fleet Readiness Center Southwest Naval Air Station North Island Hole Quality Course at the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12 Airframes' warehouse here May 4. Precision was constantly stressed during the course to avoid faulty holes in aircraft.



CPL. CLAUDIO A. MARTINEZ

A Marine fastens a drill bit to his drill during a Fleet Readiness Center Southwest Naval Air Station North Island Hole Quality Course at the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12 Airframes' warehouse here May 4. The Marines were trained to determine what drill bits to use depending on what metal and hole size they were working on.



CPL. CLAUDIO A. MARTINEZ

Cpl. Lemuel Cardinoza, a Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12 airframes aviation structural mechanic, measures the distance between two holes he plans to drill into a metal plate he was given during a Fleet Readiness Center Southwest Naval Air Station North Island Hole Quality Course at the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12 Airframes' warehouse here May 4. To pass the course, the Marines were required to install 61 fasteners of different sizes, head styles and diameters without causing any damage to the plate.

CORPS NEWS

HIGHLIGHTING MARINES AND SAILORS AROUND THE GLOBE



CPL. RASHAUN X. JAMES

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Capt. Michael Scott, air officer for 2nd Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, 2nd Brigade, speaks through a radio during an aerial interdiction operation in southwestern Afghanistan May 4. Marines from Regimental Combat Team 1, with the aid of 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing assets, conducted a vehicle interdiction and search operation near Afghanistan's border with Pakistan May 4.



CPL. RASHAUN X. JAMES

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Members of Regimental Combat Team 1 talk with an Afghan civilian during an aerial interdiction mission in southwestern Afghanistan May 4. Marines from RCT- 1, with the aid of 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing assets, conducted a vehicle interdiction and search operation near Afghanistan's border with Pakistan.

2nd MAW, ground troops join forces for aerial interdictions

Cpl. Rashaun X. James
2ND MARINE AIRCRAFT WING

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Marines from Regimental Combat Team 1, with the aid of 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), conducted a vehicle interdiction and search operation near Afghanistan's border with Pakistan May 4.

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463 supplied two CH-53D Sea Stallions to support Marines from RCT-1 while they performed searches of vehicles traveling near Afghanistan's southwestern border with Pakistan.

Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169 supplied two AH-1W Cobras to provide offensive air support to the Marines on the ground, said Capt. Glen Taylor, the assistant future operations officer and heliborne unit commander with RCT-1.

"We're interdicting smugglers who are running weapons, fighters and drugs through the deserts on the Afghan-Pakistan border," said Taylor. "The tools we have put in place allow us to make aerial observations of vehicles in this area and if they fit the profile of a vehicle likely to belong to a smuggler, we utilize the Cobras to safely bring them to a halt. As the ground force, we search the vehicles and the personnel inside. We determine if they are carrying any contraband and question the personnel to see what their stories are."

Recently, Marines with Regimental Combat Team 1's aerial reaction force, reinforced by Company E, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, seized more than \$2.5 million worth of raw opium and heroin after stopping a suspicious vehicle.

These types of operations are intended to interdict and disrupt insurgent forces from transporting arms, narcotics and supplies across the border from Pakistan into Afghanistan.

"Operations like these demonstrate to the enemy that we can come in with aerial reaction forces and disrupt their supply lines not only from the ground, but from the air as well," said Maj. Christopher S. Benfield, a future operations planner with 2nd MAW (Forward). "By coming in from the air, the Marines are able to catch the insurgents off guard and throw their operations off-balance."

Benfield went on to explain the far reaching impact of these types of operations.

"Anything we can do to take away the means that the enemy uses to fund their activities is always a help to the troops on the ground," Benfield added.

Capt. Anthony Damico, a CH-53D pilot with HMH-463, who served as the assault flight lead and escort flight lead for the most recent string of interdiction missions, said these operations fit perfectly into his squadron's motto, "supporting the infantry since 1944."

"Aerial interdictions have become a priority for RCT-1 and it is always our priority to support the infantry," Damico said. "If their intention is to interdict then it becomes ours to help them make that happen."

Although the interdictions don't always lead to big finds, Taylor said they serve a secondary purpose.

"We don't always get weapons or drugs on every hit, but we do pick up intelligence and cause some disruption to their trafficking," Taylor said.

Taylor said the seamless integration between air and ground forces leads to the positive results that aerial interdiction and disruption operations have been yielding lately.

"This is the second time this particular force has done it so they're pretty well rehearsed," Taylor said. "We were able to keep the same air crew we had last time, and they did a great job. They're becoming more and more aggressive and are able to get us very close in and perform some quick landings allowing the Marines to get in and get out in the quickest



CPL. RASHAUN X. JAMES

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan — A Marine from the Regimental Combat Team 1 commanding officer's personal security detail searches for suspicious items during an aerial interdiction mission in southwestern Afghanistan May 5. The operation is intended to interdict and disrupt insurgent forces from transporting arms, narcotics and supplies across the border from Pakistan into Afghanistan.

way possible."

Connect with 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) throughout the deployment.

Stay up to date with the latest 2nd MAW (Forward) news, photos and videos at <http://www.facebook.com/2ndmawfwd>.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS | CLASSIFIEDS

Briefs

Boy Scout Dinner
Boy Scout Troop 77 is hosting a spaghetti dinner fundraiser Friday at Capodonna Hall in Building 1100 5 - 7 p.m. For \$5, attendees get spaghetti, salad and bread. For more information, contact Ann Daniels at 253-2229.

BHC Health Consumer Council
Branch Health Clinic is pleased to announce that we will be holding our FY11 3rd quarterly Health Consumer Council meeting on May 19 at 4:30 p.m. in the main lobby of the clinic open to all base personnel. For more information, please contact Joshua Blackburn at 253-3256.

Marriage Enrichment Small Group
A marriage enrichment small group is scheduled to be held every Monday at 6:30 p.m. in Building 936C. For more information, call chaplain Bruce West at 253-3371 or e-mail bruce.b.west@usmc.mil.

NMCRS Quick Assist Loans
The Iwakuni Navy Marine Corps Relief Society is providing Quick Assist Loans to prevent active duty

service members from falling prey to predatory lenders. These loans are designed to assist with short-term living expenses up to \$300, interest free and must be repaid within 10 months. For more information, call the Iwakuni NMCRS at 253-5311 or stop by the Marine Memorial Chapel, Room 148.

Temporary Mess Hall
Building 240 is designated as a temporary mess hall. Hours of operation are 6 – 7:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Monday – Friday. The special shuttle bus will continue to run during the dinner and dinner/brunch meal periods. A sandwich bar is also available from 1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

PMO Lost and Found
Contact the Provost Marshal's Office Lost and Found if you have lost anything around the installation. Examples may include: Cell phones, keys, digital cameras, bicycle helmets, etc. To recover lost items or for more information, call 253-4929.

Fellowship Breakfast
Americable is scheduled to begin service activation in certain areas of the base. Tune in to channel 37 for more information or stop by the Americable

information, call chaplain Bruce West at 253-3371 or John Cordero at 253-5301 or 080-3217-3205.

Lending Locker Program
The lending locker program is available to provide small home appliances and utensils for incoming and outgoing command-sponsored members for up to 60 days inbound and 30 days outbound. A copy of PCS orders is required. The lending locker is located in Building 411 Room 101. For more information call, 253-6161.

Emergency Preparedness for Family Members Course
The station safety center is offering a free voluntary noncombatant respirator course at 3:30 p.m. every other Wednesday until May 30. For more information or to sign up, call 253-6381.

Mothers of Preschoolers Volunteer Opportunities
Mothers of Preschoolers is looking for volunteers to work with their MOPPETS ages 0-5 years old. If you would like to help, call at 253-2031.

Americable Activation
Americable is scheduled to begin service activation in certain areas of the base. Tune in to channel 37 for more information or stop by the Americable

office in the Crossroads Mall.

Crime Stoppers
To report a crime, call 253-3333. Callers can leave a detailed message without having to speak to a live person.

Jobs

Travel Counselor
CWTSatoTravel has a travel counselor position available at the government travel office here. This position is responsible for booking air, car and hotel reservations for military travelers in official duty status using the SABRE CRS. Desirable for the candidates to have travel agency or airline experience, and SABRE CRS experience. Knowledge of government travel regulation is also preferred. Send all inquiries and resumes to mkenat@cwtsatotravel.com. No phone inquiries.

Commissary Merchandiser
SARVIS Inc. is currently looking for a part-time commissary merchandiser, 48-hours per month. Workplace is Iwakuni Commissary/ DeCA CDC. Experience in retail or commissary merchandising is preferred. For more information, e-mail Mr.

More at tmore_sarvis@yahoo.com.

English Teachers
Two positions are available to teach English in Tokuyama every Friday 6 – 8 p.m. For more information, call 253-6868.

Vehicles

1994 Nissan March
JCI good until November 2012. Road tax paid. Asking \$1,000. For more information, call Jo at 253-2442 or 080-5865-3566.

Brief and Classified Submissions
To submit a community brief or classified advertisement, send an e-mail to iwakuni.pao@usmc.mil. Include a contact name, a phone number and the information to you would like to be published. You may submit a brief or classified ad in person at the Public Affairs Office, Building 1, Room 216 or call 253-5551. Ensure you provide all requested information to simplify the request process. The deadline for submissions is 3 p.m. every Friday. Submissions will run the following Friday on a space-available basis. The Iwakuni Approach staff reserves the right to edit submissions for space and style.

VMFA(AW)-533 sets up for tactical training

HAWKS FROM PAGE 2

support from MAG-12, VMFA(AW)-533 is able to conduct this training while deployed.

"Now that MDTC has traveled out here, we are going to be able to take full advantage of the training," Rowell said.

The course will put pilots through increasingly more difficult scenarios.

Beginning as one aircraft against another aircraft during simulated air-to-air exercises, the course will culminate with four friendly aircraft versus an unknown number of enemy aircraft.

Kadena Air Base has some unique features to allow for more training variety for the pilots.

One feature is the use of instrumented ranges. The instrumented ranges are

Pods put on the aircraft to track the aircraft movement in real time and during playback.

This provides invaluable data for the pilots during exercise debriefs, said Rowell.

The other reason is the Air Force aircraft can be used during training as both friendly and enemy forces during the training exercises.

Although MDTC is training for the pilots, the aircraft still need to be maintained by the maintenance Marines.

"It has taken about four days to transport all of our Marines and equipment from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni to Kadena via KC-130's," said Sgt. Maj. Suzie M. Hollings, the VMFA(AW)-533 squadron sergeant major.

The maintenance Marines job is to keep VMFA(AW)-533's aircraft safe and mission ready at all times.

"We have a lot of aircraft out here," said Luis J. Pantoja, VMFA(AW)-533 maintenance control chief. "My Marines ensure that all the maintenance actions are performed correctly and efficiently."

MAG-12 is hosting this training, and has helped support and assist VMFA(AW)-533 in its transition from air station to air station.

"(MAG-12) has been a great help to us," Pantoja said. "They already had parts set up for the aircraft here, which made our job a lot easier."

VMFA(AW)-533 and its Air Force counterpart are slated to start the MDTC exercises later this month.



LANCE CPL. CHARLIE CLARK

KADENA AIR BASE, Japan — Lance Cpl. William C. Sanborn, a Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 533 ordnance technician, disembarks from the KC-130 that carried him and his fellow VMFA(AW)-533 Marines to Kadena Air Base May 4.

INFOTAINMENT

Chapel Services

Roman Catholic
Saturday 4:30-5:15 p.m. Confession
5:30 p.m. Mass
Sunday 8:30 a.m. Mass
9:45 a.m. Religious Education
Tues. – Fri. 11:30 a.m. Weekday Mass
Wednesday 6 p.m. Inquiry Class for adults

Protestant
Saturday 7 a.m. Men’s Ministry
9:30 a.m. Seventh-Day Adventist Sabbath School
11 a.m. Seventh-Day Adventist Divine Worship
Sunday 9:30 a.m. Sunday School, Adult Bible Fellowship
10:30 a.m. Protestant Service
11 a.m. Children’s Church
4:30 p.m. Lutheran Holy Communion Service (Small Chapel)
Wednesday 6 p.m. Awana (Bldg. 1104)
6:15 p.m. Adult Bible Study (Capodanno Hall Chapel)

Church of Christ
Sunday 9:30 a.m. Bible Study (small chapel)
10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Latter Day Saints
Tuesday 6:30 a.m. Youth 12-17 Activities

Teen Programs
•High School Meetings (Club – grades 9-12)
•Junior High Meetings (Club JV – grades 7-8)
•HS&JR Bible Studies
•Retreats
•Service Projects
•Missions Trip
•Special Events Volunteer Training & Mentoring
•Parent Support Group
Call 080-4177-2060 or e-mail jletaw@ClubBeyond.org

For information regarding divine services, religious education or any other command religious program or chapel activity, call the Marine Memorial Chapel at 253-3371.

Photo of the week



Lt. Col. Michael C. Taylor, Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 commanding officer, and Sgt. Maj. Blake L. Smith, MWSS-171 sergeant major, race against each other in the staff noncommissioned officers against officers obstacle course during the MWSS-171 sports day here April 29. Have your own photo to submit? Submit photos to the Public Affairs Office by e-mailing them to iwakuni.pao@usmc.mil or submit them in person at the Public Affairs Office in Building 1 Room 216. Entries will be judged by the Iwakuni Approach Staff and the top selection will run in the next edition of the Iwakuni Approach. For more information call 253-5551.

SAKURA THEATER

Friday, May 13, 2011
7 p.m. Fast Five (PG-13)
Premiere

Monday, May 16, 2011
7 p.m. Take Me Home Tonight (R)
Last Showing

Saturday, May 14, 2011
1 p.m. Rio (PG)
4 p.m. Hop (PG)
7 p.m. Limitless (PG-13)
Premiere

Tuesday, May 17, 2011
7 p.m. Fast Five (PG-13)

Wednesday, May 18, 2011
7 p.m. Limitless (PG-13)

Sunday, May 15, 2011
1 p.m. Mars Needs Moms (PG)
4 p.m. Limitless (PG-13)
7 p.m. Fast Five (PG-13)

Thursday, May 19, 2011
7 p.m. Red Riding Hood (PG-13)

The movie schedule is subject to change. Please check www.mccsiwakuni.com/sakura often for updates, or call the Sakura Theater at 253-5291 for the latest schedule.

General Admission: Ages 12+ are \$2.50 / Ages 6-11 are \$1 / Children ages 5 and under admitted free. For more information, visit www.mccsiwakuni.com or call 253-5291.

Mess Hall Menu

Monday
Cream of broccoli soup, French onion soup, baked chicken and rice, yakiniku, steamed rice, lyonnaise green beans, mashed potatoes, peas and carrots, chicken gravy, dinner rolls, macaroni salad, creamy cucumber rice salad, standard salad bar, peanut butter cookies, chocolate cream pie with whipped topping and double layer banana cake with buttercream frosting.

Tuesday
Minestrone soup, tomato soup, roast fresh ham, shrimp scampi, potatoes au gratin, rice pilaf, glazed carrots, broccoli combo, grilled cheese, potato salad, Italian style pasta salad, standard salad bar, brownies, spice cake with buttercream frosting and coconut cream pies.

Wednesday
Cream and rice soup, New England clam chowder, chili macaroni, grilled cheese, grilled ham and cheese, tempura fried fish, macaroni and cheese, oven glo potatoes, broccoli polonaise, mixed vegetables, dinner rolls, macaroni salad, spring salad, standard salad bar, chocolate drop cookies, double layer Florida lemon cake with lemon butter cream frosting and blueberry pie.

Thursday
Chicken noodle soup, cream of potato soup, apple glazed corn beef, teriyaki chicken, rissole potatoes, noodles, Jefferson, succotash, fried cabbage, hot mustard sauce, chicken gravy, cornbread, potato salad, German style tomato salad, standard salad bar, pecan brownies, yellow cake with buttercream frosting and chocolate cream pie with whipped topping.

Friday
Vegetable soup, beef noodle soup, shrimp Creole, beef cordon bleu, herbed broccoli, lemon baked fish, parsley buttered potatoes, steamed rice, carrots, dinner rolls, macaroni salad, cucumber and onion salad, standard salad bar, ginger molasses cookies, double layer German chocolate cake with coconut pecan frosting and pumpkin pie with whipped topping.



William A. Chatman, a G-SUPP shooting guard, prepares to fire off a free throw in an intramural basketball game against the ROC BOYZ at the IronWorks Gym sports courts here May 4. G-SUPP was on the winning end of a 49-36 rout. The ROC BOYZ attempted to keep the game close during the middle of the second half with a score of 38-32, but G-Supp outscored the ROC BOYZ 23-13 in the second half.

ROC BOYZ gets rocked by G-SUPP

Lance Cpl. Kenneth K. Trotter Jr.
IWAKUNI APPROACH STAFF

G-SUPP proved victorious against the ROC BOYZ with a final score of 49-36 during an intramural basketball game at the IronWorks Gym sports courts here May 4. G-SUPP was first to place points on the board. During the early minutes of the first half, G-SUPP began to pull away from its competition by way of several well placed 3-point shots thanks in part to Steve A. Navar, G-SUPP point guard, and a series of fast breakaways. The ROC BOYZ players were the proverbial Goliaths, towering over their opponents on the court that night as they attempted to use their dominating size and strength to their advantage. “They were bigger than us, but we were more athletic,” said T.J. Ferguson, G-SUPP power forward and center. “We used their size to our advantage by running them to death up and down the court.” The speed difference between the two teams was apparent at the end of the first half with the score 24-13 G-SUPP. G-SUPP used its overwhelming size difference to its advantage by switching from a zone coverage defense to a man-to-man defense, using their quickness and fast hands to make shooting more difficult for the ROC BOYZ. Michael Smalls, ROC BOYZ center, and Earnest McKinney, ROC BOYZ small forward, and two of the more physically imposing members of the BOYZ, helped push forward in an attempt to bring their team within



Rajiv Douglas, a ROC BOYZ shooting guard, defends against Rabosky Tanner, G-SUPP power forward, in an intramural basketball game at the IronWorks Gym sports courts here May 4. The ROC BOYZ were on the losing end of a 49-36 final score. G-SUPP capitalized on a series of turnovers and fast breaks to ensure their success during the middle of the second half to seal the ROC BOYZ fate.

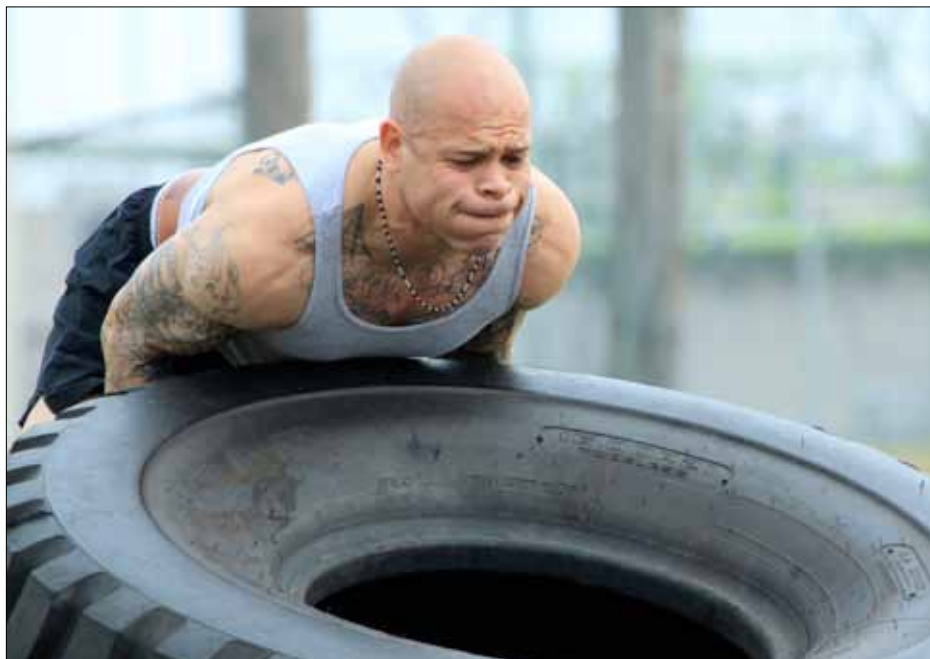
striking distance of their foes by closing the gap to within six points 38-32 in the middle of the second half. “He (McKinney) was giving us the most problems,” said Ferguson. Unfortunately, the size and strength advantage, coupled with poor shooting and costly turnovers late in the second half, proved to be the ROC BOYZ’s undoing as G-SUPP pulled further away with the lead. G-SUPP outscored the ROC BOYZ in the second half 23-13. “They didn’t have one dominant player on their team,” said McKinney. “It really was a team effort on their part.” Nevertheless, the ROC BOYZ put up a valiant effort, continuing to take shots and fight for the ball until the final whistle blew. It was just not their night. “We need to work on making more open shots and getting fast breakaways,” said McKinney. “Everybody has a job to do and we need to make sure and talk to the team about that.” So far, this season the only losses the ROC BOYZ has suffered were against G-SUPP. “They’re a good, well-rounded team,” said Derrius R. Beverly, G-SUPP power forward. Though G-SUPP emerged victorious, there still is room for improvement. “Defense is our strong point,” said Ferguson. “But there’s always room for improvement.” Both teams showed their determination while attempting to win the game. G-SUPP, undaunted before its larger opponents, used its size and speed differential to dismantle its foes. In defeat, the ROC BOYZ can potentially take what it experienced from the game and use it to improve as the season progresses.

Competitors muscle through competition



LANCE CPL. JENNIFER PIRANTE

Kelley Kelemen, 130-pound and under women's weight group division competitor, puts hand over hand during the 2-ton truck pull as part of the annual Iwakuni Strongman Competition at the Penny Lake field here April 30. Kelemen carried 152 pounds during the farmer's walk across 107 meters, performed 62 200-pound tire flips, 21.84 seconds during the iron cross, 16 reps during the steel log press and 35 seconds during the 2-ton truck pull.



LANCE CPL. JENNIFER PIRANTE

Adrian Figueroa, 160-and-under pound men's weight group division competitor, lifts a 7-ton tire with all his might during the annual Iwakuni Strongman Competition at the Penny Lake field here April 30. Figueroa carried 250 pounds during the farmer's walk across 102 meters, 17 7-ton tire flips, 31.78 seconds on the iron cross, 33 reps during the steel log press, and 29 seconds during the Humvee pull competition.

Lance Cpl. Jennifer Pirante
IWAKUNI APPROACH STAFF

Sixteen Marines, sailors and station personnel put their strength to the test during the annual Iwakuni Strongman Competition at the Penny Lake field here April 30.

Marine Corps Community Services and the SemperFit fitness department here hosted the event by providing all equipment, energy bars, water and Gatorade for competitors, volunteers and spectators.

Four female competitors participated in two weight class divisions and 13 male competitors participated in three.

Kelley Kelemen took first place in the 130-pound and under women's weight group division. Mandy Apple placed first in the 131-pound and over weight group.

Chris Junkins won the 160-and-under pound men's weight group division competition, John Manke grabbed first in the 161-190-pound weight group, and Anthony Saenz placed first in the 191-and-over pound weight group.

"I thought everyone did a great job," said Barbara Roman, SemperFit fitness coordinator. "The best part about it was the tie breakers. It's always exciting to see some tie-breaking going on."

The competition consisted of five events: Farmer's walk, tire flip, iron cross, steel log press, and Humvee or 2-ton truck pull.

Once all competitors were weighed in and divided into groups, MCCS coordinators explained the rules.

During the farmer's walk, score was based on distance traveled without time limit. Females in the 130-pound and over women's weight division had to carry 152 pounds as far as possible. Females competing in the 131-pound weight group carried 172 pounds. Males competing in the 160-and-under, 161-190 and 191-and-over weight divisions carried 250 pounds, 270 pounds and 280 pounds.

During the tire flip, female competitors had two minutes to flip a 200-pound tire as many times as possible. Men had to flip a 7-ton tire.

The iron cross, or crucifix hold, was a timed event where competitors had to hold a cement block in each hand with palms facing down and keep arms out extended at shoulder level for as long as possible.

During the steel log press, competitors had 60 seconds to push out as many standing repetitions as possible. Women in the 130-pound and over weight class division lifted 62 pounds and the 131-pound women's weight division lifted 72 pounds. The 160-pound and under men's weight division lifted 82 pounds, the 161-190-pound men's weight division lifted 102 pounds and the 191 and over men's weight division lifted 153 pounds.

During the Humvee pull, which was a timed event, female competitors pulled a 2-ton truck. Males pulled a Humvee truck.

Those who tied in any one event got to take another stab at the Humvee pull to settle the score.

When it came down to the end of the competition, Menzies and Lopez were forced to break the tie for second place in the 191-pound and over men's weight class division.

In a mad race against time, Menzies managed to cross the finish line in 23 seconds, beating Lopez by just two seconds.

"The Humvee pull was pretty fun," Menzies said. "A lot of guys come out here thinking it is more about strength, but endurance is definitely big."

Kelemen went all out when she pulled the 2-ton truck to the finish in just 35 seconds.

"You just push yourself until you can't go anymore," Kelemen said. "The most challenging one for me was the crucifix hold. It tests that back and shoulder strength."

Kelemen carried 152 pounds during the farmer's walk across 107 meters, performed 62 200-pound tire flips, 21.84 seconds during the iron cross, 16 reps during the steel log press and 35 seconds during the 2-ton truck pull competition.

Mandy Apple, 131-pound and over women's weight group division competitor, carried 172 pounds during the farmer's walk across 78 meters, 59 200-pound tire flips, 1.69 seconds during the iron cross, and 22.68 seconds during the 2-ton truck pull competition.

Junkins carried 250 pounds during the farmer's walk across 100 meters, 30 7-ton tire flips, 31.03 seconds during the iron cross, 35 reps during the steel log press, and 25 seconds during the Humvee pull.

Manke carried 270 pounds during the farmer's walk across 104 meters, 24 7-ton tire flips, 50.22 seconds during the iron cross, 31 reps during the steel log press, and 26 seconds during the Humvee pull.

Saenz carried 280 pounds during the farmer's walk across 122 meters, 35 7-ton tire flips, 40.46 seconds during the iron cross, 8 reps during the steel log press, and 29.02 seconds during the Humvee pull.