



the KINTAI
shimbun

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Aug. 30, 2007

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Logistics experts unite on station in support of Exercise UFL

by Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs
Shimbun Staff

Navy, Marine Corps and Department of Defense logisticians formed an advanced logistics support site here Aug. 20 through today to improve their capabilities while providing support to troops participating in Exercise Ulchi Focus Lens 2007.

The purpose of the exercise, which is run by Commander Logistics Group Western Pacific (COMLOGWESTPAC), is to integrate Navy, Marine Corps and Department of Defense logistics personnel and capabilities, according to Navy Capt. Jim Maus, Commander Task Force 73 assistant chief of staff for logistics and native of San Diego, Calif.

“Every year we get together to bring in all of our personnel and to maximize our capabilities,” said Maus, who added that this is the third year the site has been set up in Iwakuni. “This site, because it has both a seaport and an airport, provides us with tremendous logistics synergy. Whether it’s by plane or ship, our logistics enablers have great flexibility in how they deliver material to the war fighter.”

About 60 sailors, Marines and DOD civilians worked from a technologically stacked tent at Penny Lake, ensuring naval and Marine aviation forces supporting UFL have food, fuel, munitions, parts and ordnance. The logistics experts also simulated situations that could occur during war, providing them the opportunity to apply and evaluate logistic concepts, according to Maus.

“This is the yearly schoolhouse for logistics,” said Maus, who added that most of the personnel are reserve forces. “The whole idea is to bring those folks in so they are prepared for a real-world contingency.”

Technological advancements in logistics tracking equipment, such as Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) tags and logistics software, the Battle Command Support Sustainment System (BCS3) for example, have led to improvements in speed and communication - the keys to logistics. The ultimate goal of the exercise is to use these capabilities to their full potential, according to Jeff N. Stickel, Marine Forces Pacific Aviation Logistics Group logistics planner and native of Aiea, Hawaii.

Now that we have the technology, we have the capabilities to be very precise and efficient.

- Jeff N. Stickel

“Now that we have the technology, we have the capabilities to be very precise and efficient,” said Stickel. “But we’re not going to capitalize on those capabilities if we don’t train.”

The exercise also ensures logistics support staff are ready to respond when needed. By giving them the opportunity to perform their essential role - setting up the site and equipment in less than 72 hours and maintaining it for the duration of the



Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs

▲ Senior Chief Petty Officer Edward M. Aque, Joint Maritime Ashore Support Team Pacific officer-in-charge and native of Zambales, Philippines analyzes data at the advanced logistics support site here Aug. 22.

exercise – the staff is more prepared, according to Senior Chief Petty Officer Edward M. Aque, Joint Maritime Ashore Support Team Pacific officer-in-charge and native of Zambales, Philippines.

“There’s a lot of moving parts in a short amount of time,” said Aque. “We have to be familiar with some of the difficulties so that when they do arise, we’re confident we can handle them.”

The exercise has been very successful, said Maus. It would not have been possible or as successful if it were not for the people who take part, Maus added. “They’re very enthusiastic, very motivated,” Maus said. “(The exercise) is a great Marine Corps-Navy partnership that’s been fully supported by everybody.”

UFL Corpsmen 'staples' of safety

by Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez
Shimbun Staff

"You've just been electrocuted. You're dying," said Chief Petty Officer Albert S. Wood, Exercise Ulchi Focus Lens 2007 senior medical representative, as he began the first simulated casualty drill of the exercise. The simulated victim then fell to the asphalt as others signaled for help. The on-duty corpsman who arrived on scene in less than five minutes treated the situation as if it were a real-world catastrophe and swept the simulated victim to safety.

Wood, a Stockton, Calif., native and mastermind behind the simulated medical emergency, stressed the importance of response time and protocol in the event of a real-life emergency.

"It was all very quick," said Lance Cpl. Dana L. Wessinger, a Houston native from Marine Wing Support Group 17 and simulated casualty victim.

"They put a bandage around my waist, carried me to an ambulance that took me to the trauma center, put on a neck brace, and even set up a simulated IV (intravenous therapy) in my hand."

It took 41 minutes to return Wessinger to a stable condition. This test is the first of many during the exercise according to Wood.

"When something like this happens, everybody has to know that they have a certain job," said Wood. "As a force in readiness, everyone must be prepared to respond. This training has to be intense because we can not afford to be caught off guard."

After their aptitude was tested Aug. 20, corpsmen from the trauma center here put their life-saving skills to work Aug. 21, when a combat engineer from Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 injured himself while training.

The next morning, the trauma center corpsmen responded to another call. This time, there was no simulation.

Injured was Lance Cpl. Jacob E. House, a Midland, Mich., native, after he raised a 10-pound stake driver above his body and inadvertently struck the top of his head, opening a large gash.

"When we first heard what had happened, everyone here assumed it was another drill," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Alfred R. Vargas, hospital corpsman and native of Richmond, Texas.

See UFL on page 4



Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez

▲ Lance Cpl. Jacob E. House, Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 combat engineer and native of Midland, Mich., lies awake while his wound is cleaned by Petty Officer 3rd Class Alfred R. Vargas. House was injured while pounding a stake to secure the armory here Aug. 21.

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“Our response team was completely ready for this to happen. We rushed him over here and began working in less than five minutes,” said Vargas.

After receiving 15 staples on his head, House was prescribed to be sick in quarters for the remainder of the day. He returned to full duty Aug. 22.

A real emergency presented itself and the corpsmen’s response time was drastically quicker than the day before, according to Vargas.

“When we first heard what happened, everyone here assumed it was another drill.”

- Petty Officer 3rd Class Alfred R. Vargas

“We’re set up to respond around the clock,” said Vargas. “It’s pretty ironic that yesterday we were tested on how quick all of this would happen. We handled the situation very well I thought.”

Exercise UFL 2007 is a largely computer-generated exercise that trains U.S. Marines to combine tactics and procedures with Republic of Korea Marines who also take part in training during their time at Camp Mu Juk.

The importance of this training was highlighted when Wood was injured and subsequently received fast and efficient medical help courtesy of a few well trained corpsmen, according to Wood.

“A few minutes wasted in an emergency could mean someone’s life and interference with our mission. We can’t have that,” said Wood.



Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez

▲ Lance Cpl. Jacob E. House, Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 combat engineer and native of Midland, Mich., is escorted into the trauma center here after he was injured while pounding a stake to secure the armory here Aug. 21.

Suffragette's struggle remembered in Women's Equality Day celebration

by Lance Cpl. Cindy G. Alejandrez
Shimbun Staff

Station residents celebrated Women's Equality Day during a luncheon at the Station Library Aug. 24.

The holiday, which is observed Aug. 26, is meant to commemorate women's rights. Guests brought their own lunch as they listened to a speech about the history of the women who fought for women's right to vote, often referred to as suffragettes and had cake during a women's suffrage documentary.

"It's a celebration of the women's fight for equality throughout the years and the 19th amendment granting them the right to vote," said Master Sgt. Robert E. Raines, Station equal opportunity advisor and native of Detroit.

Belinda J. Pugh, Station Library supervisor and native of Winchester, Va., explained the importance of Women's Equality Day is to remember the struggles of the suffragettes but also the contributions from women in history, especially of those who first entered the work force during World War I, taking the jobs men had left to go to war.

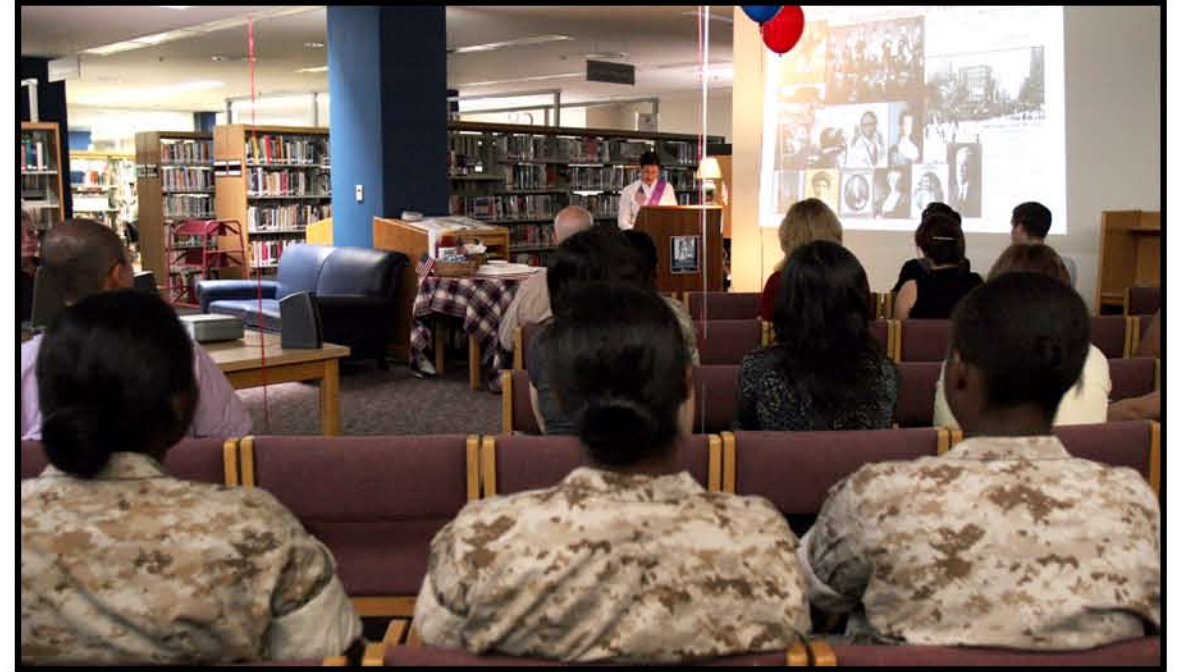
During the luncheon, Sharon L. VanDerveer University of Maryland University College professor and native of Syracuse, N.Y., addressed the group of the difficulties women faced to attain the ratification of the 19th Amendment dressed as a suffragette.

"I thought it was very interesting, all the information and all the history of how our rights began," said Sgt. Lekisha M. Montgomery, Combat Logistics Company 36 supply platoon sergeant and native of Barclay, Md. "If it weren't for their suffrage, today (we) as women would not be in the service."

Staff Sgt. Linda L. Gause CLC-36 warehouse chief and native of Marion, S.C., said her favorite part of the presentation was the documentary because it was an enjoyable history lesson. For next year, she would like to see more guests at the presentation.

"History repeats itself, not in the cliché way we think about, but history has shown us it's important to know where our rights come from," said Gause. "When those women started (suffrage) it was small, but they kept with it and it has gotten us to where we are today."

"I even felt that I should have brought my daughter," added Gause. "When (children) are small they can take the (positive) message and grow with it."



Lance Cpl. Cindy G. Alejandrez

▲ Station residents listen to the history behind the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote, during a Women's Equality Day luncheon at the Station Library Aug. 24.

Raines explained although women composed the majority of the audience during the luncheon, the positive message was something everyone can be proud of.

"The things that these women have done are important for all Americans, both male and female," said Raines.

Mu Juk ‘cooks up’ response procedures after fire

by Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez
Shimbun Staff

A food service Marine from Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 effectively responded to a fire that took place in the mess tent at the mess hall here Aug. 21.

Sgt. Tamara J. Moody, MWSS-171 food service Marine and native of Baton Rouge, La., was prepping food for dinner when she heard of the fire. Immediately grabbing a fire extinguisher, she evacuated personnel out of the mess tent and ran inside to put out the flames, according to Sgt. David T. Green, MWSS-171 food service Marine and Hempstead, N.Y., native.

“As soon as I saw the flame ignite I tried to blow it out but gas was spurting in every direction, spreading the fire,” said Pvt. Michael A. Fenner, MWSS-171 food service Marine and native of Demarest, N.J. “Before I did anything else I went and got help.”

What Fenner witnessed was the combustion of an over-pressured M-2 burner.

“Our M-2 Burners are prone to malfunctions,” said Gunnery Sgt. Faith S. Osborne, MWSS-171 food service chief and Georgetown, Guyana, native.

◀ M-2 burners and surrounding equipment are covered with fire extinguisher chemicals after Sgt. Tamara J. Moody, Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 food service Marine and native of Baton Rouge, La., responded to the combustion at the mess hall here Aug. 21.

“Pressure builds up underneath the gas distributor and eventually the slightest shake will make it detach from the burner and release the pressurized gas in every direction. I knew exactly what had happened as soon as I heard the distinct ‘boom’ from the burner combusting.”

The pressurized release can quickly spread the fire out in a 3-foot diameter, according to Osborne. However, MWSS-171 food services Marines were properly equipped for the situation.

“There is always a fire extinguisher nearby in the event of a flare-up,” said Fenner. “We usually keep our fire extinguisher-to-burner ratio at 2-to-3. For the nine burners in that tent, we keep six extinguishers.”

Thanks to the quick reaction, the fire was extinguished in less than five minutes.

Thanks to the quick reaction, the fire was extinguished in less than five minutes, according to Fenner. It took Moody three tries to fully extinguish the flame.

“Each time I would go in the tent to smother the flames, the whole area would fill up with the fire extinguisher’s thick stream making it impossible to breathe,” said Moody. “I saw that the explosion had completely engulfed the fill ranges that held the burners in place. I was surprised that I was able to extinguish the fire in the time that I did.” *See Mu Juk on page 7*



Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez



Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez

Mu Juk continued from page 6

Shortly after the fire, the M-2 burner was removed from the tent. Despite the misfortune and unserviceable equipment, the food service Marines still operated on a regular schedule.

“This type of thing isn’t an everyday occurrence, but we are fully prepared to handle the situation,” said Osborne. He added that a fire evacuation plan and protocol for actions taken in event of a fire was in place at the time of the incident.

► A charred M-2 burner sits outside the mess tent after it caught fire at the chow hall here Aug. 21. The fire it created took less than five minutes to extinguish thanks to closely followed protocol by food service Marines.

◀ Pvt. Michael A. Fenner, Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 food service Marine and native of Demarest, N.J., displays his chemical-coated cover after his work area caught on fire at the mess hall here Aug. 21. A quick reaction and closely-followed protocol led to the quick dousing of the flames.



Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez

Iwakuni Marines aim high, hit mark during Interservice Rifle Championships

by Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler
Shimbun Staff

Whether they work in a warehouse, office or airplane hangar, all Marines are riflemen, trained killers ready to drop their pens and pick up an M-16 at a moment's notice.

Two Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron marksmen here proved this by representing the air station and Marine Corps during the Interservice Rifle Championships at Marine Corps Weapons Training Battalion, Quantico Va., July 17-24.

Gunnery Sgt. Christopher J. Geraci, weather forecaster, and Cpl. Esteban M. Ramirez, air traffic controller, contributed to the Far East Team's first place finish in the Commanding General and Marine Corps Infantry Trophy Team Matches.

"We didn't win any individual awards, but we were shooting against the best," said Geraci. "The competition is pretty high out there."

Geraci was a natural fit for the position on the Far East Team.

An avid hunter since he was a boy, the St. Louis native parlayed his love of shooting into a 16-year career in the Marine Corps.

"This is something I enjoy doing," he said. "Competitive shooting is just a plus for me."

Ramirez, who joined the Far East Team as a last-minute fill in, gained the vote of confidence of Capt. Mike J. McCoy, Indoor Small-Arms Range officer-in-charge and Salt Lake City native, who recommended the 20-year-old Marine take the empty seat.

“This is something I enjoy doing ... competitive shooting is just a plus for me.”

- Gunnery Sgt. Christopher J. Geraci

"He's a very good shot. He's got a lot of potential as a shooter and he's a good Marine," McCoy said. "I knew I could send him to the hardest competition in the military and not have to worry about him."

The Marines' journey to the interservice matches began at the National Rifle Association's Virginia State Regional Tournament.

Here Geraci and Ramirez had a chance to get familiar with the match M-16s they would be using in Quantico.



Photo courtesy of Civilian Marksmanship Program

▲ Cpl. Esteban M. Ramirez, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron air traffic controller and native of Salt Lake City, prepares to fire at the 200 yard line during the Interservice Rifle Championships at Marine Corps Weapons Training Battalion, Quantico, Va., July 17.

According to Geraci, the match M-16 is about four pounds heavier than the regular service rifle and offers more sensitive trigger and sight settings, which allow shooters to achieve tighter shot groupings at greater distances.

"It's equivilant to what you would find basically on a civilian M-16," he said. "It's much nicer, smoother."

Although the match M-16 took some getting used to, shooting tournament first-timer Ramirez found himself hitting black in no time.

"We got lucky being able to shoot the NRA matches," said Ramirez. "We'd never BZOed (battlefield zeroed, Marine jargon for sighting in a weapon), so we used that as an opportunity to BZO." See Rifle on page 9

Rifle continued from page 8

“The cool thing was there were a lot of civilians there, and they’re really active. They like to help you out and give you pointers,” the Shidler, Okla., native added. “That’s what really helped me out. There was competitiveness, but they really like to share their knowledge.”

With a better handle on their weapons the Marines headed to Quantico with victory in their sights. Throughout the seven-day championship, contestants shot from the 200, 300, 600 and 1,000 yard line while combating hot weather and some of the finest competition

in the U.S. armed forces.

“When you’re laying there for a long time in the prone while the sun is beating down on you, man, you start sweating a lot,” said Ramirez. “We had (shooting) jackets on too, so it was pretty intense.”

It doesn't matter what your MOS is. Whether you're on a convoy or flying, every Marine has a rifle and the potential to use it...

- Gunnery Sgt. Christopher Geraci

For Geraci, a difficult but rewarding aspect of the competition was firing from double the longest distance of normal Marine Corps rifle qualification.

“One of the coolest things is shooting 1,000 yards with an iron sight on an M-16,” Geraci said. “You just don’t realize how far that is until you’re out there looking at it. You can barely read the number boards.”

Geraci and Ramirez’s placing in the tournament is testament to not only H&HS but the air station’s encouragement of retaining those skills invaluable to every Marine.

“We’re very fortunate because the command endorses this type of thing,” said McCoy. “We don’t have a rifle range here, but it shows with the right amount of skill and the right perspective, a little training can go a long way,” he added.

Geraci, a two-time Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran, agrees, adding that the enemy doesn’t care about a Marine’s Military Occupational Specialty in combat.

“The case in point right now is in Iraq,” said Geraci. “It doesn’t matter what your MOS is. Whether you’re on a convoy or flying, every Marine has a rifle and the potential to use it at any time.”



Lance Cpl. Noah Leffler

▲ Gunnery Sgt. Christopher J. Geraci, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron weather forecaster and St. Louis native, stands with shotgun in hand on the flight line here Aug. 28. Geraci regularly lends his shooting expertise to the BASH (Bird-Aircraft Strike Hazard) program, which aims to eliminate the risk of birds damaging aircraft.

Marine takes pride in Corps, sets outstanding example

by Lance Cpl. Cindy G. Alejandre
Shimbun Staff

When Sgt. Patrick T. O'Brien was a teenager the stories from his cousin, a Marine scout sniper, not only captured his imagination but became a serious career option.



Photo courtesy of Sgt. Patrick T. O'Brien

▲ Sgt. Patrick T. O'Brien, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron Indoor Small Arms Range operations chief and native of Jacksonville, Fla., while he was deployed with 3rd Battalion 1st Marine Regiment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Every moment
with that
Marine is
memorable. ↓

- Sgt. Matthew R. Piano

The idea of working with weapons motivated him to become a rifleman.

Since then O'Brien, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron Indoor Small Arms Range operations chief and native of Jacksonville, Fla., has not only excelled in his career but has also helped fellow Marines do the same.

"Every moment with that Marine is memorable," said Sgt. Matthew R. Piano, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., Weapons and Field Training Battalion combat marksmanship trainer and native of Broadalbin, N.Y. "He always leads from the front and is fair and just to his Marines."

After his initial rifleman training, O'Brien was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment based in Camp Pendleton, Calif., as a radio operator in a constantly deploying and training environment.

The 6-year grunt has deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, graduated a Military Operations in Urban Terrain instructor's course and became a Stability and Support Operations course instructor.

O'Brien describes his time on deployment only by saying, "We saw a lot of (things), if you will."

It was during his second time in Iraq when he distinguished himself among his unit. In November 2004 he earned a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with a Combat "V" for actions taken while his squad was the lead element for his company during Operation Phantom Fury, the now infamous battle in Fallujah.

He is stoic when describing his citation, explaining it very matter-of-factly. "There's a sniper over there, go get him," said O'Brien describing his orders from his platoon commander.

On Nov. 9, 2004, O'Brien, who was a squad leader at the time, was tasked with finding a sniper without his radio. He and another Marine met fire from a Russian machine gun, while crossing a courtyard. They continued on out of the line of fire, clearing the wrong house before finally making it to the roof of a building where they could see another squad in their company. He made contact with the other squad leader via an inter-squad radio to find out where the enemy was.

See Marine on page 11

Marine continued from page 10



Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

▲ Sgt. Patrick T. O'Brien, Indoor Small Arms Range operations chief, shoots an M9 pistol inside the ISAR Aug. 17.

"Then I threw a grenade in the window and didn't hear a sniper anymore," said O'Brien.

His citation commends him for "displaying tactical proficiency and leadership abilities well beyond his rank and time in service."

"I had a blast in Fallujah," said O'Brien. "It was the greatest time of my life. I was a 22, 23-year-old corporal and I had 13 Marines I could tell whatever, and they did it. My leaders had the utmost confidence in me."

O'Brien's best friend, who was with him during those deployments praises his intelligence and ability to lead.

"Sgt. O'Brien is very smart, so he (can) therefore pass on that knowledge to his junior Marines," said Piano.

O'Brien once had to pull-up and relax Piano after he was shot in the head. The bullet only grazed the top layers of his Kevlar, but before realizing this, Piano thought he had met his end.

"And that's why you don't throw your Kevlar on the ground," explained O'Brien as he raised his voice.

Once back at Camp Pendleton, O'Brien continued his leadership training by taking part in the Corporal's Course, before receiving welcomed orders here.

"I wanted to come out here so I could have some time with my family," said O'Brien. "I missed both my kids being born while on deployments. When I came out here I had been married for three years and had spent a total of probably nine months with my family."

During his time here, O'Brien has only left his family for training or for rifle qualification in Okinawa, Japan.

He can usually be found behind his desk, concealed in camouflaged netting.

Those who work with O'Brien here describe him as someone who gets the job done.

"He ensures the range functions in all capacities," said Capt. Michael J. McCoy, ISAR and air traffic control officer-in-charge and Salt Lake City native. "As a sergeant, he has the job that in other bases (pertains) to a staff (noncommissioned officer.)"

During his time here he also became a Marine Combat Instructor Trainer of Water Survival and was the noncommissioned officer of the quarter for H&HS.

A proud moment in his career was the opening of the ISAR more than a year and a half ago. He is the last Marine now remaining on station who saw it happen and made it work from the beginning.

"I remember when it first opened," said O'Brien. "It was chaos. Nobody knew what their job was and we basically organized it."

His dedication to the range's operations has not gone unnoticed.

"He ensures the range functions and he takes marksmanship and any training very seriously," said McCoy. "He's an infantryman by trade, was a squad leader in Fallujah and knows the importance of maintaining marksmanship."

For the future, O'Brien plans to put in a package for Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command and possibly attach to one of their battalions at Camp Pendleton or return to his old battalion to become a scout sniper.

"Hopefully I'll stay with the grunts, pick up (gunnery sergeant) then become a warrant officer," said O'Brien.

Until then, his peers and students here appreciate working with him for his ability to motivate Marines.

"If it wasn't for him I wouldn't have reenlisted," said Sgt. Nicholas M. Heier, ISAR combat marksmanship trainer and native of Philadelphia. "He whole heartedly believes in what the Marine Corps is all about."



Lance Cpl. Cindy G. Alejandrez

▲ Jamie M. Henderson, Wine and Nine competitor and native of Pensacola Fla., tries a practice swing at Torri Pines Golf Course Aug. 23.

► Keith L. Thornton, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron locksmith, Wine and Nine competitor and native of Philadelphia takes a swing at Torri Pines Golf Course Aug. 23.

Wine and Nine entices golfers with relaxed atmosphere

by Lance Cpl. Cindy G. Alejandrez
Shimbun Staff

Three teams tied in an evening Wine and Nine scramble golf tournament at the Torri Pines Golf Course here Aug. 23.

For \$8, 12 participants enjoyed a full selection of red and white wines, snacks and played nine holes all while meeting new people and potential golf partners.

“The Wine and Nine is a good way to get golfers to meet new golfers,” said Paul Hahn, Torri Pines golf course manager and native of Hilton Head Island, S.C. “We have all types of expertise, from beginners to old pros. We try to get them to mix it up and make friends.”

Hahn said he saw a couple of new faces who were looking forward to a relaxed evening.

Susann D. Campell, a novice golfer and Yucca Valley, Calif., native said she was participating for relaxation and practice.



Lance Cpl. Cindy G. Alejandrez

“Because I need to get better at golf,” said Campell. “We’re not taking this too seriously.”

Hahn said the wine and nine holes go together because they produce a friendly atmosphere.

Participants who are of age can help themselves the selection of red and white wines under tents near the edge of the golf course, not too far from a small pond. This is how most participants first meet each other before teaming up to start the competition.

“We want to make it more a social setting with golf instead of more competitive,” explained Hahn.

On the golf course, players used the best of four shots played and repeated the efforts until the hole was finished. For most players the comfortable game of golf was successful in helping them improve their skills.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Jeff S. Searcy Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron builder, constructor and native of Nicholasville, Ky., explained he had not had an opportunity to golf in years. He recognized his strengths and challenges when golfing. “Driving is definitely something I would not do, I would have better luck throwing the ball,” said Searcy who prefers using a hybrid club or an iron.

Hahn encourages station residents to take part in future tournaments or golf camps. “More people should go out and enjoy (golf),” said Searcy.



▲ Guests gathered around the Nishiki River and Kintai Bridge to watch the 40th Annual Nishiki River Water Festival's fireworks display Aug. 25.



▲ Food and souvenir vendors lined the Nishiki River during its 40th annual celebration near the Kintai Bridge Aug. 25.

40th Annual Nishiki River Water Festival

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler
Shimbun Staff



▲ Children play in a fountain near the Kintai Bridge during the 40th Annual Nishiki River Water Festival Aug. 25.



▲ A couple enjoys the fireworks display during the 40th Annual Nishiki River Water Festival Aug. 25.



▲ Guests gathered around the Nishiki River and Kintai Bridge to watch the 40th Annual Nishiki River Water Festival's fireworks display Aug. 25.

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Approximately 120,000 people gathered at the Kintai Bridge area for the 40th Annual Nishiki River Water Festival Saturday.

The festival, an annual favorite among Iwakuni locals, gave many station residents a unique glimpse into Japanese culture as well as a fun-filled day with their families.

"It's beautiful, like a big picnic," said Javier Perez, a Parris, Calif., native who spent the past month visiting family living on base. The festival would be one of Perez's last activities while in Japan, and he said he was happy to enjoy the celebration with his loved ones.

"(Japanese) festivals are completely different," he added. "You don't see many parks like this with (water fountains) at home, and everything feels very safe."

Like many summer events in Japan, the festival included a variety of souvenir and food stands, offering everything from glow sticks to cooked octopus.

"The food is really good," said Lance Cpl. Angel L. Rosado, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12 pneumatic structures mechanic and Miami native. "I tried this garlic chicken they have on a stick, and I want to go back and try the yakisoba."

Attendees began staking their spots along the Nishiki riverbank early in the afternoon, eager to claim a spot where their children could splash in the river while waiting for the festival's main attraction: the fireworks display.



▲ Guests gathered around the Nishiki River and Kintai Bridge to watch the 40th Annual Nishiki River Water Festival's fireworks display Aug. 25.

"I came because I heard there were going to be fireworks that put the Fourth of July to shame," said Lance Cpl. David Y. Yang, MALS-12 aircraft maintenance support equipment electrician and Torrence, Calif., native.

The evening concluded as a one and a half-hour display lit the night sky with about 6,000 shots, much to the delight of cheering onlookers.

Although the display was a lengthy 90 minutes, longer than what many would expect in the U.S., it was impressive nonetheless, said Yang.



Lance Cpl. Carl D. Suemmeler, Marine Aviation Logistic Squadron 12 power plants maintenance technician and native of Armstrong, Mo., jumps through an obstacle as Sgt. Tchaikawsky E. Samuels, 414 and 413 work sections non commissioned officer-in-charge and native of Brooklyn, N.Y., follows during an obstacle course run at Hachigamine Park in Otake City, Aug. 30.

Lance Cpl. Cindy G. Alejandre

11th MEU conducts humanitarian aid exercise

by Cpl. Scott M. Biscuiti
11th MEU



Cpl. Scott M. Biscuiti

▲ Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 11 gaze at the USS Tarawa as they make a ship-to-shore movement during a humanitarian aid operation exercise Aug. 23. The Marines and sailors of CLB-11, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit sprang into action in response to a simulated disaster in an Iraqi village during the MEU's first at-sea period.

When torrential rains and flooding destroyed the food and water supplies of a small Iraqi village and leveled many buildings, one hope for the people to get their lives back together was nearby; a Marine tExpeditionary Unit.

The Marines and sailors of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit responded to this very training scenario Aug. 21-24 during the MEU's first at-sea period. Members of Combat Logistics Battalion 11 sprang into action and made a ship-to-shore movement with the equipment and personnel needed to mitigate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Within hours they set up a distribution site, a medical facility and a tactical water purification system (TWPS), capable of purifying ocean water and making it safe for consumption, said 1st Lt. Douglas Pugh, HAO site commander.

"The first thing we did when we went into the town was ask 'What can I fix and how do I make this work better for the town,'" said 1st Lt. Katie Rowbotham, the initial response team commander and Anoka, Minn. native.

Though prepared to help in any way they could. There are some things that CLB-11 could only plan for once they were on the ground talking with the locals.

"We intended on providing humanitarian rations, water and basic medical aid, said the St. Paul, Minn. native. "Upon getting to the site we discovered that the villagers had a great need for shelter, blankets and baby formula."

While the upper echelon worked with headquarters to get the needed supplies brought in via helicopter, the Marines and sailors did everything to help the more than 300 villagers that were in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.

▼ Hospital corpsmen with Combat Logistics Battalion 11, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit treat patients during a humanitarian aid exercise Aug. 24.



Cpl. Scott M. Biscuiti

The medical personnel treated patients constantly for three days. They saw everything from cuts and headaches to broken bones.

"We dealt with many illnesses common to a flood and had to treat them accordingly," said Hospitalman 2nd Class Elias Flores, from Lodi, Calif. "Having a limited numbers of interpreters was difficult and we had to use our hands and expressions to communicate sometimes."

See Corps on page 17

AROUND THE CORPS

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.

Corps continued from page 16

While medical coverage was a large aspect of the humanitarian operation, it wasn't everything.

The engineers of CLB-11 had their hands full building shelters for the villagers, draining the standing water and repairing the electric wiring.

The training also tested the on-scene commander's ability to work with members of a village council, which often include local religious leaders or Imams and Sheiks.

"Having a strong relationship with the Sheik and village council gives you credibility with the town," Pugh said. "When we go to the Sheik it reinforces his credibility with his people."

After many long hours, hundreds of patients treated and fresh water flowing freely to the villagers, the Iraqi's were back on their feet. As quickly as the Marines and sailors setup their life-saving camp, they broke it down and made their way back to their ship to wait until called upon again to be America's 911 force in readiness.



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◀ A hospital corpsman with Combat Logistics Battalion 11, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit treats a simulated casualty during a humanitarian aid exercise Aug. 23.



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▲ Role players, acting as members of a village council, advance toward the humanitarian assistance distribution site Aug. 23 during a humanitarian aid exercise here. The Marines and sailors of Combat Logistics Battalion 11, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted a ship-to-shore movement in response to a simulated disaster in an Iraqi village during the MEU's first at-sea period.



Cpl. Marcus A. Birdon
Roswell, Ga.

“Basically just promote more the benefits of eating healthier, by giving out more information about obesity and what causes it. Then give ways to stop it.”

Seaman Apprentice Lonnie A. Pope
Augusta, Ga.

“Just exercise, that’s what I would think (would work). Because my parents are a little over weight but it’s not that they don’t eat healthy it’s that they just don’t exercise.”



While the military endorses a healthy and active lifestyle the obesity rate in the U.S. has been skyrocketing in the last five years. In a recent study Mississippi became the first state to crack the 30 percent barrier for adult obesity. So we were wondering ...

What can we do to fight the obesity epidemic?



Lisa Faraco
Grass Valley, Calif.

“I think the first step is to eat healthier and make sure that physical activity is important to you and your family. Get your kids outside. You don’t have to go to the gym just do something fun and active.”



Ensign Peter C. Maki
Pheonix

“Get your kids a Wii instead of a Playstation.”



STAFF

Public Affairs Officer

Maj. Guillermo A. Canedo

Public Affairs Chief

Master Sgt. John A. Cordero

Public Affairs Web Master

Sgt. Edward R. Guevara Jr.

Assistant Web Master

Yukie Wada

Layout and Design

Cpl. Lendus B. Casey

Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

Press Chief

Cpl. Luke Blom

Combat Correspondents

Lance Cpl. Cindy G. Alejandrez

Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs

Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez

Community Relations Chief

Cpl. Lendus B. Casey

Community Relations Specialist

Hiroko Soriki

Hiromi Kawamoto

Public Affairs Admin Specialist

Hiroyasu Sumida

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All queries concerning news and editorial content should be directed to the Public Affairs Office, Building One, Room 216, MCAS Iwakuni, Japan. Call 253-5551.