



the KINTAI
shimbun

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by Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez

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by Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffer

Police hose down firefighters in golf tourney

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Sept. 27, 2007

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Moto Photo

MINE-SWEEPING HM-14 VANGUARD ARRIVES AFTER 4-MONTH JOURNEY

by Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez
Shimbun Staff

Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 14 arrived Sept. 12 after four months of traveling from Naval Station Norfolk, Va.

During their year stay, HM-14 will better relations with the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force while conducting training and qualification evolutions involving airborne mine detection (AMD) and vertical onboard delivery (VOD), according to Petty Officer 2nd Class McKay D. Estep, HM-14 air crewman and native of San Dusky, Ohio.

The 60-sailor detachment's journey began at Naval Station Norfolk, Va. and toured them through the waters of the Pacific, finally arriving in Iwakuni. They were aboard the USS Pelelieu which took the unit as far as Singapore by means of Pacific Partnership 2007, a combined humanitarian clean-up mission. Throughout the mission, the detachment's helicopters were utilized to transport food and medical supplies.

The HM-14 detachment maintains two MH-53E Sea Dragon Helicopters, each capable of airborne sweeping, neutralization and destruction of mines. The squadron as a whole maintains 14 MH-53E helicopters around the world and are able to respond to any theater on the globe in approximately 72 hours, said Estep.

The helicopters' secondary utility mission on the air station involves the movement of cargo and equipment and the transportation of passengers.

The detachment will be maintaining the helicopters throughout their stay, while enhancing relations with the JMSDF Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 111, who employs the same model helicopter, said Lt. Cmdr. Daniel Buhr, HM-14 detachment officer in charge and native of Norfolk, Va.

Aside from giving HM-14 a chance to improve relations, the effort gives the detachment a chance to experience life on a



Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez

An MH-53E Sea Dragon helicopter, run by members of the newly-arrived Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 14 detachment, taxis away from its hangar before beginning today's training of utilizing an airborne acoustic stimulator that is capable of detecting acoustically triggered mines in the water. Each MH-53E is capable of detecting, neutralizing and ultimately destroying mines.

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different hemisphere.

“Iwakuni has been a great place for us as far as location and local attractions,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Matthew S. Vanallen, HM-14 aviation ordnance technician and native of Norfolk, Va. “We’ve been traveling for four months and so far, this is my favorite stop.”

Vanallen, along with other sailors in the detachment, find time to go outside the gates and experience the Iwakuni lifestyle. Like many welcomed newcomers living here, Vanallen says he has plans to visit the large cities of Japan before rotating back to Naval Station Norfolk, Va. in November.

“I can already tell, even after being here for a week, that I am really going to enjoy this place,” said Vanallen. “We’ve got a lot of training to complete while we’re out here, but it’s going to be a great experience for the detachment.”

An MH-53E Sea Dragon helicopter, manned by the newly-arrived Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 14 detachment, is preparing for the day’s training exercise.



Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez

ATFP program keeps station step ahead of terrorists, earns DoD award

**Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs
Shimbun Staff**

A Department of Defense Antiterrorism Force Protection Award was presented to the station for its terrorism-detering accomplishments during the past year Sept. 14.

Earning an honorable mention in the best installation category, the station became the first Marine Corps base or air station to claim a DoD ATFP award.

“This award is a testament to our antiterrorism working group,” said Andrew R. Samuels, station antiterrorism officer and native of Los Angeles. “They’re consistently striving to get better and to improve our processes,” said Samuels.

During the annual competition, installations are evaluated on antiterrorism improvement measures, innovative actions, community awareness, intelligence and major accomplishments. The station stood out because of a host of projects, including the fortification of key facilities, enhanced flight line security and a stronger perimeter.

These projects were completed by the efforts

of the station’s “antiterrorism working group,” a team of representatives from all station units. The group determines where force protection improvements are needed and collaborates to determine how security upgrades can most efficiently be implemented.

“It’s a total team concept,” said Samuels. “We get support from the entire installation.”

Major improvements to installation security were possible because of the tremendous support ATFP personnel received from station leaders, according to Samuels.

“The command was very enthusiastic and supportive of our efforts,” said Samuels, who added the antiterrorism group worked together to improve or resolve more than 100 security issues during the past year. “Without the commanders’ backing and support, we would never have been able to achieve what we did.”

While the command has given the go-ahead to pursue an extensive ATFP program, support has also come from the surrounding community. Station ATFP personnel work



Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs
Andrew R. Samuels, station antiterrorism officer and native of Los Angeles, heads the station’s award-winning antiterrorism program. The station was presented with the Department of Defense Best Antiterrorism Program Installation (Honorable Mention) Award Sept. 14.

very closely with Japanese police and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force to ensure the community is prepared to handle threats.

“It’s a team effort to keep the installation and the local community safe,” said Lt. Col.

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Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs

Hitoshi Takahashi, security guard and Yamaguchi native, checks an identification card at the main gate here Sept. 21. One of the biggest threats to the station is vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, or VBIEDs, according to Staff Sgt. Trenton J. Sweeney, antiterrorism force protection chief and native of Buffalo, N.Y.

ATFP CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

John J. Thomas, station operations officer and native of Chicago. “The award couldn’t have been obtained without the dedication and professionalism of our Japanese counterparts.”

Last, but certainly not least, is the role all station residents play in keeping the station terrorism-free. In order to maintain the sta-

regularly trains station residents on basic antiterrorism measures including bomb evacuation procedures and travel safety. “It’s important they remain alert and report any suspicious activity.”

This isn’t the first time the station was recognized for its antiterrorism program. During the past three years, the station, Samuels and other key individuals have placed first in the Marine Forces Pacific and U.S. Pacific Com-

“Marines and their families play a huge role in preventing terrorism ... It’s important they remain alert and report any suspicious activity.”

-Staff Sgt. Trenton J. Sweeney

tion’s defense, residents should continue to do their part, according to Staff Sgt. Trenton J. Sweeney, antiterrorism force protection chief and native of Buffalo, N.Y.

“Marines and their families play a huge role in preventing terrorism,” said Sweeney, who

mand Antiterrorism Program competitions.

In conjunction with this year’s award, the station received a Marine Corps Certificate of Commendation and plaque which will hang on the wall of the ATFP office at the Provost Marshal’s Office.



Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs

Lance Cpl. Stark Norton, military policeman and native of Farmersville, Texas, checks an identification card at the main gate here Sept. 21. ID checks and vehicle searches are basic elements of the station’s award-winning antiterrorism program.

ASF TRAINING BRINGS LEARNING, BURNING TO H&HS MARINES

Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler
Combat correspondent

Morning, noon and night - rain, snow or sun, they stand post with military policemen, acting as the face and force behind the air station's gates. These Marines and sailors are often the first thing one sees coming aboard and the last thing fading away in the rearview when leaving.

But Auxiliary Security Force members know their duties entail more than simply clipping on a radio and slinging a shotgun, and thanks to a recently revamped training course they are qualified to tackle any situation they may encounter.

A class of 61 Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron Marines and sailors completed two days of mandatory ASF qualification training Thursday.

"The primary function (of ASF) is it gives the commanding officer the ability to respond to any threat that may present itself," said Staff Sgt. Neil W. Constine, PMO training chief and Marinette Wis., native. "If we have a heightened threat condition we can pretty much double the security forces

we have here aboard the air station."

The training began Wednesday morning with classes covering gate procedures, threat levels and the use of deadly force, all of which was included in a written test Thursday morning.

"My number one concern is that they understand how we use force ... the different levels of force available to them and circumstances when they should or should not use force," Constine said.

The remainder of the day focused on an ASF member's primary weapon: the M1014 Bennelli 12 gauge shotgun. Students were given a class on weapon handling and taken to the Indoor Small Arms Range to shred some targets.

"We got the Bennelli, and that was awesome," said Pfc. Mason K. Sherwood, H&HS air traffic controller and native of Portland, Ore. "Firing the shotgun lets you know what kind of hell you're (capable of) unleashing."

The next day students were given classes on non-lethal baton methods, crowd control techniques and a recent addition to the



Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

Blinded by a faceful of burning Oleoresin Capsicum pepper spray, Cpl. James L. Bragg, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron weather observer and Thousand Oaks, Calif., native, performs a non-lethal compliance technique during the OC Level 1 certification course at the Provost Marshal's office Sept. 20.

training - Oleoresin Capsicum spray. Made from the extract of the cayenne pepper plant, OC irritates the eyes, skin and mucous

membranes of the upper respiratory tract, incapacitating the subject but causing no

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long-term side effects.

“As of right now ASF doesn’t carry OC. However, by the nature of their job they’re working side-by-side with the military police who are,” Constine said. “If they have to use OC, there’s a good chance the ASF may get contaminated. It’s very important, especially when somebody’s armed with a weapon, that they know how to react, fight through and maintain that weapon.”

There were many apprehensive faces Thursday afternoon as the time approached for the Level 1 OC certification. One by one, the students were sprayed in the face with a small yet extremely painful dose of OC before running a short gauntlet of stations in which they performed various compliance techniques. Disoriented and virtually unable to see, the service members relied on teamwork and bearing to complete the quick but arduous course.

Although he described the feeling as “red hot embers sitting on my face and eyeballs,” Cpl. Trevor J. Good, H&HS air traffic control radar technician and native of Gillette, Wyo., knows the experience has given him the knowledge not to panic should he find himself in a similar situation.

“I feel like I’m better prepared, like if I had this happen again I’d know what to expect,” Good said.

“Although I’d probably kill the (guy) who did it,” he added jokingly.

“If (military police) have to use OC, there’s a good chance the ASF may get contaminated. It’s very important, especially when somebody’s armed with a weapon, that they know how to react, fight through and maintain that weapon.”

-Staff Sgt. Neil W. Constine

Constine hopes the newly certified Marines and sailors take away a sense of accomplishment from the course, and says experience outside one’s Military Occupational Specialty can only make him a more skilled warrior.

“I think that for any Marine the more that you can do and the more experience you get



Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

Sgt. Hugh R. Sargent, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron military policeman who serves as a non-lethal weapons instructor and native of Sacramento, Calif., uses Pvt. Michael A. Fenner, H&HS food service specialist and Demarest, N.J., native, to demonstrate a non-lethal compliance baton technique to the Auxiliary Security Force class outside the Provost Marshal’s Office Sept. 20.

makes you a well-rounded person,” he said. doing it.”

“In today’s Marine Corps security and force protection is something everybody needs to be concerned with. This gives people a better background and understanding of what (MPs) do on a daily basis and why we’re

Ceremony welcomes 7 into chief's mess

Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler
Shimbun Staff

For sailors, the chiefs' mess is more than just an area of a ship where chief petty officers eat, sleep and socialize. Ask any Navy E-7 or above and they will tell you the chiefs' mess is a mindset, a fraternity of sorts in which years of hard work and service develop into a one-of-a-kind military camaraderie.

A group of seven sailors were welcomed into the chiefs' mess during a chief petty officer pinning ceremony at the Marine Memorial Chapel Friday.

The promotion to chief petty officer is a milestone in the career of an enlisted sailor, and the ceremony means more than simply pinning on his anchor and receiving the combination cover.

"The transition from E-6 to E-7 is, for us, very symbolic of 'ask the chief,' which is one of the most famous phrases we have in our naval history," said Master Chief Petty Officer Daniel A. Sligh, Naval Electronic Attack Squadron 141 command master chief and Los Angeles native. "That phrase in itself means a lot to these folks. They strive from

seaman recruit to one day wanting to be the chief - to be the one who is asked those questions."

As they marched into the chapel to the tune of Anchors Away, one could see the satisfaction on the faces of those about to join the proud rank.

"As far as my military career goes, there isn't anything that has been better than that," said newly-appointed Chief Petty Officer Michael Gouge on the feeling of being promoted.

Gouge, an Expeditionary Logistics Unit aviation electronics technician here with the Unit Deployment Program, says he would have enjoyed the opportunity to have his family back at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island in attendance. Nevertheless, the Fife, Wa., native was glad he could celebrate his promotion alongside the six fellow sailors with whom he graduated induction season - a rigorous six-week rite of passage for all sailors selected to be appointed as chief petty officers.

"It was special," he said. "It felt special to be



Photo courtesy of Lance Cpl. Jaqueline Diaz

A newly promoted group of chief petty officers looks on during their pinning ceremony at the Marine Memorial Chapel Sept. 21.

able to throw the whole six weeks of induction season in one ceremony. It's all just built up inside of you."

Sligh describes induction season as the

month-and-a-half period of intense physical training, naval education and history to be completed before the chiefs are pinned.

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Photo courtesy of Lance Cpl. Jaqueline Diaz

Chief Petty Officer Richard Peterson, Naval Electronic Attack Squadron 141 aviation structural mechanic, beams as his anchors are pinned upon being promoted during his pinning ceremony at the Marine Memorial Chapel Sept. 21.

CHIEF'S CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

“It’s (a culmination of) all those things that have made the Navy chief what it is for the last 114 years ... when the first chief was made,” he said.

The training emphasizes heavily on teamwork and unity, and the end result is a chief petty officer who puts the welfare of

his sailors and fellow chiefs before his own. Spending nearly every waking hour together, the petty officers 1st class must put aside any differences and pull together to accomplish a myriad of sometimes seemingly impossible tasks.

“You’re taking all these different personalities and making them all work as one cohesive unit so that they all look the same and act the same,” said Senior Chief Alicia J.



Photo courtesy of Lance Cpl. Jaqueline Diaz

A group of seven newly promoted chief petty officers receive their combination covers from their sponsors during their pinning ceremony at the Marine Memorial Chapel Sept. 21.

Koval, ELU aviation maintenance administrationman and Seattle native. “They all have to depend on each other.”

Sligh, who will soon be departing back to Whidbey Island with the Shadowhawks, credits Iwakuni’s CPO mess with fostering an environment where the most recent batch of chiefs here can grow as leaders and sailors.

“I envisioned the MCAS Iwakuni CPO mess to be fully integrated with (VAQ-141’s CPO mess) for the induction season process,” Sligh said.

“The amount of contributions the MCAS Iwakuni CPOs made was amazing,” he added. “It was just like being at home. They didn’t skip a beat.”



Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs

MASP gives service members chance to improve test-taking

**Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs
Shimbun Staff**

The Military Academic Skills Program readied six Marines and sailors for the Armed Forces Classification Test by strengthening their mathematics, English and test-taking skills here Sept. 17-21.

MASP is a quarterly program held by the Education Office designed to give service members the chance to practice the skills needed to score well on the AFCT, which is the enlisted service members' equivalent to the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test (ASVAB). A high score on the AFCT increases a service member's chances of lateral moving into a more technical job field or being accepted for an enlisted-to-officer package.

The six Marines and sailors, whose ranks (rates) ranged from seaman apprentice to staff sergeant, spent seven hours a day studying and taking quizzes as well as completing nightly homework assignments. The Marines and sailors

Cpl. Micah Parsons (right) Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting specialist and native of Chicago, and Lance Cpl. Anthony Mitchell, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron administration clerk and native of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., discuss a test question during the Military Academic Skills Program here Sept. 21.

took advantage of the time away from duty and made the most out of the program, according to Julie Rhodes, MASP instructor and native of Joshua Tree, Calif.

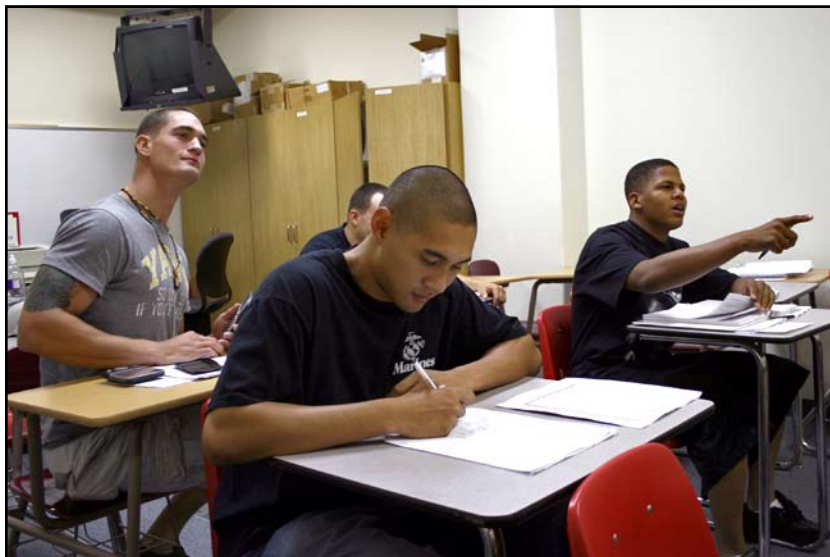
“(The students) have been very respectful and attentive,” said Rhodes, who added the class focused on working with percentages, fractions and other number-related problems. “We’ve had a lot of fun and they’ve learned a lot.”

The students' motivation to take the course stemmed from a variety of desires. Lance Cpl. Anthony Mitchell simply wanted to improve his skills and get a better score for his service records.

“I saw it as an opportunity to improve myself,” said the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron administration clerk and native of Fort Lauderdale, Fla. “A lot of the skills here are good just for general knowledge. You never know when you might need them.”

Other students also saw the class as a chance to better themselves while possibly advancing their careers. Navy Seaman Apprentice Philip Ayer, who does electrical maintenance work on the station's shore patrol vessels and currently is an undesignated rate, enrolled in the course to become an electrician's mate.

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Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs

Six service members participated in the Military Academic Skills Program here Sept. 17-21. The course focused on strengthening the Marines' and sailors' mathematics, English and test-taking skills in order to prepare them for the Armed Forces Classification Test.

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"I've been an electrician for most of my life," said the native of Dallas, who failed to meet the score requirement to qualify for the EM rate when he enlisted two years ago. "I scored pretty high (on the ASVAB) but in the wrong places."

Ayer has enough on-the-job training to earn the electrician's mate rate with a qualifying score on the AFCT. In hopes of making the grade, he has dedicated himself to improving his math skills.

"I was having trouble in math, and for a while I was trying

to learn it by myself," said Ayer, who added he now feels more confident about his abilities. "Having an instructor has really helped me."

*"I was having trouble in math,
and for a while I was trying to
learn it by myself... Having an
instructor has really helped me."*

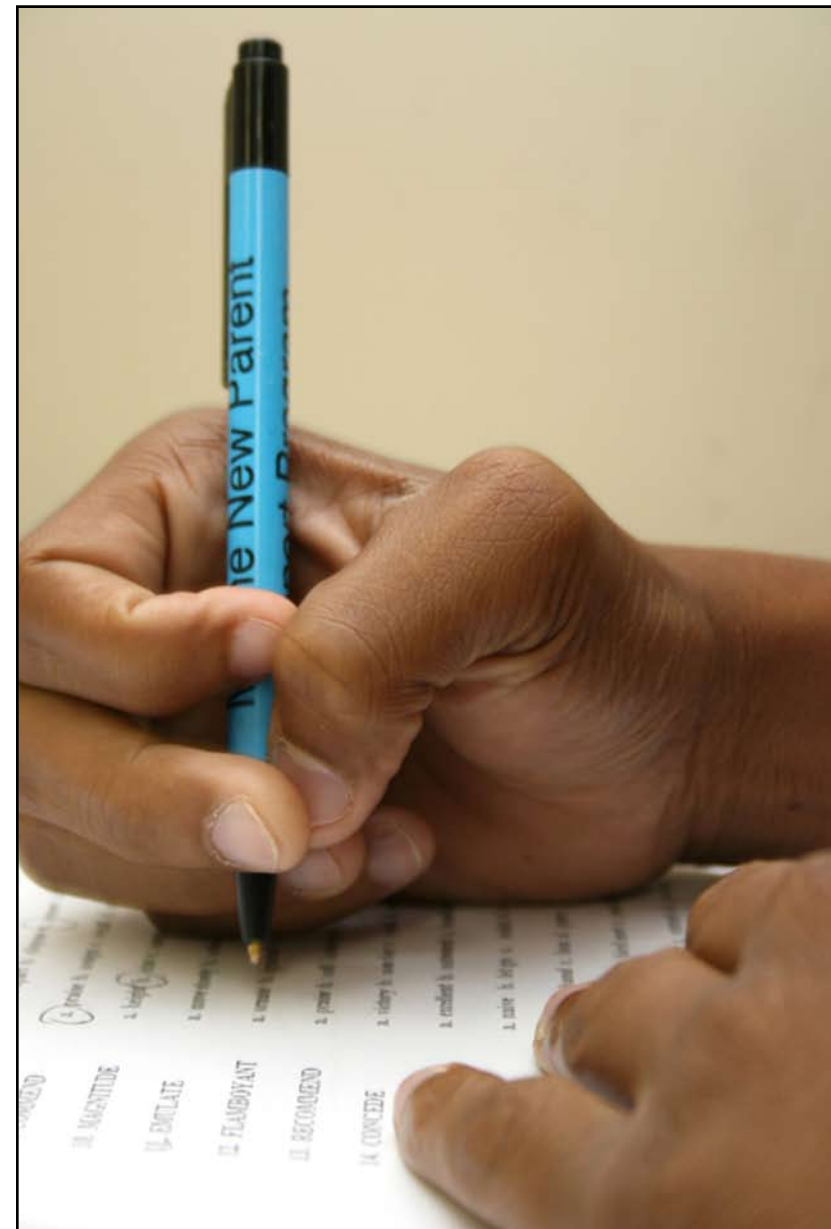
- Navy Seaman Apprentice Philip Ayer

The service members will put the skills they gained during the program to the test when they take the AFCT today.

"I think what I've learned here is going to be enough to put me over the edge," added Ayer.

The next MASP runs from Nov. 3-7. For more information visit the Education Office in building 411 or call 253-3855.

Six service members participated in the Military Academic Skills Program here Sept. 17-21. The course focused on strengthening the Marines' and sailors' mathematics, English and test-taking skills in order to prepare them for the Armed Forces Classification Test.



Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs

Pedaling toward perfection

Two wheels is only way for ATC gunny

**Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler
Shimbun Staff**

Standing at 6 feet 2 two inches tall and weighing in at 165 pounds, it's hard to believe eight years ago Gunnery Sgt. Tom J. Draffen was concerned about his physical fitness.

"I came into the Marine Corps 155 pounds soaking wet," said the Northville, N.Y., native.

But several years of sacrificing some of his physical responsibilities in order to meet the demands of a young Marine with a wife and four children had taken their toll, and in 1999 Draffen decided to do something about it.

"I was up to 220 pounds, starting to get pretty heavy and over the max," he added, referring the allowable height/weight ratio per Marine Corps standards. "One day I looked in the mirror and thought, 'Man, this is rough. Something has got to change.'"

Eight years later and 65 pounds lighter, Draffen is living proof it's never too late to take that first step toward a healthier life, and offers a two-wheeled solution for those ready to unleash the lean Marine within.

Growing up in rural upstate New York, Draffen stayed active in extra-curricular activities such as track and cross-country skiing throughout high school. He was also an avid cyclist, though this was mostly out of necessity.

"It was more a mode of transportation than anything else," said Draffen. "I didn't get a driver's license until my first year of college, so biking was kind of a way to get from home to work and school."

In 1994 Draffen put pedaling in the past when the newlywed and soon-to-be-father joined the Marine Corps and was soon stationed in Quantico as an air traffic controller. But after five years and four children, the 26-year-old sergeant found himself sinking into a less active lifestyle and began experiencing joint pain while running due to his

weight gain. Looking for a low-impact workout, he decided to eliminate the car from his daily commute.

"It was 4.7 miles back and forth to work, so I started biking five days a week," he said. "Any weather, any temperature – snow, sleet, whatever."

After a few months, he noticed not only significant weight loss but also a difference in his physical fitness test.

"In November I was running about 23 minutes for my PFT. In May I was down to 190 (pounds) and I ran a 19:20," said Draffen. "It turned a lot of heads."

He continued the fitness regimen until his 2001 reassignment to the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit made it nearly impossible to continue cycling. As the staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the Marine Mobile Air Traffic Control Team, Draffen and his team of five Marines often ran 10 to 13 miles on a regular basis.

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Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler
Gunnery Sgt. Tom J. Draffen, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron air traffic controller and native of Northville, N.Y., prepares for a ride outside his home here Sept. 25.

GUNNY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

“We did a lot of running there,” he said. “As a team in training as well as deployed, we were always on our feet. Running was the whole exercise and there just wasn’t any time for cycling.”

It wasn’t until his second deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004 that Draffen had the opportunity to get back behind the handlebars. While working on the airfield in Al Asad, Iraq, he purchased a low-end Iraqi bicycle to keep in shape and pass the time.

“There were a lot of opportunities to ride,” said Draffen. “It was a cheap bike, but it was something different to do than running. It was one of those things that killed the boredom for me.”

After assuming his present duties here as a Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron air traffic controller in February 2005, Draffen broke out the same mountain bike he began riding in Virginia. Like many cyclists here, he was immediately taken by the miles of easily accessible scenery here.

“It was kind of nice knowing I could go all sorts of places,” he said. “I used the bike as a way to see the countryside, get out and kind

of explore the local area. I started to fall in love with all the places I could get around to here on the bike, so I started to stretch out and go further.”

It wasn’t long before stretching out and going further became an obsession. The more Draffen rode, the more his weight and run time continued to drop. Finally, he decided to set some serious cycling goals.

“My goal for 2006 was to do 10,000 kilometers in a year, and by September I’d already gotten over 10,000.” Draffen said. “I started looking around at races and other community events I could take part in.”

“By the time October rolled around I’d kind of been bitten by the racing bug,” he added with a smile. “I did a couple races in October, then a couple in November and December and saw I was able to be pretty competitive with some of the other upper-end cyclists in the area.”

Gunnery Sgt. Derek G. Smith, an H&HS air traffic controller who first met Draffen during the initial push in Iraq, will attest to his coworker’s newfound addiction and jokes that others wanting to accompany him on a ride should bring a map and compass.

“People have, in the past, tried to go cycling

with Gunny Draffen, but it’s not like a ride with your family down the seawall,” Smith said. “I have heard him and another person will go out to do his little bike route ... (Draffen) will sit at the main gate, and an hour later the other guy will show up.”

With a number of Japanese races and first place finishes under his belt, Draffen now takes cycling more seriously than ever. Riding more than 500 kilometers and 18 hours per week, his sights are set on competing in the states when his permanent change of station takes him to Washington Navy Yard in January 2008.

“I’m pretty stoked about the number of races that are available, because you’re really limited in Japan to what races you can participate in,” Draffen said. “I’ve already started to look at next year’s racing to set up my training schedule and it’s almost overwhelming.”

One may think this overwhelming training and racing schedule would test the patience and sanity of the Draffen family, but his “tremendously supportive” wife and children take pride in their husband and father’s accomplishments.

“As in anything he does or I do, we do try to support each other as much as possible,”

said Amy B. Draffen, his wife of 13 years. “I know the times when I give a little, he’ll give a little too.”

According to Draffen, the secret to keeping the peace at home is a combination of sacrifice and compromise.

“It’s almost a part-time job to cycle 18 hours a week,” he said. “Part of the commitment on my part is to make my cycling convenient for the family - I schedule my time on the bike around everything else the family is doing.”

Tired as he may be after a strenuous week of working, biking and finding time for the family, Draffen knows his lifestyle makes him a better man, Marine, and role model for those he loves.

“It’s definitely hard, but I like to think I’m able to translate what I do in cycling to my kids,” said Draffen. “Things like goal setting, health and nutrition – all those things that are critical to my success in cycling are critical to my kids’ success in life. I like to be able to share that with them.”

Those interested in taking up cycling either as hobby or means to improve their physical fitness can log on to Draffen’s Web site www.cycleiwakuni.com for more information.

Fun only a "club-length" away at Hachigamine Park



Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez

Lance Cpl. Nick W. Sweet, American Forces Network broadcast journalist and Seattle, native, swings a rented golf club at the Hachigamine Park driving range in Otake City, Sept. 23.

**Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez
Shimbun Staff**

Station members are always looking to get the most entertainment from their weekends, whether it be the dance clubs in Tokyo or the shopping in Hiroshima. However, the majority of these day trips are spent en route and leave your gas tank, and sometimes wallet, nearly empty.

Hachigamine Park, nestled in the inviting back roads of Otake City, is an alternative that has many attractions to offer station residents here who are fans of miniature golf and are willing to venture five miles outside the gate.

"Because of our location, we see a lot of Americans on the weekends," said Takao Akizaki, Hachigamine Park manager and native of Iwakuni City.

"Our biggest attraction for them is the golfing. Some guests will end up staying the entire day."

The park's miniature golf course is composed of three separate 18-hole courses of different par levels.

"Par 3 is going to be the hardest game out here," said Lance Cpl. Nick W. Sweet, American Forces Network broadcast journalist and Seattle native. "This course is designed for experienced miniature golfers."

The park's par 3 course has certain obstacles that require calculated putting efforts of the participating golfers. Noticeable trends are holes shielded by metal poles or steady inclines that increase the difficulty of maintaining the lowest amount of shots.

This course isn't littered with fiberglass alligators and other bogus ball-hungry oddities such as those found in the United States. These games contain surprisingly puzzling putter's impediments.

The most difficult hole involved sending the golf ball over a gap and through a metal frame without letting it drop into a trough that would divert the ball from the hole, said Sweet. Sometimes, the courses can be a little too frustrating for everyday golfers.

For those who are just looking for a place to

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Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez

Lance Cpl. Lisa R. Marshall, American Forces Network productions chief and native of Richmond, Va. tries her hand at miniature golf Sept. 23 at Hachigamine Park in Otake City.



Pfc. Kyle T. Ramirez

A competitive miniature golf team practices at the Hachigamine Park golf course in Otake City, Sept. 23. The team was one of a couple that practices every weekend at the park.

PARK CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

practice their swing, the 2,600-square-foot driving range is located north of the miniature golf course. This bi-level range has golf clubs and additional equipment available for rent at the clubhouse.

“The driving range is one of the best I’ve been to out here in Japan,” said Sweet. “It spreads out to 400 feet and the prices aren’t bad either.”

Marshall, AFN productions chief and native of Richmond, Va. “I would say that this park is more entertaining than most American recreational parks because of the amount of activities there are to participate in.”

Aside from the driving range and miniature golf areas, the park has areas for grilling and camping, an obstacle course, an 836-foot rolling slide, and full-size fields for other recreational sports.

“It was a lot of fun going out there,” said

“I would say that this park is more entertaining than most American recreational parks because of the amount of activities there are to participate in.”

-Lance Cpl. Lisa R. Marshall

One game of miniature golf at the park will cost 500 yen and the entry fee to the driving range is 300 yen according to the Hachigamine Park flyer that is provided at the Information Tours and Travel Office. The flyer also contains detailed directions to the park and a list of its many attractions.

“There were a lot of things at the park that I would not expect,” said Lance Cpl. Lisa R.

Marshall. “I haven’t played miniature golf since I lived in the United States. Those places are hard to find out here.”

For additional information and assistance with booking, contact the Information Tours and Travel Office by calling 253-4377.

LOCAL POLICEMEN, FIREFIGHTERS GO HEAD-TO-HEAD IN GUNS AND HOSES GOLF TOURNAMENT

Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs
Shimbun Staff

Local firefighters and policemen met in a more relaxed setting than usual during the first-ever Guns and Hoses Golf Tournament at Torii Pines Golf Course here Sunday.

The purpose of the tournament was to foster stronger relationships between Iwakuni city and station police and fire departments, according to Capt. Giuseppe A. Stavale, station provost marshal and native of Cincinnati.

“This is a great chance for us to get together in an off-duty status and get to know each other better,” said Stavale. “We work so closely together, but it’s not often we have time to share our common interests.”

Fifteen four-man teams representing either the fire department (hoses) or the police department (guns) partook in the scramble-format tournament. The station Fire Department, Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting and the Iwakuni City Fire Department represented the Hoses while the Provost Marshal’s

Office, Navy Criminal Investigative Service, Staff Judge Advocate, Iwakuni City Police Department and Japanese Coast Guard represented the Guns.

Most of the teams consisted of two Japanese responders and two of their American counterparts. While there were a variety of ability levels on the course, the competitiveness of the event was kept low-key. After a muffed shot, most of the players joined their teammates in laughter while a pin-seeking approach or sunken putt produced a team full of cheers and high-fives.

“We just went out there and had fun,” said Sgt. David Morse, PMO accident investigator and Calhoun, Ga., native. “It’s not all the time that you get to participate in something like this.”

In accordance with the purpose of the event, the day was less about good golf and more about sustaining strong ties.

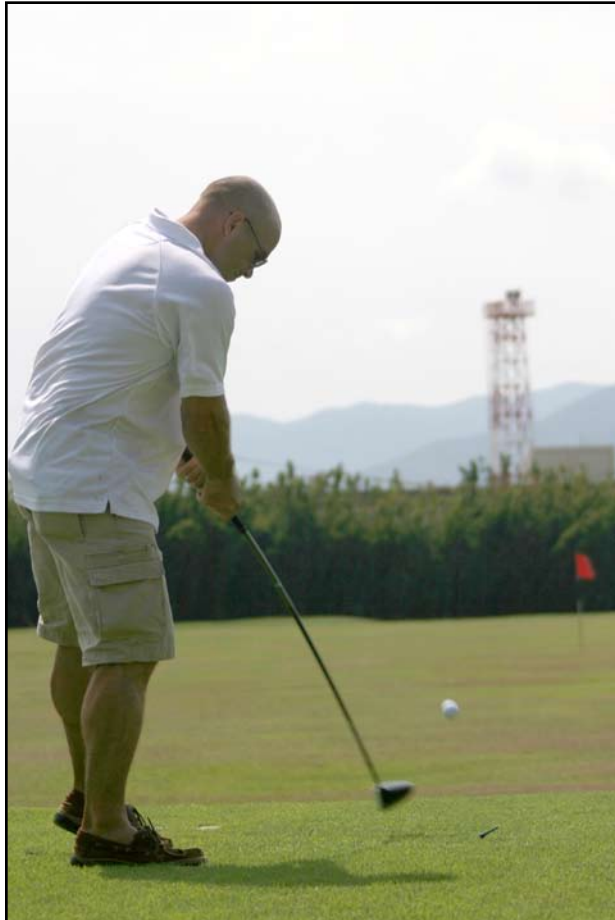
“We already have a good relationship with

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Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs

The winning team of the first Guns and Hoses Golf Tournament shot an 8-under-par 62 at Torii Pines Golf Course here Sept. 23. The ultimate winners of the event were the Iwakuni city and station first responders who fostered stronger relationships during the outing, according to Capt. Giuseppe A. Stavale, station provost marshal and native of Cincinnati.



Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs

Master Sgt. Christopher Wikel, Criminal Investigations Division chief investigator and native of Hastings, Fla., tees off on the 17th hole at Torii Pines Golf Course during the first Guns and Hoses Golf Tournament here Sept. 23. Iwakuni city and station police and fire departments competed against each other in the event.

GOLF CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

each other,” said Satoru Hirozane, Iwakuni Police Department deputy chief and native of Shunan City.

“I think we became even better friends through this event.”

After the last shots were holed, the teams gathered around the score table where they chatted about their rounds and awaited the tournament’s results. In the Guns and Hoses battle, there was a three-stroke difference.

“It was close, but we’re giving it to you this year because you have guns,” said Devin Johnston-Lee, station fire chief and native of Waipahu, Hawaii, grinning as he presented the tournament trophy to the police department.

Vital to the Guns’ winning performance was one of its team’s medalist rounds of 8-under-par 62, which topped the rest of the competition by three shots.

“We played well,” said Morse, a member of the winning team. “It feels real good (to win). It was a team effort today.”

Following the trophy presentation, the players gathered for a group photo before saying



Lance Cpl. Chris Dobbs

Toshikatu Mizuno, Iwakuni Fire Department chief inspector and Iwakuni native, holes a putt on the 11th green at Torii Pines Golf Course during the first Guns and Hoses Golf Tournament here Sept. 23. Iwakuni city and station police and fire departments competed against each other in the event.

their farewells to each other.

“Usually we only get together when an incident occurs,” said Stavale. “This is a nice change. I hope this is something the organizations sustain in the years to come.”



Gunnery Sgt. Salvatore Cardella, American Forces Network detachment commander and Boston native, pulls Cpl. Guillermo E. Vargas, AFN broadcast journalist and native of Alameda, Calif., through the pool at IronWorks Gym Sept. 26 for their annual swim qualification. Upon completion of the work out, the Marines were qualified as Class 2 swimmers.

SENIOR ENLISTED MARINE VISITS FALLUJAH LEATHERNECKS

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq

by Sgt. Stephen M. DeBoard
Regimental Combat Team 6

Sometimes, the old sergeant major's just got to call it like he sees it.

"Devil dog, you look like a liberty risk," pronounced Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Carlton W. Kent at a meeting with Marines from Battery T, 5th Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, Sept. 23.

The proclamation was met with much laughter. The "libo risk" in question was Cpl. Travis S. Geisler, an artilleryman with Tango Battery, who promptly grinned and flushed with embarrassment at being arbitrarily singled out by the Corps' top enlisted Marine.

Kent, the 16th leatherneck to hold the senior enlisted spot in the Corps, had spent a few minutes quizzing Geisler on why he was choosing not to re-enlist. He used Geisler's reticence to make a point about staying Marine.

"I get tons of e-mails from warriors who want to come back into the Corps," said Kent. "As long as they're qualified, we will take them back. So my point is, you can always come back if things don't work out for you as a civilian. You have to ask yourself, 'Is the grass really greener?'"

Kent also admonished Marines not to test the bonus system by waiting until next year's order on re-enlistment bonuses are published.

"If you're trying to wait to see if you get a higher bonus next year, don't do that, because it's no guarantee. Right now it's looking good for next year, but it's no guarantee," Kent said.

During his visit to the Fallujah area, Kent visited Marines and sailors with Regimental Combat Team 6, including a battlefield circulation to positions currently held by Marines with 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment.

After visiting the RCT-6 subordinate commands, Kent held a town hall meeting to speak to the Marines and sailors stationed aboard Camp Fallujah about issues currently being addressed by him and Marine Corps commandant Gen. James T. Conway. These issues include the modification and update of the physical training uniform, functionality of the Body Composition Program and the policy regarding wear of the camouflage utility uniform on liberty.

The Marine Corps has had a variety of PT uniforms throughout the years, the latest of which is the green running shorts and green undershirt, dubbed "green-on-green" by



Sgt. Stephen M. DeBoard

Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Carlton W. Kent, the Corps' senior enlisted man, speaks to the crew of an M198 medium towed howitzer aboard Camp Fallujah, Iraq, Sept. 23. The Marines with Battery T, 5th Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6, were visited by the top enlisted Marine in his first trip back to the area of operations since his appointment to his post Apr. 25, 2007. Among the things Kent discussed with his Marines were retention of first-term Marines, adjustments to the Body Composition Program and the updating of the physical training uniform.

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Marines. While speaking about the new running suit currently under evaluation by the uniform board, Kent sought to soothe some concerns about the new uniform.

“You can keep your green-on-green, and we’ll still issue it at recruit training,” he said to an audience of more than 200 Marines and sailors. “But, the new running suit is sharp! It’s so sharp you’re going to have civilians coming up to you and asking you where they can get it. Just take them on in to the recruiting office.”

The BCP is used to gauge the fitness of Marines who weigh more than the maximum allowed by the height and weight standards established by the Corps. Currently, Marines who weighed in more than their maximum have their measurements taken to calculate their body fat percentage. Kent said there are some issues with how this system is executed.

“Some changes will come about in this program. You can have a Marine who’s a weightlifter, great shape, but be (out of regulation). Then you can have a short Marine, who’s round,” he said while making hand gestures intimating a short and fat figure, “but maybe he’s got the right sized neck. The system is broken.”

In the last of his prepared points, Kent addressed the recently changed policy regarding the wear of the camouflaged utility uniform, or “cammies,” on liberty. He said the old policy was established on a camp-by-camp basis by local commanders with no Corps-wide uniformity. Kent said he and Conway wanted that to change.

“As you saw recently, cammie policy has changed. The old policy was that you could wear your cammies to the gas station, to the bank, to day care. But some people were going further than that. You had Marines in the club throwing down out on the dance floor in cammies. So that (policy) changed across the board,” he said.

The new policy means Marines will have to change into another uniform, such as the new running suit, before leaving work if they have to stop and fill up their gas tanks or pick their children up from day care.

Once finished with his prepared comments, Kent opened the floor up to questions. One of the first was regarding the remarks of Gen. David Petraeus, commanding general, Multi National Force-Iraq, to Congress about the possibility of a troop drawdown, and the effects such a drawdown would have on the Marines in Anbar Province.

Kent replied by saying that there was a lot of political talk in Washington, D.C., but ultimately, it’s still up to the president

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Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Carlton W. Kent talks with the enlisted leadership of Battery T, 5th Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6, about their newly established living spaces at the artillery ‘gun line’ aboard Camp Fallujah, Iraq. Kent, who was formerly a battery first sergeant for an artillery battery aboard the camp, said he was pleased to see that living conditions were improving for the Marine cannoners. Kent was in the area to visit the Marines currently serving with Multi National Force-West, the Marine command responsible for Anbar Province, Iraq.

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq



Sgt. Stephen M. DeBoard

AROUND THE CORPS

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq

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when Marines would come home. Kent also said gradual drawdown would take time, and that U.S. forces would still have an overwatch responsibility for Iraqi Security Forces. Overwatch status, according to the briefing slides presented by Petraeus to Congress, is one of the final steps in establishing complete Iraqi autonomy in the security plan for Iraq.

Another Marine questioned the impact of giving 60 points toward the composite scores of Marines who re-enlist for fiscal year 2008. He said his concern was that it was accelerating promotion of Marines simply for re-enlisting.

“Right now,” replied Kent, “we need great warriors to stick around. Next year, you’ll be able to do it. We can’t give everyone 60 points, I won’t sugar coat it for you. That wouldn’t be fair either.”

Gunnery Sgt. Levi Hodges, administrative chief for 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines, focused his question on the processing of awards. He asked Kent about delegating the authority to

First Sgt. Russel A. Strack, battery first sergeant, Battery T, 5th Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6, gives an area brief to Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Carlton W. Kent aboard Camp Fallujah, Iraq, Sept. 23. After Kent’s visit with artillery and infantry Marines throughout the RCT-6 area of responsibility, he held a town hall-style meeting with Marines and sailors to address changes coming down the pipeline and answer Marines’ questions. Heavy on the top enlisted Marine’s agenda was the issue of retention of first-term Marines, which he said is essential to the commandant’s guidance to grow the Marine Corps by 27,000 Marines.

authorize certain combat-related awards down to the level of colonel, instead of commanding general, where it currently resides.

“I’m hesitant to do that,” Kent replied.

He went on to elaborate that leaving award policy in the hands of the commanding general, instead of at regimental or equivalent level, lessens the leeway in the interpretation and application of rules regarding awarding of combat ribbons and medals. This strictness leads to greater uniformity and fairness for all Marines across the board, he said.

After the questions concluded, Kent ended his town hall meeting by expressing his pride in his Marines.

“I have 32 years in the Corps this Dec. 10. The only reason I stayed around is because of the Marines and sailors I worked with. The eagle, globe and anchor is branded on our hearts. God bless, and Semper Fi.”



Sgt. Stephen M. DeBoard



Lance Cpl. Andrew E. Lund
Calumet, Mich.

"I don't think it should get a spot in the Advertising Walk of Fame. It hasn't withstood the test of time. It's been around for a little while but, "Semper Fidelis," has been around much longer and if the Marine Corps should be represented by any slogan or motto, it should be that one."

Sgt. Kevin B. Flynn
Pensacola, Fla.

"It should definitely earn its own plaque. It has substance. This is a slogan that has spoken to people not just in the United States, but all around the world too. It has inspired many Americans to want to be Marines. It's a great advertising slogan."



The well-known slogan of Marine Corps recruiting campaigns for decades, "The Few. The Proud. The Marines," is rivaling the best slogans in advertising history in an online poll for its own plaque in the Madison Avenue Advertising Walk of Fame. The slogan will be compared to marketing slogans including Nike's, "Just do it." So we were wondering ...

Do you think the Marine Corps recruiting slogan, "The Few. The proud. The Marines," deserves its place in the Advertising Walk of Fame?



Gunnery Sgt. Douglas M. Dickover
Thousand Oaks, Calif.

"It will earn its place. Everybody has heard it at some point in their life. I know it was around even when I enlisted so long ago. Before that, the Marines were looking for, "A few good men." It has withstood the test of time. It definitely did its job as an advertising slogan."

Chief Warrant Officer Dan L. Linnabary
Jackson, Mich.

"The slogan has its place in history and it should have its place in the Advertising Walk of Fame. This slogan defines the Marine Corps as a whole. As an advertising slogan, like Marines, it should be remembered and live on forever."





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