

Torii Teller



Marine Corps Air Station, Iwakuni, Japan

Vol. 26 No. 14 January 9, 1981



Winter Arrives

Shime-nawa: Wards Off Evil

By GySgt. Mike Littlejohn

The first few weeks of the new year are something special to most Japanese. It is a time to do certain things to ensure they will be blessed with luck, prosperity and good health during the coming months.

One thing that is most visible now, even though it is used throughout the year, is the shime-nawa or sacred straw ropes.

Shime-nawa are hung around sacred places and before Shinto shrines year 'round. According to Shinto beliefs, evil cannot pass through a gate or door adorned with shime-nawa. A true piece of handiwork, the shime-nawa are plaited from rice straw in a left-handed twist which is thought to represent the positive side of nature and existence. They usually have one end which is tapered and the other flared, with the larger end being placed to the left side of the shrine or sacred area.

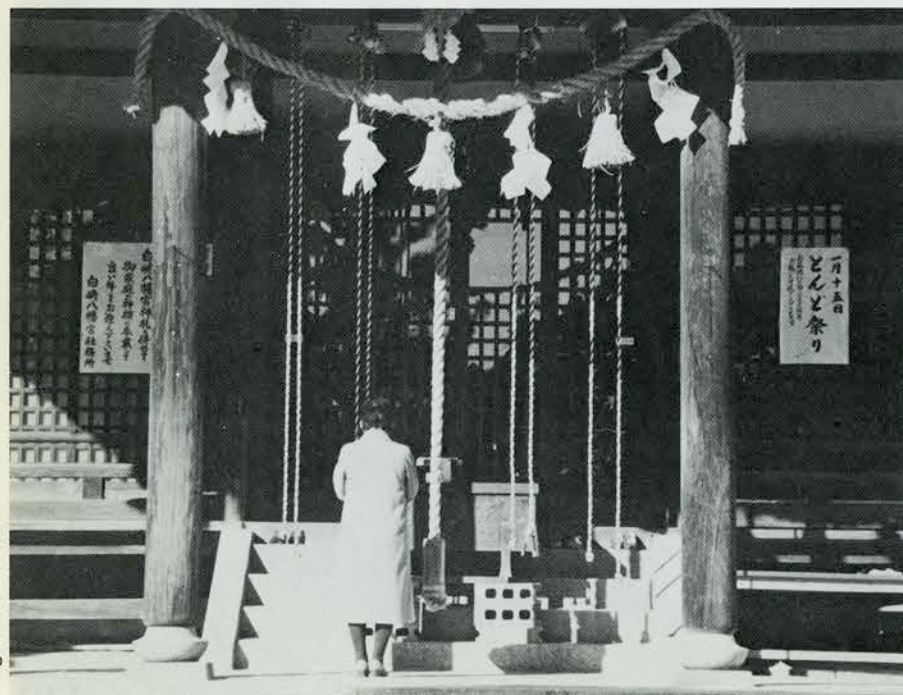
Legend has it that the shime-nawa originated during the time of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. It is said that family problems caused the sun goddess to hide in a deep cave. She was eventually forced from the cave and to prevent her from returning, Prince Futodama placed a shime-nawa across the entrance. It was then called 'shiri-kumi-no-nawa' or the 'don't retreat rope' which was later shortened to shime-nawa.

The wanawa or circle ropes seen for weeks after the new year begins, is a contemporary version of the shime-nawa. They are sometimes displayed adorned with white paper, gohei, or strands of unplaited straw. Other items such as a bunch of oranges, a piece of seaweed or lobster and green fern leaves are also used.

The orange represents continuity of good health in the family, seaweed for good fortune, lobster for long life, while green fern leaves represent humility and purity.

When the decoration is not hanging on the front entranceway of a house, it's probably sitting on top two large cakes of rice paste, kagami-mochi, in the toko-no-ma, alcove.

While most westerners are used to ringing in the New Year a second or so after midnight of Dec. 31, and celebrating on the first day of the year, our Japanese counterparts spend the better part of a week welcoming the coming year.



Torii Teller

MCAS, Iwakuni, Japan
FPO Seattle, Wash. 98764

CO, MCAS Col. S. F. Shea
PAO CWO-4 C. E. Cannon
PA Chief GySgt. Tony Delgado
Torii Teller Staff
Editor SSgt. Rich Pontow
Sports Writer Sgt. Andra McNeill
Interpreters Mr. Shiro Suga
Mr. Masaaki Hirayama
Admin. Support Ms. Yumiko Fujimori

The **Torii Teller** is currently printed weekly by the Yohane Printing Company, Iwakuni, with appropriated funds and complies with MCO P5600. 31D. Its purpose is to disseminate information about the Marine Corps and Navy, this command, and the men and women thereof. It shall in no way be considered directive in nature as the views expressed herein are not necessarily those of this command, the Department of the Navy or the Department of Defense. **Torii Teller** is a subscriber to the American Forces Press Service. Circulation is 2,500 copies.



Our Cover

Our cover this week features the winter splendor that visited Kin-un-Kaku, a prayer or vowing gallery, in Kikko Park near Kintai Bridge. The snows that fell Dec. 27 blanketed the park and bridge areas in a winter white that was unusually heavy for Iwakuni.



More than 1,300 Iwakunians will make the transition into adulthood next Thursday in an Adult Day ceremony to be held in the Main Hall of the Civic Auditorium. Celebrated nationwide Jan. 15, this year's celebration scheduled to begin at 1 p.m., will recognize those born between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 1961. Nearly 657 young women and 647 young men will receive gifts and a 'welcome to adulthood' greetings from Mayor Takeo Kawakami.

Martin Luther King Birthday Service Set

MCAS Iwakuni will honor the late Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. on his birthday with a memorial service of prayer, song and sharing at noon Jan. 15 in the Station Chapel.

This service pays homage to the civil rights activist of the 1960's who fought non-violent wars for human dignity and equality. For his efforts he was awarded the Noble Peace Prize. An assassin's bullet ended his career April 6, 1968.

Though his life was abruptly ended, his causes continue. This service in his honor is provided to all at MCAS Iwakuni who wish to pay their respects.

VMFA-235 Participates In 'Cope Thunder' Exercise

By 1stLt. J.P. Johnston

Marines of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron-235 recently returned to Iwakuni following a five and a half week training exercise at Naval Air Station, Cubi Point, R.P.

The highlight of the training was the squadron's participation in 'Cope Thunder 80-1' a joint-service exercise hosted by the United States Air Force at Clark Air Base. 'Death Angels' maintenance Marines worked around-the-clock to provide mission capable Phantom II aircraft for squadron aircrews. Pilots and radar intercept officers (RIO's) flew simulated combat missions in a variety of 'enemy threat' scenarios. 'Death Angels' Phantoms delivered live and practice air-to-ground ordnance on targets in the 'Crow Valley' target complex near Clark Air Base as well as numerous targets within the Subic Range Facility. Speed and good lookout were the watchwords when '235 aviators met F-15 Eagle, F-5 Tiger, F-14 Tomcat, A-7 Corsair, and A-4 Skyhawk adversaries in the skies for dissimilar air combat training (DACT). 'Cope Thunder' is the only exercise in WestPac in which Marine aircrews can receive such realistic, intensive combat training," observed the Squadron Operations Officer, Major Harry B. Spague. "The concentration of aircraft assets from other services and the outstanding range availability afford squadron aircrewmembers an unsurpassed opportunity to hone their air-to-air and air-to-ground skills," Maj. Sprague concluded.

Following Cope Thunder, VMFA-235 continued intensive air-to-ground weapons training and dissimilar air combat training. Supported by adversary F-15 Eagles of the USAF 18th Tactical Fighter Group and Navy A-4's of Fleet Composite Squadron-5, 'Death Angel' aircrews

refined tactics and lessons learned during Cope Thunder.

MSgt. Bobby Mann, VMFA-235 Maintenance Chief, noted that the intensive training required long hours by squadron maintenance personnel. "With the high temperatures and humidity, the training schedule was demanding," MSgt. Mann remarked. "However, these Marines feel that they are part of a family, and are dedicated to producing quality aircraft. They really put out a superb effort on this training."

VMFA-235's training ended with the squadron's participation in Exercise 'Valiant Blitz.' Squadron Phantoms flew close-air-support and air-to-air superiority sorties as Marines 'hit the beaches' on Mindoro Island. Squadron aircrews were able to participate with Marine command and control elements to provide the best possible air support for the assaulting Marines.

VMFA-235 returned to Iwakuni to begin its third month of the squadron's current tour. Home-based at MCAS Kaneohe, Hawaii, the 'Death Angels' were the first Marine F-4 squadron to participate in the six-month unit deployment program. This is the squadron's third such six-month tour since 1977. The Squadron Commanding Officer, LtCol. J.W. Pearson, III observed that the outstanding success of the Cubi training "directly resulted from the unit deployment concept. Our Marines of all ranks know each other well and realize that our mission is to be combat ready at all times in the Western Pacific. The unit deployment program ensures stability, enhances aircrew training proficiency, and ensures a high quality of aircraft maintenance since we take our airplanes with us wherever we're sent."

Compromise Version Of DOPMA Is Now Law

MC News--A new version of the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) was enacted into law. The bill passed the House Nov. 17, the Senate Nov. 21, and received presidential approval Dec. 12.

DOPMA amends Title 10 of the United States Code to make uniform the provisions of law relating to appointment, promotion, separation and retirement of regular commissioned officers of the Marine Corps, Navy, Army and Air Force. The bill equalizes the promotion standards for men and women, and establishes a one-star rank for the Navy, to be titled commodore admiral.

This legislation imposes new grade limitations on the service for the numbers of O-4/5/6s, and it creates about a five percent reduction to the maximum limitations of these senior officer grades. However, no actual reduction in numbers of officers will be required since the new ceilings for the Marine Corps are above our current strength levels.

The bill will provide for a single permanent promotion structure for each service.

DOPMA will establish standardized career expectations of 30 years for colonel, and 28 years for lieutenant colonel. The bill provides that captains and majors, who twice fail selection to the next higher rank, will be subject to involuntary separation or retirement, if eligible. However, when the needs of the service require, the Secretary of the Navy may convene boards to recommend O-3s and O-4s to stay on active

duty up to 20 and 24 years, respectively.

Under normal circumstances, O-4s are expected to continue to 20 years of service. The feature regarding O-3s was added by Congress to provide limited flexibility to address shortages in specific skill areas.

The bill also includes selective early retirement provisions for O-5s and O-6s. The Secretary of the Navy may conduct continuation boards for officers after four years in grade as colonels and for lieutenant colonels who have twice failed for selection. The bill requires service in a pay grade above major for three years before an officer may request voluntary retirement in that grade.

DOPMA also raises the maximum amount of separation pay from \$15,000 to \$30,000, that may be given to an officer.

Implementation of DOPMA by Sept. 15, 1981, will require significant revisions to current policy and directives. However, individual officers should experience little difference in the management of their careers. There will be no cuts to existing officer inventory, nor will promotion timing and opportunity be adversely affected. Flexibility in the law and care given to transition assure no detrimental effect to officers now on active duty.

DOPMA provides an officer management system which affords more flexibility in meeting requirements of the services and accommodating the careers of individuals. Additional information will soon be made available regarding this legislation.

CHAMPUS Care Deductibles Due

MC News--Oct. 1 marked the start of a new year for Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services deductibles for outpatient care.

Outpatient deductibles--\$50 per person or \$100 per family of two or more members--are the amount patients must pay each fiscal year before CHAMPUS cost-sharing is available.

Outpatient medical expenses exceeding the deductibles are shared by the patient and CHAMPUS. Compounded medical expenses totaling less than the deductible during the fiscal year are paid by the patient. Less-than-deductible expenses are not carried over from one fiscal year to the next.

For more information on CHAMPUS, see the CHAMPUS representative at the Naval Regional Medical Center, Branch Hospital, Iwakuni.

Radio And TV Marines Needed

MC News--As a result of the Marine Corps' shortage of broadcasters, the Public Affairs field is looking for qualified Marines to lateral move into the 4313 Military Occupational Specialty (MOS).

Marines, who have a broadcast background, or who can meet the necessary requirements, and want to come into Public Affairs are encouraged to see their career planner. Those who are eligible for a lateral move will be referred to the command's Public Affairs Office where they will be interviewed and will take a voice audition.

The voice audition is sent to the Defense Information School (DINFOS), Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind., where a panel of broadcast specialists evaluate the audition to determine if the individual is voice qualified and can be trained

to meet basic broadcast field requirements.

If accepted, and providing the Marine is eligible for lateral move, he/she will receive on-the-job-training and will eventually attend the broadcast course at DINFOS. Attending the DINFOS course, however, depends on available classroom quotas.

The job of a Marine broadcaster encompasses many facets in radio and television, and provides an excellent potential for career growth. The broadcaster is more than an announcer, and often becomes involved in writing and production.

Marines who want to become a broadcaster, should contact their career planners.

Editor's note: Marines at Iwakuni would receive their on-the-job-training at their next duty station.

Japanese Winter Wonderland Provides Wonderous Thrills

By Kate Short

Skiers take heed! There's snow in the mountains, a good base on the slopes and the skiers are already out in force. Special Services has planned three ski trips for January and more are in the works.

The one-day ski trips will be on Jan. 17, 24 and 31. Cost will be \$12 per person for transportation and only 29 seats are available. Sign up is at Special Services, Bldg. 144 and departure time is 6 a.m. from that building on the trip dates. Skis, boots and poles can be checked out from the Issue Room at the Gym for a user's fee of just \$3.

Geihoku Kokusai is the destination for all three trips. It's a three to four-hour drive from the Air Station and is the largest of the ski areas in the vicinity. There are five runs there and lift tickets range in price from ¥180 for a single ride to ¥3,000 for an all day open ticket. Ski rentals at the resort cost from ¥1,000 for used to ¥3,500 for the newer, more modern skis.

Naturally, here as in the States, ski traffic will be heaviest on the weekends. Personnel with an opportunity to get away to the slopes on a weekday can take Route 2 north to Route 54; in Hiroshima turn north and then west on 191; bear right on 186 where the highway splits to Geihoku, a distance of about 70 miles.

It's even possible to rent a bus from Special Services for group trips to the area of your choice. Cost for bus use is \$6 per hour for the bus and driver, plus \$1.50 for parking and the first tank of gas is included. Maj. E. M. Miyamoto, Special Services Officer, recommends that individuals wishing to reserve a bus contact Special Services at least two weeks in advance since the busses are already in heavy demand.

Why not make plans to take advantage of one of Special Services organized trips to check out the route? Spend a day on the slopes with friends and once you're sure of the route, escape to ski whenever you can.

And by all means, take a camera. The scenery is breathtaking as are the small towns and shops along the route. Restaurants are plentiful and meals and snacks can be purchased at the ski lodge. Ski accessories such as goggles, hats and gloves are also available at the lodge.

Make an effort to enjoy the winter weather and you may be surprised at the fun to be had.



The slopes at Geihoku Kokusai can provide the first-timer as well as the more experienced skier with an exciting variety of skiing.