

Torii

*Marine Corps Air Station
Iwakuni, Japan*



Teller

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NGOs on target with M-9

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Kanji--the writing style of the Orient

美 This odd-looking symbol is what Japanese people might write when describing their girlfriend or boyfriend. It's known as a "kanji," and it means beautiful, graceful, charming, sweet, noble and pure, or "utsukushii" to the Japanese.

It's one of several thousand kanji that are currently used throughout Japan, along with three other systems of writing: hiragana, katakana and romaji (alphabet).

Kanji, which has no plural form, were not invented by the Japanese. A Chinese named Ts'ang Chieh, who lived in the 26th century B.C., invented the "picture language" by observing nature.

The Japanese "borrowed" the language from the Chinese in the 5th century A.D., and today it's still in use. However, most of the kanji have changed over the centuries so that today, only about one in 10 resembles anything in nature.

There's no quick way to learn kanji except by memorizing them. However, by learning about 2,000 basic components or "radicals" of kanji, individuals can have a good understanding of the language.

Americans are not the only people who use many meanings for one word. This kanji, 生, means "umareru" or birth. It also has about 100 other meanings, including: grow, resuscitate, spare a life, arrange flowers, bear, fruit, breed, raw, inexperienced and genuine. Another meaning is "on tap," and this kanji is prominently displayed on the bottles of a popular Japanese beer.

To show the various meanings of a kanji, to make a word in past or present tense and to indicate grammar in a sentence, another system of writing - hiragana - is used.

Japanese sometimes have trouble remembering their own kanji. For the more difficult kanji, the hiragana is written next to the kanji - called furigana. There are 51 hiragana letters.

Another Japanese system of writing is katakana. It's similar to hiragana, but it's used to write foreign words.

Finally, romaji seems to be the simplest form of writing for Japanese. Romaji is another name for the 26 English letters. After having memorized thousands of complicated kanji, learning the alphabet becomes an easy process.

U.S. Marine Corps	English
米海兵隊	Kanji
べいこくかいへいたい	Hiragana
ベイコクカイヘイタイ	Katakana
Bei koku kai hei tai	Romaji

Chaplain's Call



Catholic:

Masses: Sat., 5 p.m.; Sun., 9 a.m.; Mon.-Fri., 11:45 a.m. Confession: Sat., 4:15 p.m. CCD classes: Sun., 10:15 a.m. Adult convert classes: Wed., 6 p.m. For Bible Studies and Adult Religious Education, call 5218.

Protestant:

Sun.: 7:45 a.m., Communion Service; Protestant Worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 9-10 a.m.; Full Gospel Hour, noon; Mid-week Service, 7 p.m., 1st and 3rd Wed.; Men's Prayer, Tue. 6 a.m.; Ladies Bible Study, Wed. and Fri., 9:30 a.m.; Choir Practice, Tue., 7 p.m.; Gospel Choir Practice, Tue. and Fri., 7 p.m.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints:

Sun., 1 p.m., Chapel Center

Church of Christ:

Sun., 9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; and Wed., 7 p.m.; Chapel Annex

Pentecostal Fellowship:

Church of God, Cleveland, Tenn. Sun., 1:15 p.m., Worship service; Wed. and Fri., 7:30 p.m., Bible Study, Chapel Center.

Lutheran:

Last Sun. of the month, 6 p.m., Main Chapel

Jewish:

Second Fri. of the month, 5 p.m., Capodanno Chapel (inside Main Chapel)

Buddhist:

Contact MSgt. Stemper at 4343 Call 5218 for more information.

Torii Teller

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MCAS, FPO Seattle, WA 98764

Sculptor inspired by orphans

Story and photo by Sgt. Chuck Luoto

The value of a common flat, wood toothpick is next to nothing. An Iwakuni Marine, however, has carefully put about 7,500 of them together, using Elmer's glue, spare time and love, to create a price-less unique sculpture destined to brighten the lives of homeless orphans.

Sgt. Robert Gogol, who works at MALS-12 Airframes Division non-destructive inspection lab, calls his creation, "Different Paths to Success." The name, Gogol explained, is due to the design's inclusion of numerous devices leading to the highest portion of the piece. For Gogol, the sculpture demonstrates that there are different ways to get to the top of the ladder of life.

One of the reasons the 30-year-old Marine got involved with visiting orphans at Christmas time this year was that he missed his family. Gogol, who hails from Monongahela, Pa., is here on an unaccompanied tour. His wife Jill, and their son James, 5, and daughter Ashley, 1, are back at MCAS El Toro.

"When Father Donlan brought orphan children to the Air Station during the holidays, I spent time with them and it was a lot of fun," Gogol recalled. "The children remind me of my own kids back home."

Another reason for Gogol's interest in doing something special for the orphans stems from his own childhood. "I went to the boys school at Hershey, Pa., for grades nine through twelve," Gogol said. "My mother had died the year before, and my father was having trouble taking care of two children while working full time as a traveling salesman."

"I can really relate to these orphan kids, because of my years away from my own family back then. The children have a very real need to be touched and loved. They latched right on to me. Those children have no family; it was a little sad to realize the children had no parents to love them. These kids don't have anybody. You can see the sadness in their eyes when they are getting ready to go back to the orphanage."

"I felt good about sharing my time and reaching out to children who needed some love. I just wish more Marines would take the time to get involved. The children are a lot of fun."

Gogol started his project in December, during his slack time as a way to reach out to the orphan children. The project has many shapes within it, including curves, squares, diamonds, stars, triangles, pyramids and octagons. He hopes the children will take the sculpture as a challenge, perhaps getting creative ideas from it for projects of their own.

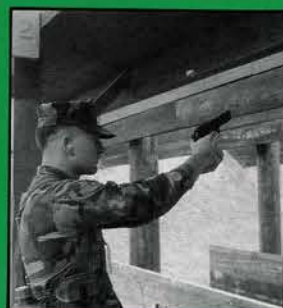
"The project grew over a period of time, with input from numerous people," Gogol said. "Other Marines would offer suggestions, and some were pretty good. This project is more or less an accumula-



Sgt. Robert Gogol adds a toothpick to his sculpture, entitled, "Different Paths to Success."

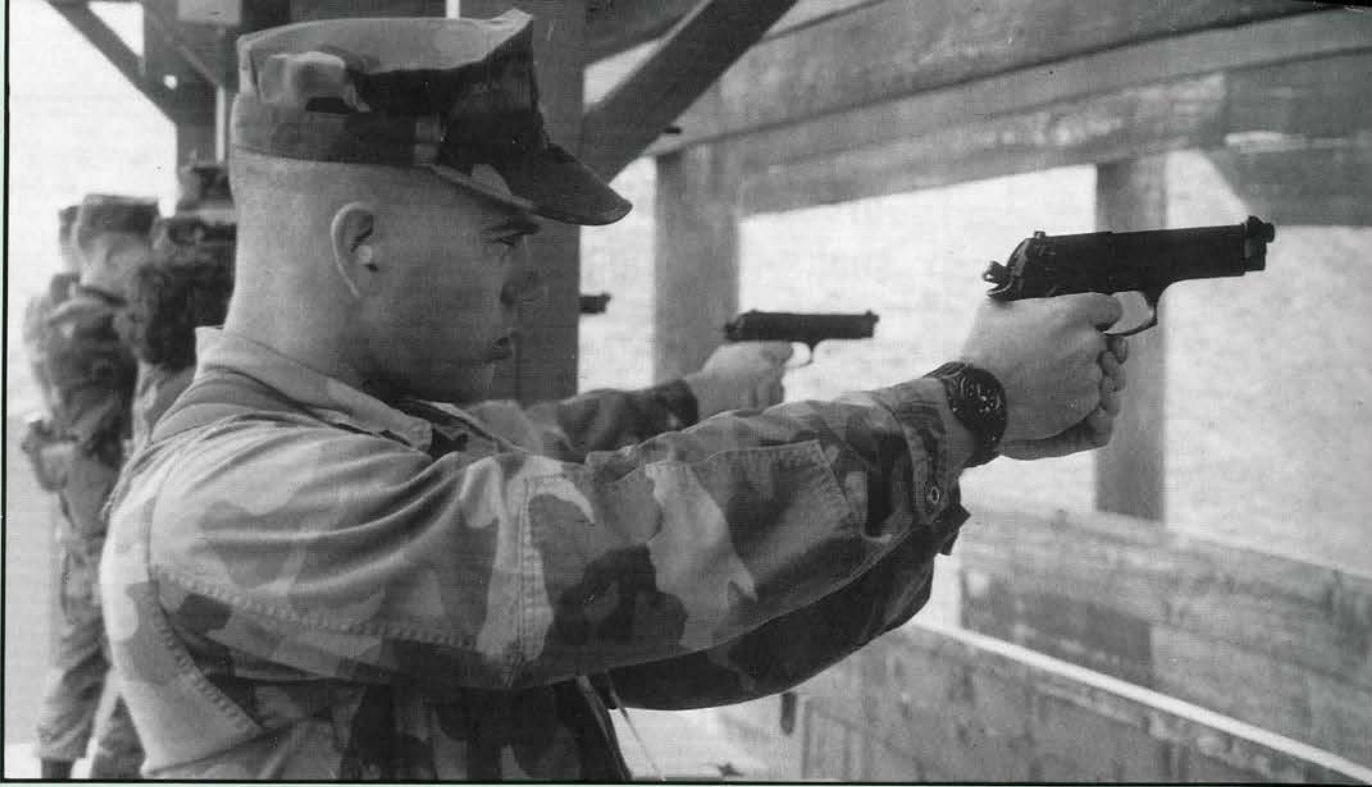
tion of different ideas from different people."

Gogol presented his completed sculpture to LT. Paul Donlan March 2. Chaplain Donlan will present the sculpture to the Garden of Lights orphanage in Hiroshima, during the chaplain's next scheduled visit there, later this spring. Unfortunately, Gogol will not be there to view the eyes of the orphan children, because Gogol returns to his own wife and family the first week of April. He will have the satisfaction, however, of knowing that he did what he could to make some children's lives a little brighter. It will be up to the Marines he leaves behind at Iwakuni to keep the torch of friendship burning.



Our Cover

Cpl. Joseph H. Mulloy, of VMA-242, absorbs the recoil of the 9mm pistol during the slow-fire stage of his familiarization firing as a spent casing is ejected from the chamber. (USMC photo by Sgt. Nolan Wells)



Cpl. Matthew Hill, of VMFA-323, aims in during the slow-fire portion of the familiarization firing of the M-9 Barretta 9mm pistol.

NCO School students fire 9mm

Story and photos by Sgt. Nolan Wells

Members of NCO School's class 4-89 will graduate today in much the same manner as thousands of Marines in hundreds of classes before them. But today's graduates leave knowing they have done something different from all others, knowing they are the first to participate in what is to be a regular part of training for all to follow.

The zero-five muster under the overcast skies and bone-biting cold of Jan. 23 started like many others for the 34 NCOs of class 4-89, the largest one to date. Four miles later with 50-pound packs they found themselves staging gear at the pistol range in preparation of familiarization firing with the M-9 Barretta 9mm pistol.

"With the majority of the Marines here belonging to the air wing, the nine millimeter pistol is going to be their TO weapon, and they need to be familiar with it," said GySgt. Ralph Guerrero Jr., NCO School's NCOIC. "We've been talking about getting the nine millimeter added to curriculum for about four or five months now.

"It took a lot of coordination with GySgt. (Ruben) Carvajal (pistol range NCOIC) and the sergeant major (SgtMaj. Lewis Lee, Air Station sergeant major) before we were finally able to get the nine-millimeter in the system and let the students fire," Guerrero said.

During the one-day familiarization firing, students were broken down into two relays, each having the opportunity to shoot 50 rounds through the pistol across varied stages of fire. They moved from slow fire to shooting at bobbing targets in a manner similar to that they would experience should they actually be attempting to qualify for record.

"The actual qualification course would take a week for a person to go through," Guerrero said. "Our intent was not to qualify them but rather to get them familiar with the weapon and to give them a course as close as possible to an actual qualification course."

The actual firing was preceded by classroom instruction in which the NCOs were briefed on all the characteristics of the 9mm, to include disassembly, cleaning and assembly.

A big plus of having the students fire the pistol was that it also gave NCO School instructors a base from which to better lessons on the newly-acquired pistol. "This being the first class, I think there are some improvements we could make," Guerrero said. "One of the first things would be to get a few more pistols during class time so that we can offer students a better chance for hands-on training."

A plus for the students was having a highly-qualified person to teach them about the pistol—a person who previously shot and placed in division matches during 1987 and 1988, and an honor graduate of class 1-89.

"Sgt. (Rudy) Lurding gives the class on the nine millimeter," Guerrero said. "His experience has been a great deal of help to the school, especially during this portion of the training. He's been through the school, he's fresh out of it, and it's a good feeling to have an honor grad come back to you as an instructor. We're really going to miss him when he rotates back to the States in May."

Overall, Guerrero said the student did quite well. "Three or four of them really plugged the center out of the target and everybody connected with it. That's pretty good," he praised, "since some of them had never held a pistol before."

Marine uses humor to relieve stress

Story and photos by Sgt. Chuck Luoto

Working in the field of Marine aviation brings periods of intense activity, followed by slowdowns. During the peaks of aircraft operations, a great deal of stress may be encountered by every member of the squadron. One Marine here at Iwakuni has found an unusual method to deal with stress and uses his talents to help others cope.

MSgt. Ben Spotts is the maintenance chief of Marine Attack Squadron 323. With the exception of two years experience as a drill instructor at MCRD San Diego, his 18 years of Marine Corps service has been in the field of aviation.

The 36-year-old native of Fort Morgan, Colo., is now serving his third tour with VMFA-323. His first tour with the squadron began in 1971 as a plane captain. His nickname among fellow staff NCOs and officers within the squadron is "Benjo," which is also his pen name for his unusual hobby of drawing cartoons of squadron members.

"The nickname, contrary to popular opinion, dates back to my childhood," Spotts said. "My uncle was a career Marine and returned to the States after his first overseas tour. He combined my real name of Ben with a Japanese word he learned while stationed on Okinawa. He gave me the nickname at age three, and I didn't discover the English translation of the Japanese word until age seven."

"The nickname stayed with me, and I even signed my school papers by that name."

When Spotts joined the Marine Corps and was subsequently assigned to VMFA-323 as his first squadron, his peers searched for a nickname for the new squadron member.

"Back in those days," Spotts recalled, "everybody in the squadron had a nickname." "My buddies tried giving me several different nicknames, but none of them stuck. I told them my lifelong nickname and it stuck. Everyone in our field knows me by that nickname."

The cartoon drawing hobby began during his junior high school days and slowly developed over the next decade as a creative pastime. It was on the drill field at MCRD San Diego that Spotts' creative talents bloomed into an expression of Marine Corps life.

"I started cartooning drill instructors and recruits during my tour as a DI," Spotts recalled. "It was a way to bring comic relief to a high-stress environment. An example of my life in that environment would be the month when I worked 0500 to 2400 without a day off."

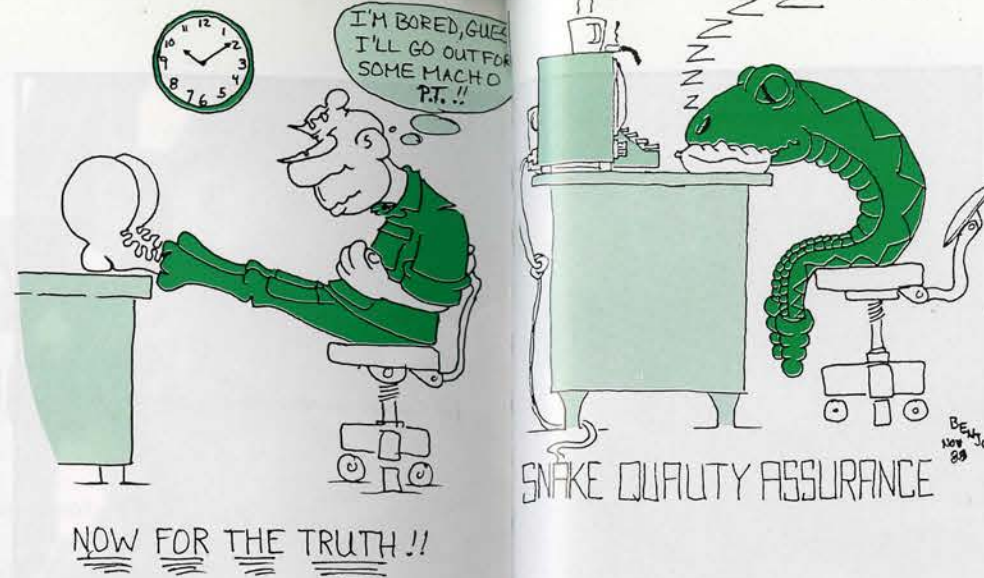
"On my long-awaited day off, the phone rang at 1000. It was the company gunny on the line, telling me to come in to work, because the regimental commander wanted all available drill instructors to go for a run, and I had been deemed 'available.' I was highly angry, to say the least. I went in, as ordered, and later drew some cartoons to note the irony of the situation."

Because ironic situations were common during his duty as a drill instructor, Spotts enjoyed drawing cartoons based upon the irony of everyday life; this included cartoons of the occasional unusual behaviors of both DIs and recruits under pressure. Spotts continued his cartooning during the following years while working at various aviation billets, a practice he continues today.

"I have specialized in drawing the humorous situations which occur as people interact within the squadron," Spotts said. "I think this helps the junior troops most. I think it teaches them to see the humor in difficult situations of squadron life."

The 18-year veteran of Marine aviation has learned to be light-hearted during alternating periods of intense stress and low stress which are a part of daily life.

By cartooning his lighthearted viewpoint of difficult situations, Benjo strives to make life a little easier for his fellow Marines.



MSgt. Ben Spotts uses pen and paper to draw his own version of the VMFA-323 squadron logo.

The daily work journal and notebook of MSgt. Ben Spotts is adorned with the Rattlesnack logo he designed for the "Death Rattlers."