



Flight Jacket

Vol. 5, No. 49

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar

December 12, 2003

Miramar families enjoy Christmas Carnival

Story by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

MCAS Miramar Correspondent

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. – Hundreds of military members and their families kicked off the holiday season with fun and games during the Children's Christmas Carnival at the Youth Sports Complex here Dec. 5.

The day could not have been more perfect as the sun brightened the many young faces and adults who came out to enjoy the festivities presented by Marine Corps Community Services and several sponsors including the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Flying Leatherneck Museum.

The four-hour carnival included live entertainment, carnival rides, games and lots of giveaways and prizes, according to Denise Fairbanks, special events manager, MCCS.

The Youth Center Dancers, a Master Yang Martial Arts Display, an exotic animal show and live music played by the band "High Voltage" provided entertainment to many spectators walking through the carnival.

Other attractions at the event included a 29-foot wave slide, inflatable obstacle course, bungee run, swing ride and a petting zoo for the youngsters. Other booths provided information on services and activities available on and off-base to military members.

Parents then waited with their children for the much anticipated arrival of Santa Claus, who posed for photographs and gave away presents to all of the little boys and girls.

"Santa Claus is the highlight of the event," said Fairbanks. "The event was successful, and people had a good time."

Fairbanks said the carnival is one of two free carnival events MCCS conducts every year for the military families here. The other carnival takes place during the spring.

She said the event brings families together to have a little fun and excitement especially during a time when other families are not so fortunate to be with their loved ones because of the ongoing war on terror.

"This is an opportunity for the kids and parents to put all that aside and for us to give them something fun to do," Fairbanks said. "It's a way for MCCS to bring families together and offer them a program that they can enjoy."



Dragonfly the clown makes a flower out of balloons for a young lady attending the Children's Christmas Carnival at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Dec. 5. Children at the carnival also had a chance to meet Santa Claus. Photo by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

Inside

Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station



64° / 43°
Today



65° / 44°
Saturday



66° / 44°
Sunday

O'Club displays Presidential jacket



Page 5

MASS-6 prepares for deployment



Pages 6-7

Miramar Mail



"Why do E-6 and above get head of the line priority at the barber shop, causing E-5s and below to wait up to 45 minutes?"
Cpl. Kendal Broom, aviation radio repairman, MASS-6

At one time E-6s and above had their own barber shop at Miramar. The head of line policy was implemented in 1998 after the consolidation of the barber shops on base

and at the request of a station sergeant major in recognition of the important operational role of staff noncom-

missioned officers and commissioned officers in their day-to-day duty requirements in their respective shops.



Maj. Gen. Jon A. Gallinetti

Editor's note:
E-mail your questions to the Commanding General, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar at:
ombpaoflight@miramar.usmc.mil

HQMC releases update regarding PME

Story by Gunnery Sgt. Preston L. Fuller

HQMC Enlisted Career Counselor

Professional Military Education affects Marines through promotion, education and leadership development. The Marine Corps Institute has been working with the Enlisted PME staff at the Marine Corps University to revise the Staff Noncommissioned Officer Advanced Distance Education Program, also known as the 7200 series. This new development has resulted in the discontinuation of the 7200 program and the release of the improved SNCOADEP, or 8200 series.

If students are enrolled in the 7200, they have until June 22, 2005 to complete the course. If they do not complete it by the deadline, they will automatically be disenrolled according to MARADMIN 260/03. All gunnery sergeants who desire promotion to master sergeant or first sergeant during the fis-

cal year 2004 selection board must have completed either the 7400 or the 8200 series in order to satisfy distance education PME requirements according to the Promotions Branch. Look for this to be incorporated as part of change 2 of the Promotion Manual. Students will have 5 years from the date of enrollment to complete the respective program. If students decide to drop out of the 7200 or 7400 series and enroll in the 8200, they will not receive credit for the lessons already completed.

It is also important to note another change concerning PME that should be reiterated. In May of 2001, MARADMIN 209/01 was released announcing the Amphibious Warfare School Phase 1 8500 series would be replaced with the new 8510. Effective June 1, 2003, all students actively enrolled in the old 8500 AWS program were administratively disenrolled. If any Marines were

among those disenrolled and still desire to complete the required PME program, the following options are available:

If the student has completed the 8501 course, send MCI a copy of the completion certificate with a cover letter, and credit will be given for course 8511 of the new AWS program. However, the student is still required to complete courses 8512 and 8513 in order to finish the new program.

If the student has completed the work for 8502 but it was not received at MCI before the cut-off date of June 1, 2003, send MCI the exam with a cover letter requesting credit for course 8512. If the student passes the exam, credit will be given for course 8512, and the student will still be required to complete courses 8511 and 8513 to complete the AWS program.

Although the AWSDEP is not required for SNCO promotions, it does add to the

level of competitiveness for each Marine. However, to even be considered eligible for promotion the minimum requirements must be met. Gunnery sergeants looking to be promoted to master sergeant must complete the SNCOADEP 7200 series and Warfighting Distance Education Program 7400, or the new 8200. In addition, those gunnery sergeants desiring promotion to first sergeant must attend the SNCO Advanced Resident Course. Staff sergeants looking to be promoted to gunnery sergeant must complete the SNCO Distance Education Program 7100 series, and sergeants looking to be promoted to staff sergeant must complete the Sergeant Distance Education Program 8010 series or one of the equivalent courses. Because SNCO promotions are highly competitive, Marines should seek and complete additional PME to exceed the minimum PME requirements.

Marines expected to serve longer tours in Okinawa, Iwakuni

Compiled by CPAO

MCAS Miramar

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. — Miramar Marines receiving permanent change of duty station orders overseas will see an extension in their tours beginning next year.

Since 1987, Marines have served 12-month dependent-restricted tours in Okinawa and Iwakuni, Japan when the Corps was granted an exception to a Department of Defense policy that has other services serving 24-month unaccompanied tours, according to Marine Administrative Message 529/03. Dependent-restricted tours

are normally associated with hard-duty locations.

General Michael W. Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps, said the decision was based on the need to reduce the turnover rate within III Marine Expeditionary Force and Marine Corps Bases Japan. He also mentioned that the quality of life on Okinawa is now comparable to stateside assignments.

"The reduced turnover will enhance our operational readiness and III MEF's war-fighting capability," Hagee said.

At the time the waiver of policy was given, Marines on Okinawa faced isolation and hardships due

to a limited support infrastructure. Improvements in housing and a full range of professional, social, travel, educational and recreational opportunities have made living conditions much more enjoyable for personnel stationed there.

"The quality of life on Okinawa for Marines and their families has dramatically improved over the last 16 years," he said.

After several months of review and further discussions with senior leadership, the commandant of the Marine Corps approved the proposal to change the policy for Marines being assigned to III MEF or MCBJ for 36-month tours with family members, or 24-month tours

unaccompanied.

The phase-in plan will occur over the next five years, with full implementation expected by 2008.

"This issue was carefully considered by the Corps' senior leadership," said Hagee. "The time has come to change the standard unaccompanied tour lengths on Okinawa to 24 months."

The policy change does not affect assignments to Okinawa and Iwakuni under the Unit Deployment Program, which make up approximately 30 percent of Marines serving within III MEF, according to Maj. Larry Bauer, military assignment policy analyst, Manpower Policy Branch, Quantico,

Va. Third Marine Aircraft Wing units serving under the program normally perform six-month deployments to the islands.

"Those areas are not their permanent duty stations so the policy does not apply to them," explained Bauer.

Hagee said although the policy change will not increase the number of Marines assigned to III MEF or MCBJ, it would likely increase the number of family members.

"We are committed to developing a common sense phase-in plan that will be sensitive to the welfare of Marines and their families. We

See *Overseas*, page 11

Flight Jacket

The Flight Jacket is published every Friday at no cost to the government by Military Guides, a private firm in no way connected with the Department of the Navy or the U.S. Marine Corps under an exclusively written contract with the U.S. Marine Corps. This civilian enterprise newspaper is an authorized publication for the military services, contents of the *Flight Jacket* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Navy, or the U.S. Marine Corps. It is for informational purposes only and in no way should be considered directive in nature. The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs Office. Comments or questions about editorial content should be directed to ombpaoflight@miramar.usmc.mil. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense, or the Military Guides, of the products or service advertised. Everything advertised in this publication must be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation, or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. All queries concerning business matters, display ads, or paid classified ads should be directed to Military Guides, 9636 Tierra Grande, Suite 201, San Diego, California 92126, or (858) 547-7343.

Maj. Gen. Jon A. Gallinetti

*Commander
Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area
Commanding General
MCAS Miramar*

Maj. Gen. James F. Amos

*Commanding General
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing*

Public Affairs Staff

*Maj. Curtis L. Hill Director
1st Lt. John E. Niemann Deputy
1st Lt. Greg Scott Special Projects Officer
1st Lt. Carolyn M. Nelson External Officer
2nd Lt. Victoria Jennings Internal Officer
Gunnery Sgt. Barry L. Pawelek Public Affairs Chief
Staff Sgt. Risa Carpenter Internal Chief
Staff Sgt. Mia C. Brookman Assistant Internal Chief
Sgt. C. Nuntavong Press Chief
Cpl. James S. McGregor, Lance Cpl. Paul Leicht Layout & Design*

*Sgt. Richard J. Kulleck
Sgt. Valerie A. Martinez
Sgt. W.A. Napper Jr.
Sgt. A.C. Strong
Sgt. Joshua Stueve
Sgt. J.L. Zimmer III
Cpl. Tara Smith
Cpl. Kristen L. Tull
Cpl. Jeff Zaccaro
Lance Cpl. F.J. Sayas
Combat Correspondents*

K-9 unit aids Task Force Kabul

Story by
Cpl. Nicholas Tremblay

4th MEB (AT) Combat Correspondent

U.S. EMBASSY KABUL, Afghanistan – Marines inspect every vehicle that enters the U.S. Embassy compound in Kabul, Afghanistan for explosive devices.

The Marines at the vehicle inspection area use many tools to aid them in their search. The most effective tool they frequently call upon when they need a more thorough sweep of a vehicle is the Marine Military Working Dog unit attached to Task Force Kabul.

The Military Working Dog unit is comprised of two Marines and two bomb-detection Military Working Dogs from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

“The dogs are trained to detect the odor of certain explosives found in bombs,” said Sgt. Ken Porras, MWD handler and kennel master here.

The Marines and their K-9 counterparts are on call twenty-four hours a day, waiting for the next time they need to search vehicles and packages entering the compound.

“Our primary mission is to detect any explosives entering the compound,” Porras said. “We are

here to protect the lives of Marines and embassy personnel.”

Although the MWD handlers and their dogs are in potential danger every time they check a vehicle or package that enters the compound, they remain focused on the mission at hand, said Porras, a North Bergen, N.J. native.

“My main goal is to stay focused on the mission and protect everyone in the embassy,” Porras said. “I value my life and my dog’s,

**‘We train for the opportunity to come out on missions like this and put our practices to use.’
Sgt. Ken Porras**

but I’m a Marine first and my job is to make sure no explosive devices come into the embassy.”

“(At Miramar) we train for the opportunity to come out on missions like this and put our practices to use,” Porras said. “Being here and on call 24/7 gives me huge job satisfaction.”

When the MWD handlers are not supporting their fellow leathernecks, they train one another and their dogs in bomb detection and in patrolling. This necessary training is needed to keep the dogs and handlers proficient in their demanding jobs, Porras said.

To keep one another on their toes, Porras and Lance Cpl. Chris James, MWD handler, make bomb detection drills as realistic as possible. They never tell the other handler where they hid the training aid (controlled explosives that are found in bombs) so not only is the dog enhancing his detection skills, but the handler is also enhancing his presentation skills as well.

“My dog might have the greatest nose in the world, but if I don’t keep my mind and presentation skills sharp, then the dog might miss a potential explosive device,” Porras said.

The two dogs have well trained noses and more than 10 years of combined experience, but if their handlers do not point them in the right direction, the chances of overlooking a bomb increases, Porras said. The handler and dog are a close-knit team that relies on each other to effectively get the job done.

Porras has been working with his K-9 partner Kwinto, a 6-year-old Belgium Malinois, for little more than a year and they have grown fond of each other. During the little down-time they have between training and vehicle/package inspections, they can sometimes be found in a remote corner of the compound playing tug-of-war with Kwinto’s favorite chew-toy.



Sgt. Ken Porras, Marine Corps Military Working Dog handler and kennel master here, shows his Military Working Dog partner, Kwinto, a 6-year-old Belgium Malinois, where to sniff for a potential explosive device recently. Porras and Kwinto are one of two MWD teams assigned to Task Force Kabul who search vehicles entering the embassy compound. Photo by Cpl. Nicholas Tremblay

According to Porras, the biggest challenge the handlers have faced since they have been here is dealing with the weather, especially during the summer months.

“In the summer the temperature gets up into the mid to upper ‘90s,” Porras said. “It gets real dry and dusty and it takes a while for the dog to adjust to the climate.”

To battle the hot summers and cold winters a new kennel is being built for the dogs that will include heating and air-conditioning,

Porras said.

“The dogs proficiency depends on the dog handler,” James, a Placerville, Calif., native said. “It’s up to the handler to give his (dog) the training he needs.”

“The biggest fear a handler can have is that your dog misses something because you didn’t give him a good presentation and then someone gets hurt,” James said. “The most horrible thing is if someone

See K-9, page 11

New Tax Relief Act helps servicemembers, families

Story by K.L. Vantran

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - Legislation signed by President Bush on Veterans Day increases the death gratuity payment to \$12,000 and provides that the full payment is tax-free.

That portion of the Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003 is retroactive to Sept. 10, 2001, to provide for servicemembers who died in the terrorist attacks the following day and in the ongoing global war on terror, said Army Lt. Col. Janet Fenton, director, Armed Forces Tax Council.

“If you are killed on active duty, regardless of whether you’re in theater, or in a training accident, or die from disease, your family receives a \$12,000 death gratuity that is not taxed,” she added. “And that’s a big change. In addition, any future increases to the death gratuity will remain tax free.”

The death gratuity has been \$6,000 since 1991, with half of it being taxed, said the director. “It just didn’t seem fair for the military family who was left grieving for their servicemember to get hit with a tax bill,” she added.

Capital gain exclusion for home sales is one of the most common areas where people were looking for tax relief. “This act will allow members to suspend the period of time which they have to sell their home and take the tax exclusion so they won’t have to pay capital gains,” said Fenton. “It’s retroactive to 1997 so military members who have sold their homes since 1997 have one year from Nov. 11, 2003, to request a refund for any tax they did pay.”

Since 1997, when the law was previously

changed, if servicemembers who owned a home got reassigned more than 50 miles from that home or were ordered to move on post, they were no longer able to roll over the gain from that sale to the next home they purchased.

Also since 1997 individuals could exclude up to \$250,000 (\$500,000 for married couples) of gain from the sale of a home if they resided in the home for two of the five years preceding the sale. Under this act mili-

tary and Foreign Service personnel can suspend (for up to 10 years) the time transferred away from home on official extended duty for purposes of applying the five-year portion of the two-out-of-five-year rule.

The 2003 act also includes above-the-line deduction for overnight travel expenses of military reservists and National Guardsmen who have to travel more than 100 miles to attend drills or meetings.

“The act allows for an above-the-line,

which means you don’t have to itemize your taxes to take advantage of this deduction,” said Fenton. She added that servicemembers will “be able to deduct unreimbursed travel expenses such as lodging, 50 percent of meals and any transportation costs.” This part of the act is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2003.

When the tax code changed in 1986, it said any military benefit existing in Septem-

See Tax, page 11

Miramar Marines learn decontamination



A Marine sprays down a P-19 during a recent decontamination drill. The P-19 is considered a major aircraft rescue firefighting vehicle, and the training taught Marines how to reduce the levels of contamination to below negligible levels. Photo by Cpl. Kristen L. Tull

Story by Cpl. Kristen L. Tull

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Marines are taught how to stay low to avoid getting hit by rounds and train in the gas chamber in order to be better prepared for a chemical attack. However, getting the troops and equipment back in operational order is just

as important.

"Sometimes people don't realize how mission critical (the decontamination process) is," said Cpl. Adam C. Moyer, nuclear biological and chemical specialist, Marine Wing Support Squadron 373.

Marines from MWSS-373 and 374 spent two days learning how

to decontaminate their equipment and themselves. For this exercise, they used a P-19, a major aircraft rescue firefighting vehicle.

"The purpose is to clean the vehicle so that levels of contamination are reduced to below negligible levels," said Moyer.

The first thing to do is mark the vehicle in Zulu time, a

universal means for calculating time, according to Moyer. The vehicle gets sprayed down with hot water, and then mopped and scrubbed down with a decontamination solution removing the chemical agent.

"(Decontamination) is probably the most important part. It will tell us if the Marines have

done their job correctly," said Moyer.

After an incubation period of 30 minutes, the truck is sprayed down with water to remove the solution and then it gets checked for chemical levels.

"If the levels are not low enough, it goes through the entire process all over again until it's done," said Cpl. Josh Ramirez, NBC specialist for MWSS-373.

Ramirez says, in a real world situation, the vehicles would go from station to station in a straight line, avoiding chances of wind blowing the agent towards a decontaminated vehicle. However, in this exercise the road beside the gas chamber is U-shaped due to a lack of space.

The troops as well as their clothing and personal gear go through a similar process, said Moyer.

"This is a learning process for the Marines. Next time they will know to pay closer attention to the nooks and crannies of the vehicles and to take their time. Overall they did very well," said Moyer. "Individual benefits may be hard to see, but they are now a very beneficial part to their unit in case of a chemical attack."

Maximum vocational funding available for military spouses

Story by Cpl. Jeff Zaccaro

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The Air Station's Career Advancement Center, located in the Career Resource Center, building 5305, recently received a grant through the Department of Labor to fund 100 percent of vocational training costs for military spouses.

To be eligible for funding from the CAC, a female spouse must have a military identification card and must be eligible to work in the United States. Requirements for male spouses are the same with an additional requirement of being registered with the Selective Service.

In addition to funding, spouses participating in the program also receive special attention that will assist them in the entire process of finding a job that best suits

them.

"The program is designed to help spouses recognize their goals, research the labor market, find the best schools for them and pay for it," said Victoria Joes, senior workforce advisor at the Career Resource Center.

According to Joes, if a spouse isn't quite sure of the job field they want to get into, aptitude tests are available to measure their strengths and recommend jobs that best fit their strengths.

After strengths are realized, and the spouse is accepted into training, they work with workforce advisors who walk them through the program, help with research and once they are finished, assist them in seeking further education and point them in the right direction in finding a job.

Another benefit of the program comes

to those spouses who already have a job and training, but want to improve their job skills.

"We can also fund schooling for a spouse who already has a job, but wants to further their training to achieve a higher position," said Joes. "San Diego has a very high cost of living expense, and this is a great way for the spouses to get a higher paying job to compensate."

Shannon Niemann, who holds a bachelors' degree in psychology, said that

furthering her education is the best way to stay competitive if her husband gets transferred.

"The (job) market isn't good for psychology right now and the medical field is really hot, so I wanted to get the training so I can still provide income wherever we get transferred," Niemann said.

For more information on career training through the Career Advancement Center, call 635-9142 ext. 1454.



HO, HO, HO! Where's your ID?

A Marine clears a visitor for entry at the west gate here Dec. 5. Miramar's gates were decorated with holiday cheer by the Miramar Officers' Spouses Club during the previous weekend. Photo by Lance Cpl. Paul Leicht

Presidential tanker jacket displayed at O'Club

Story by Lance Cpl. Paul Leicht

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. – The Officers' Club is now home to a custom-made jacket President George W. Bush wore during his address to area Marines, Sailors and their families here Aug. 14.

In preparation for the presidential visit last August when President Bush addressed San Diego, White House staff members contacted the Officers' Club in hopes of being able to give the president something to wear as he stepped off Air Force One to greet Lt. Gen. James T. Conway, commanding general, I Marine Expeditionary Force.

“Scott Shadian with the White House Communications Agency called me about 48 hours before the president was supposed to land and said that he wanted something light weight and distinctly military, if not Marine Corps,” said Mary Joe Heath, manager, Miramar Officers' Club. “A nylon flight jacket seemed out of the question, so I described a tanker jacket to him and he said that it would be perfect.”

But finding something presidential proved to be more challenging than expected.

“We went over to the Uniform Shop within an hour to find a size 43 regular tanker jacket, but as it turns out tanker jackets only come in even sizes,” explained Heath.

“With help from an employee at the Uniform Shop, we contacted the Uniform Support Center (a manufacturer) to see if they could custom make a size 43.

“The answer was ‘yes,’ but it could take weeks. When we explained who it was for, the time frame dropped to three days. This was still too long for us to wait, so I suggested that we make identical jackets, one each in size 42 regular and 44 regular, and let the president decide which he preferred.”

Like most Marines experience from time to time, shopping for the right size and actually finding it in stock can even be a problem for the President of the United States.

“Our Uniform Shop was out of both 42 and 44 regulars, so we called Camp Pendleton, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Marine Corps Base Quantico and then Marine Barracks at 8th and I ... nobody had 42 or 44 regulars,” said Heath. “We made more phone calls to the Uniform Support Center and we were able to have a 42 and a 44 regular shipped directly to our Uniform Shop from the manufacturer.”

With the jackets on the way, the problem of what to put on the jacket had to be resolved.

“Our patch shopping went a little smoother,” recalled Heath. “Scott (Shadian) liked the Miramar patch, but said



The size 42 regular tanker jacket that didn't quite fit President George W. Bush during his visit here Aug. 14 now hangs in the halls of the Miramar Officers' Club. Photo by Lance Cpl. Paul Leicht

the colors and the finely printed words would not work well on camera.

He selected an eagle, globe and anchor in olive green and gold for the right chest and an American flag in desert colors for the left shoulder. Twenty-four hours later after the jackets had arrived, I was too swamped with other White House Press Corps needs, so Linda Gerardi with Marine Corps Community Services volunteered to take

See Jacket, page 11

MSG Program protects 'in every clime and place'

Story by Lance Cpl. Paul Leicht

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Across the world in nations as varied as their people, the image of a Marine, an “ambassador in blue,” serves as the persistent image of American strength, resolve and good will.

This month marks the 55th anniversary of the Marine Security Guard Program that began with a signed memorandum of agreement Dec. 15, 1948, between the Department of State and the Secretary of the Navy.

The agreement provides for MSGs throughout Foreign Service posts around the world to maintain adequate security, and protection of life and government property.

The primary focus of MSGs is the interior security of diplomatic posts and buildings. In the case of an emergency, they can be authorized to provide exterior security and special protection of diplomatic personnel. Marine Security Guards also have a degree of diplomatic immunity in the performance of their duties, according to www.msgbn.usmc.mil.

Marine Security Guard training is conducted at Marine Corps Base Quantico

where Marines from any military occupational specialty are selected, trained and screened for MSG duty. Training is eight weeks for all detachment commanders and six weeks for sergeants and below. Marine Security Guard training is considered to be intense and while the attrition rate is more than 30 percent, more than any Marine Corps school, the result is less than 2 to 3 percent attrition from MSG duty, leaving some of the finest Marines serving as MSGs throughout the world.

The earliest assignments were given to outstanding Marines ready to post at missions overseas, with Marines headed for Tangier, Morocco and Bangkok, Thailand in January 1949. Later in 1954 the MSG Program School began a formal training program.

But the Marine Corps has a long history of cooperation with the Department of State dating back to the earliest days of our nation. From raising the American flag in Derna, Tripoli, to the recent reopening of U.S. Embassies in Belgrade, Yugoslavia and Kabul, Afghanistan, Marines have served in a variety of roles as couriers and guards to protect U.S. diplomatic posts.

Today, more than 1,200 Marines serve at more than 120 posts in 115 countries

across the globe. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and an ever-changing international political landscape, Marines can be found protecting American missions in an increasing number of regions.

Earning a distinguished reputation for

performance of duty while accomplishing an important mission for their country, MSGs maintain the Marine Corps' international reputation of excellence in service through their working relationship with America's diplomatic community.



Marines with the Marine Security Guard Program at Marine Corps Base Quantico train with the Uzi submachine gun during their six-week course. The MSG Program has one of the highest attrition rates in the Marine Corps, which speaks to the quality of Marines serving on MSG duty. Marine Corps Security Guard Battalion photo

MASS-6 reservists prepare for deployments with ...

SULE

Story and photos by
Sgt. Richard J. Kulleck

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Patrolling with packs for 10.2 miles, surviving on minimal sleep, rationing one meal ready-to-eat package for two days and accomplishing a mission was not the typical reserve weekend for Marines of Marine Air Support Squadron 6.

With possible deployments coming up during the first of the year, MASS-6 wanted their Marines to be prepared.

From Dec. 5 to 7, a Small Unit Leadership Evaluation and Direct Air Support Center here was the focus of the MASS-6 three-day exercise on East Miramar.

Reservists reported a day early for their drill weekend, and began drilling at 5:30 a.m. Friday morning with a physical fitness test. The Marines pressed on into the late evening with gear issue and administrative processing.

"The first part of the exercise was to get gear ready to deploy," said Staff Sgt. Christine M. Hopkins, air support operations operator, MASS-6. "It was a long day getting everything packed up for the SULE and DASC operations."

With a couple hours of sleep, the exercise began at 2:15 a.m. Saturday morning with loading gear onto vehicles and moving the convoy from MCAS Miramar to Camp Elliot, East Miramar.

Upon arrival, the Marines stood up the DASC and were ready for operation.

Five squads then formed up with their gear waiting to load up onto a Humvee or M-923 5-ton, and be dropped off at one of nine checkpoints.

"The Small Unit Leadership Evaluation, SULE, is an evaluation on the squad leader taking charge and leading their Marines," said Hopkins.

Each SULE checkpoint challenged the squad. At times the squad leader was the only person allowed to give the answer forcing the squad to work as a team. Other times the squad leader would be considered dead, forcing someone within the squad to take charge.

"The exercise is to prepare Marines for actual combat," said Cpl. Albert V. Romero, motor transport mechanic, MASS-6, and station five instructor on Marine Corps history. "We received information from the Marines that

came back from Operation Iraqi Freedom and they pointed out that Marines were lacking in experience due to lack of realistic training."

The squads traveled from each location practicing weapons handling, and squad tactics, patrolling, Marine Corps knowledge, first aid, land navigation, communications equipment, martial arts, detaining enemy prisoners of war and nuclear biological and chemical weapons training.

Each station event was conducted for 30-minutes before the squad continued on the 10.2 mile patrol. As the SULE came to an end late into the night, Marines were forced to adapt to the cold climate change and low visibility due to heavy fog.

"Overall this was a motivating day, I think doing this squad exercise brought our group closer together," said Lance Cpl. Carl F. Fenzel, motor transport mechanic, MASS-6. "It let everyone know that we will always be there for each other."

The evening was not over for the Marines as they returned to base camp.

Following the SULE, the Marines operated the DASC for the next 9-hours. The mission of the DASC was to simulate the process of immediate air support requests, coordination of aircraft employment with other supporting arms, management of terminal control assets, support ground combat and combat service support forces, and control of assigned manned and unmanned aircraft transiting through the DASC operation airspace throughout the night.

Perimeter security was conducted during the DASC operation. Shifts were taken manning .50-caliber and M-240G machine guns around the base camp.

The exercise ended the next morning to a light rain but that didn't dampen the pride of the reservists. They packed their gear knowing they accomplished the mission they had been given.

"It was a pretty good evolution, I think we learned some good things," said Fenzel. "There are skills that we need to practice more often because there are things we don't know. The more we practice the better we will be as a force to go over to Iraq or wherever we are needed to do what we have to do."



3rd squad point man Lance Cpl. Michael K. Esquivel, motor transport driver, MASS-6, hikes under simulated gas attack during the Small Unit Leadership Evaluation.

'Overall this was a motivating day, I think doing this squad exercise brought our group closer together.'

Lance Cpl. Carl F. Fenzel

Safety is everybody's business



Above: Lance Cpl. Michael K. Esquivel, motor transport driver, MASS-6, informs his squad to shift to the right of the road during the exercise.

Above right: During sunset, 3rd squad conducts nuclear biological and chemical warfare exercises at check point eight during the SULE.



Below right: Lance Cpl. Edward L. Goldman, motor transport mechanic and Lance Cpl. Mike D. Galvan, maintenance management specialist, receive a message from the rest of their squad sent over a PRC-13 as Cpl. Mitzi S. Marter, embarked, writes it down. The Marines are with MASS-6.



Remembering the Son Tay Raid

*Significant Vietnam operation
all but lost in pages of history*

Story by Cpl. James S. McGregor

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Do you remember the Son Tay Raid, an incredibly significant covert operation of the Vietnam War?

Although the Son Tay Raid may not be at the forefront of the recollection of the more recent generations, the Son Tay Raid was described by Mike McKinney, co-author of the 2001 book, "Chariots of the Damned," as a special operations raid that "stands out above all as the best example of flawless planning, preparation and execution."

By early 1970 there were several hundred American prisoners of war being held in North Vietnam, and in May 1970 it was confirmed that POWs were being held in a camp near Son Tay.

Reconnaissance flights by SR-71 Blackbirds discovered the POWs, and also pointed out that while the camp was only 23 miles northwest of Hanoi, the area was isolated and desolate. Conditions for the POWs were poor.

Initial planning to rescue POWs was underway in June 1970. It was found that POWs of the camp were sending signals to

help develop a rescue strategy, but Army Brig. Gen. Donald Blackburn, Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities, who worked directly for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had an idea of his own. He decided that while the POWs suggestive signals of a rescue around Mount Ba Vi, where groups of POWs were often sent in working parties, would have a high chance for success, he thought an operation should be made to crash-land into the prison and rescue all the POWs rather than a few.

Soon after a feasibility study group of 15 men committed to the plan, Air Force Brig. Gen. Leroy Manor was selected as the overall commander for the mission. Manor, at the time, was the commander of U.S. Air Force Special Operations forces at Eglin Air Force Base. The outcome of the operation was ultimately his responsibility.

To start planning, a window of perfect opportunity had to be decided on. The raid would take place at night – the skies had to be clear for air refueling, there would have to be little to no wind or turbulence in the mountains, one-third to one-quarter moon, and 35 degrees above the horizon to provide the necessary visibility. The best

window of opportunity was around Oct. 21, but preparation and political blockades eventually pushed the operation back to the second window of opportunity, and the raid would take place the night of Nov. 20.

Between the time of the initial planning and the operation date, preparation was precise. Manor would take less than five months before the operation to recruit and train the rescue force. Most of the force came from the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service, which "were the only helicopter crews that routinely penetrated deep inside North Vietnam to rescue downed airmen. Their training was optimized for this mission and better yet, so too were their helicopters," according to McKinney. Twenty-eight helicopter air crewmen volunteered for the mission, and the pilots were two captains, six majors and four lieutenant colonels.

The pilots who were selected to train for the raid were noted as "some of the most experienced pilots in the Air Force," and some were more notable than others. One, for instance, was Air Force Maj. Frederic Donohue, who was a veteran of more than 130 combat missions in theater. Another pilot was Air Force Lt. Col. Herbert Zehnder, who had set a world record in 1967 by flying an HH-3E non-stop from Brooklyn Naval Air Station, N.Y., to the Paris Air Show – 4,157 miles.

The training was divided into steps. The exercises were simple at first and gradually intensified to prepare the men for Son Tay. Helicopter crews worked on formation procedures, familiarization with dissimilar aircraft, weaponry and landing scenarios until every given situation that could arise during the operation was covered to perfection, as McKinney described.

"The final phase of training put all the pieces together, as the raiders and helicopter crews practiced every contingency. With only two weeks left until the first launch window, one final piece to the puzzle remained – the elimination of two guard towers on the wall surrounding the prison. The raiders could not place enough rounds on target in the initial assault to ensure that the guards in the towers wouldn't jeopardize the mission. The only option was to use the firepower of the HH-53s. Major Donohue and Captain Thomas Waldron were chosen to act as a gunship and fly between the towers while their crew in the back, Staff Sergeant Aron Hodges, Staff Sergeant James Rogers and Staff Sergeant Angus Sowell, engaged the towers with their 7.62mm miniguns. With firing speeds up to 4,000 rounds per minute, the three miniguns would shred the guard towers in seconds. This was a very risky maneuver because of the proximity to the POWs quarters. There could be no margin for error as the chance of injuring the POWs was too great. Even after all the intense preparation, very few people in the force knew of the exact target. Because of the numerous hours of over water flight, many of the helicopter crews were convinced they were going to

launch an attack on Cuba. In the end, the assault force conducted 170 rehearsals of the mission, totaling over 280 sorties and 790 flight hours. They were honed to a razor-sharp edge and ready for action."

The mission started at 11:18 p.m., Nov. 20, 1970, when the first HH-53C, codenamed Apple 1, lifted from Udorn Air Base in Thailand. The operation involved HH-53Cs, one HH-3E, A-1 Skyraiders, MC-130E Combat Talons, and HC-130P tankers. At about 1:15 a.m. the helicopters refueled once more before meeting the MC-130 Combat Talon that would use its navigational systems to lead the force to Son Tay through the mountains and valleys of North Vietnam.

"As the flight emerged from the foothills in North Vietnam, the lights of Hanoi could be seen glowing in the distance," McKinney continued. "This was the time when the mission was most vulnerable. The planners had gone to considerable lengths to analyze the North Vietnamese early warning radar coverage and to choose the best route."

Everything had been going as planned until the mission ran into a "glaring error." The formation had gone toward the wrong objective, a compound 400 yards south that re-

sembled Son Tay. However, they realized the mistake at the last second and turned north. The force succeeded at entering the compound and destroying the two guard towers. Everyone eventually got into place and were ready to complete the evacuation of the "70-80 ill-nourished, weak and sick POWs" intelligence had reported. There was one problem though; there were no POWs to be evacuated. The raiders evacuated themselves and flew back home "completely demoralized." They were sure members of intelligence had "really screwed up this time." However, the POWs were at Son Tay, but were relocated in July to another camp a few miles away. While the main objective of retrieving POWs was not met, McKinney concluded that the mission was a staggering success in many other ways.

"While on the surface, the Son Tay raid seems like a complete failure, it did have some unseen effects," McKinney wrote. "The North Vietnamese feared another raid and congregated all of the POWs into two camps in Hanoi. This allowed the POWs to communicate among one another, increasing morale. As the story of the raid circulated among the POWs, told by those who had witnessed it, they realized their country had not forgotten them. Finally, the North Vietnamese began taking better care of the POWs, again fearing reprisals. What the Son Tay raiders had done was truly remarkable. They planned, rehearsed and executed a daring special operations mission, deep in the heart of enemy territory. Their goal was the noblest of all, to rescue fellow countrymen held against their will. The lessons of the Son Tay raid are still echoed today in special operations training; a mission properly planned and practiced can succeed even under the most demanding conditions."

'Their goal was the noblest of all, to rescue fellow countrymen held against their will.'

Mike McKinney

Miramar Golf Course offers something for all players

Story by Cpl. Jeff Zaccaro

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Golfers new to the Air Station and those who want to take up the sport will be pleased to know the Miramar Memorial Golf Course is one of the best military golf courses worldwide.

Ranked eighth finest out of more than 200 courses by Travel and Leisure Golf Magazine, the par 72, regulation length course here offers up to 6,818 yards of play and scenery that rivals most top dollar courses.

Although the course is ranked so high, beginning players shouldn't be intimidated since lessons are available by

Professional Golf Association credentialed instructors for \$25 for a single half-hour lesson, or \$100 for a series of five. In addition to lessons, the pro shop at the course offers club and cart rentals, clothing, bags, clubs, shoes, gloves and balls.

For those players who have the fundamentals of the game down and are ready to hit the greens, 18-hole green fees range from \$8 for E-5 and below to \$18 for O-4 and above. Department of Defense employees can also play for \$20 and guests accompanied by a servicemember

can play for \$24.

Although the quality of the course and the price of course usage is exceptional, not enough servicemembers are utilizing the facilities, according to Robert Knight.

"It seems like we see the same guys around here all the time," he said. "We are here to support the troops, and since the course is right across the street from the barracks we would like to see more of the younger guys come over and play. We

even reserve the first hour on Saturdays for enlisted members only."

In an effort to support the troops, Knight noted that, "The course is available for squadron events, such as the Marine Corps

Ball long drive competition, and we even hosted the Second Annual Toys for Tots Tournament and the 2001 Armed Forces Inter-Service Golf Tournament."

Although playing the sport is the main purpose, according to Knight, just enjoying a cold beverage outside of the course's pro shop or restaurant can be as relaxing as playing a round.

"This area is just a fun place to be, like a nice little island of peace and serenity amongst all this war stuff," he said. "The sunsets out here are amazing, and after a

while you even stop hearing the planes take off."

However, for those looking for nothing but a good game of golf, the course will not let them down. Dale Winsted, a reviewing writer for the San Diego Golf Pages noted, "The course at Miramar Marine Corps Air Station can best be

described as a very playable course. Its prime feature is its greens: they're nearly always perfect, rolling fast and true."

The course is open every day besides Christmas, and the pro shop is located in building 3485. For more information on the course or to reserve a tee time call 577-4155.

'We are here to support the troops, and since the course is right across the street from the barracks we would like to see more of the younger guys come over and play. We even reserve the first hour on Saturdays for enlisted members only.'

Robert Knight



Kids run for toys

Several children finish the last leg of the USO/Toys for Tots 1k candy cane stroll Saturday. At the end of the run, all the children were given medals by Marines and volunteers at the finish line. The USO/Toys for Tots 8k/5k runs and the candy cane stroll are part of an effort to raise toys for needy children in the San Diego area. Photo by Sgt. J.L. Zimmer III

Chapel weekly schedule of events

Holy Family Catholic Community

- ◆ Mass: 11 a.m. Sunday, 11:30 a.m. weekdays.
- ◆ Rosary: 10:30 a.m. Sunday.
- ◆ Confession: 10:15 a.m. Sunday or for appointments call Father Berchmanz at 577-1333.
- ◆ Religious classes for children for first communion, confirmation: 9:30-10:45 a.m. Sunday.
- ◆ Youth gathering and planning following mass Sunday.
- ◆ Baptism: Normally the first Sunday of the month. Call chaplain's office for details.
- ◆ Marriage: Call chaplain for details at least six months before wedding.
- ◆ Instruction in the Catholic faith (RCIA). Call chaplain's office for details.
- ◆ Scripture Class: 7 p.m. Wednesday in Chapel classroom.
- ◆ Choir Practice: 6 p.m. Wednesday in Main Chapel.

Liturgical Christian

- ◆ Sunday: Choir rehearsal at 9 a.m.
Liturgical worship at 9:30 a.m.
Adult/Youth/Children Bible study at 10:45 a.m.
- ◆ Tuesday: Morning prayer group (Room 4) at 6 a.m.
Contemporary Gospel Service at 7:30 p.m.
- ◆ Wednesday: Crafts and conversation at 9 a.m. Free childcare provided.
Women's bible study at 10:45 a.m.
Baptist service at 7 p.m.
- ◆ Thursday: Liturgical choir rehearsal at 7:30 p.m.
- ◆ Friday: Baptist bible study at 7 p.m.

Jewish

- ◆ First Friday of the month at MCRD San Diego at 7 p.m.
- ◆ Last Friday of the month in Edson Range Chapel Camp Pendleton at 7:30 p.m.

Part-time jobs available

Part-time positions are available for school bus drivers to transport children to and from the Youth Center and school.

Candidates must be active duty military and have a government issued driver's license.

Drivers are needed Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Drivers must be reliable and responsible with children.

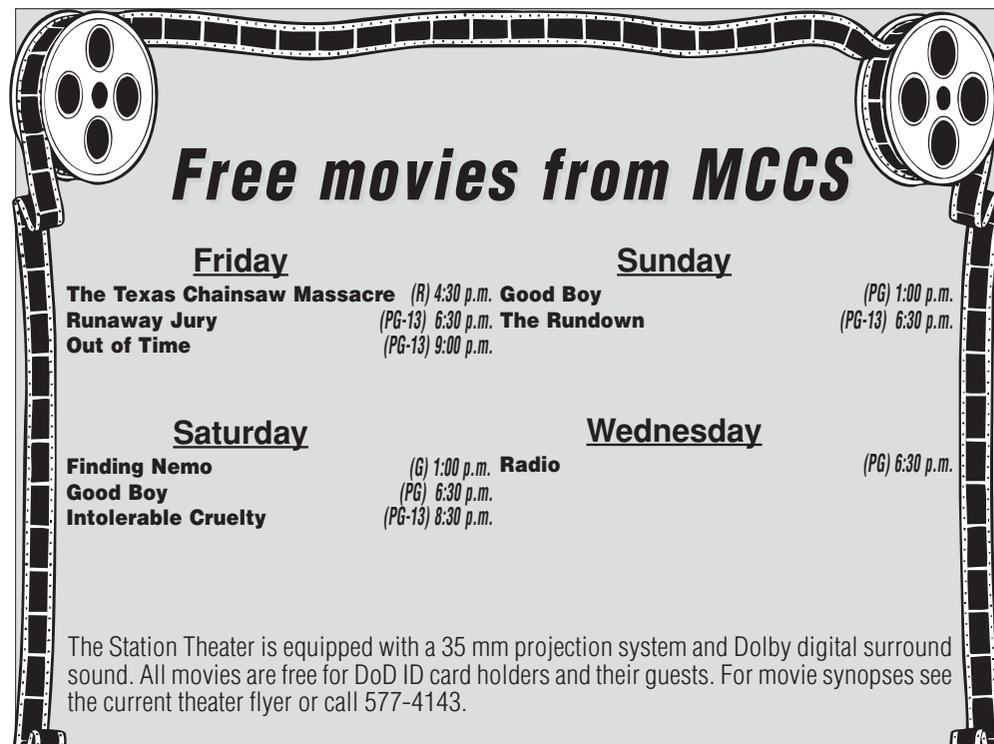
To apply, fill out an application at Marine Corps Community Services, building 2273.

For more information, call the Youth Center at 577-4136.

Santa, elves to tour housing

Santa Claus and his elves will be leading a Christmas parade through base housing here Thursday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

During the holiday parade, good holiday cheer and goody bags for children will be



Free movies from MCCS

Friday		Sunday	
The Texas Chainsaw Massacre	(R) 4:30 p.m.	Good Boy	(PG) 1:00 p.m.
Runaway Jury	(PG-13) 6:30 p.m.	The Rundown	(PG-13) 6:30 p.m.
Out of Time	(PG-13) 9:00 p.m.		
Saturday		Wednesday	
Finding Nemo	(G) 1:00 p.m.	Radio	(PG) 6:30 p.m.
Good Boy	(PG) 6:30 p.m.		
Intolerable Cruelty	(PG-13) 8:30 p.m.		

The Station Theater is equipped with a 35 mm projection system and Dolby digital surround sound. All movies are free for DoD ID card holders and their guests. For movie synopses see the current theater flyer or call 577-4143.

handed out by the jolly man in the red suit. For more information, call 577-6365 or visit www.mccsmiramar.com.

luncheon-response@afcea-sd.org. For more information, visit www.afcea-sd.org.

Joint chapter holiday luncheon

On behalf of the Membership of Camp Pendleton/North County and San Diego Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association Chapters, you are cordially invited to kick off the holiday season at our holiday luncheon Tuesday from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Miramar Officers' Club.

Lunch is free. However, there will be Marines guarding the entrance, so the donation of a new unwrapped toy is strongly recommended (a limited number of \$10-20 toys will be available for purchase at the door).

Members and non-members please join us. R.S.V.P. to your respective chapter or to

Jingle bell jog

The 2003 Jingle Bell Jog 1-mile family fun run/walk will be held Thursday at 1:30 p.m. at the Station Theater.

All participants will be given jingle bells to wear on their shoes. There will be holiday give-aways and treats for the children. Parents with small children in baby joggers/strollers are welcome. A movie will follow at the theater for those who wish to attend.

There is no registration required. For more information call Janie at 577-1702, or Laurie at 577-9143.

Safety is respect for law.

**Overseas,
continued from page 2**

will ensure that the supporting infrastructure such as schools and housing can accommodate an incremental family member increase," he said.

Marines currently assigned to Okinawa will not be affected. The criteria for who will receive orders to Okinawa or Iwakuni under this new policy is still being finalized, but implementation will commence with colonels, lieutenant colonels, sergeants major, master gunnery sergeants and master sergeants, according to Bauer.

This policy will not apply to Marines or civilians assigned to Camp Fuji, Japan, since it is more isolated and does not enjoy the same support infrastructure as Okinawa. Also, the policy will apply to Navy personnel assigned to Okinawa under a Marine Corps command.

**K-9,
continued from page 3**

gets killed because you didn't do your job proficiently."

When conducting a search, the handler walks the dog around the vehicle and points to an area he wants him to search. The dog's behavior changes and sits when he sniffs-

out and detects a potential explosive device, showing his handler he found a possible threat.

"I won't take chances," James said. "If the dog doesn't sit, but he behaves like something is out of the ordinary, there might be a bomb and I'll call the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Marines to take a closer look."

The K-9 unit also supports the Regional Security Officer whenever they are needed to search areas in town when important personnel visit, Porras said.

During their time here the K-9 unit completed a combined total of 297 vehicle searches, 409 package/luggage searches, and supported more than seven VIP visits.

**Tax,
continued from page 3**

ber 1986 would remain tax free, said Fenton. However, it was always unclear whether military child care was included in that, she added. "This act merely makes it clear that those provisions of child care were intended to be tax free to military members."

The tax act also provides for extra tax-filing time for troops serving in contingency operations. The internal revenue code allows servicemembers who are serving in combat zones or hazardous duty areas to have an

extension of time – usually 180 days from the time the person leaves the combat zone - to file taxes.

"A lot of military operations don't rise to the level of being declared by the president as combat," said Fenton. "But there are several contingency operations where servicemembers are outside the continental United States."

The act also includes modifying eligibility criteria of tax-exempt veterans organizations; tax free treatment of homeowners' assistance program payments; suspension of tax-exempt status for designated terrorist organizations; and extension of victims' tax relief to astronauts who die on space missions.

**Jacket,
continued from page 5**

the jackets and patches over to Chesty's on Miramar Road to have the patches sewn on and the words 'George W. Bush, Commander in Chief' embroidered on the left chest."

Heath said Chesty's did a very quick turnaround and had the jackets back by the end of the day.

The next morning when Air Force One landed, the finished jackets were taken up

the back stairs into Air Force One for the president to try on, said Heath.

"I asked if the jacket that was not selected could be returned to us as a keepsake for the O' Club and within a day or so after the president's departure, the 42 regular was returned to me via 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing and then the Miramar Air Museum, where it had made stops," Heath said. "Once we got the jacket at the O' Club, I had it professionally framed and so now the jacket the president didn't wear, or at least tried on, is hanging in the O' Club."

Heath explained that the hardest part of the ordeal to get the jackets made was getting people to believe that they were really for the president.

"Everyone from the Uniform Shop to the manufacturer to Chesty's expressed stunned disbelief when we told them who the jackets were for," said Heath.

"But once they were convinced they were extremely cooperative and understood the urgency of our requests.

"Everyone that participated in getting the jackets made on time was bursting with pride when the president stepped off Air Force One wearing 'our' jacket."

