

FLIGHT JACKET

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Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

April 16, 2004

3rd MAW Marines receive praise for vigilance, hard work in Iraq Hagee, Estrada address troops at Al Asad

Story compiled by CPAO

3rd MAW Forward

AL ASAD, Iraq - Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Michael W. Hagee and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada visited with more than 400 Marines and Sailors of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing here April 8.

The commandant and sergeant major of the Marine Corps thanked the Marines and Sailors and used the visit to gain an understanding of what can be done to help 3rd MAW Marines accomplish their mission. The commandant expressed gratitude and support on behalf of the American public and politicians back in the states.

"The sun never sets on the United States Marine Corps," said Hagee. "Congress has told us we are to be the most readied force when the nation is least ready. We have definitely demonstrated that over the past couple of years, especially over the past 10 months."

Hagee continued by saying the Marine Corps has demonstrated the most flexibility, adaptability, agility and capability to turn those attributes into tempo and speed.

"We came out of southern Iraq in September of last year, and many of you were there," he said. "We did not think we would be going back. In October, we were told to put a force here of 25,000. In those short months we stood the force up."

Hagee added that troops sent back to Iraq on short notice after returning were given the training needed to adapt to new threats.

"We properly trained (the deployed forces) with aggressive training and put them into theater ahead of time," he said.

According to Hagee, the evolution was accomplished much quicker than many individuals thought possible.

The Corps has again answered the call of the nation and did so very quickly, he added.

"We get a mission, we respond; and we respond extremely fast," said Hagee.

The sergeant major of the Marine Corps spoke briefly and gave thanks to the troops and relayed a message from members of Congress and private individuals he has come in contact with since becoming the senior enlisted Marine in the Corps.

"I visited with some of you a few weeks back and was wishing that I was coming back with you," said Estrada.

'Tell your Marines that we are behind them 100 percent.'
Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada

"Every politician, every ordinary citizen that I have come in contact with that knows I am a Marine asks me to relay one message when I visit my Marines, 'Tell your Marines that we are behind them 100 percent.'"

He added that Marines who are still in the U.S. want the Marines here to stay focused and continue to take care of each other.

"The main (message) they all want to relay is to keep it up and continue to win this fight," he said. "You are making a significant and positive difference in what is going on in this part of the world right now."

For many of the Marines in attendance, the visit was an unexpected treat.

"The commandant and sergeant major's visit is the highlight of my deployment so far," said New Britain, Conn., native Gunnery Sgt. Dan Picard, Marine Aircraft Control Group 38, 3rd MAW. The 42-year-old logistics chief also mentioned that the visit raised the spirits of his Marines and "let us know that the folks at home really appreciate what



Gen. Michael W. Hagee (right), commandant of the Marine Corps, and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada answer questions from individual Marines during their visit to Al Asad, Iraq, April 8. Among the questions asked by Marines was for clarification regarding the possible extension of tours for servicemembers. Photo by Staff Sgt. A.C. Mink

we're doing over here."

According to 36-year-old stinger missile gunner Gunnery Sgt. Ira B. Harris, 3rd Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion, 3rd MAW, the time the commandant and sergeant

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HMM-161 crew chiefs fight to save lives in war-torn Iraq

Story by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

MAG-16 Combat Correspondent

AL TAQADDUM AIR BASE, Iraq - The two weary but light-hearted crew chiefs lounged around in the CH-46E Sea Knight helicopter that is referred to as a "Phrog."

They were in "alert 30" status - meaning that if a call came, the helicopter would be in the air in under 30 minutes.

One of the chiefs casually looked out the window to see their other pilot running to-

wards the chopper at breakneck speed. They just got a call for a casualty evacuation, or CASEVAC.

They put on their game faces - this is their duty here.

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., is flying CASEVAC missions into the heart of the Sunni Triangle's most dangerous places for the singular purpose of pulling their wounded

brethren out of the fire.

Since the squadron's arrival in Iraq less than two months ago, they have wasted no time in performing all the missions required of a "Phrog" squadron, according to Staff Sgt. Michael A. Miller, CH-46E crew chief, HMM-161.

"Our main mission is to support military operations here," he said. "With that, we conduct troop and (high priority passengers) transport, cargo lift, but our primary purpose is CASEVAC."

The Martinez, Calif., native said the squadron's "alert 30" stand-by procedure is a self-imposed alert status to make sure they can get the quickest response time to the wounded Marines.

"We are set up to be in the air in 30 minutes, but we're usually in the air within 10 minutes," he noted. "Within a half-hour we have them on the plane and to the hospital within an hour."

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Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station



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President addresses nation Promises victory in war on terror, peace in Iraq

Story by Sgt. W.A. Napper Jr.

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

President George W. Bush addressed the nation Tuesday evening from the East Room of the White House and spoke for little more than an hour about the war on terror, the situation in Iraq and briefly on the upcoming election.

Starting out on a somber note, the president spoke of the recent violence in Iraq.

"Coalition forces have encountered serious violence in some areas of Iraq," he said. "Our military commanders report that this violence is being instigated by three groups: some remnants of Saddam Hussein's regime, along with Islamic militants have attacked coalition forces in the city of Fallujah.

"Terrorists from other countries have infiltrated Iraq to incite and organize attacks. In the south of Iraq, coalition forces face riots and attacks that are being incited by a radical cleric named al-Sadr,"

added the president. "Although these instigations of violence come from different factions, they share common goals.

"They want to run us out of Iraq and destroy the democratic hopes of the Iraqi people. The violence we have seen is a power grab by these extreme and ruthless elements."

President Bush went on to clarify that U.S. forces in Iraq are not fighting a civil war or dealing with a popular uprising. He also reassured the American public that most areas in Iraq are relatively stable.

"Most Iraqis, by far, reject violence and oppose dictatorship," he said. "... Iraqis have expressed clear commitments. They want strong protections for individual rights; they want their independence; and they want their freedom."

The commander-in-chief had high praise for Marines, Sailors, soldiers and airmen serving in Iraq, although he said

"America's armed forces are performing brilliantly, with all the skill and honor we expect of them ... The people of our country are united behind our men and women in uniform, and this government will do all that is necessary to assure the success of the historic mission,"

President George W. Bush

United States troops would serve in the Middle East until they were no longer needed, regardless of the June 30 deadline to transfer sovereignty back to the Iraqi people.

"America's armed forces are performing brilliantly, with all the skill and honor we expect of them," he said. "We're constantly reviewing their needs. Troop strength, now and in the future, is determined by the situation on the ground. If additional forces are needed, I will send them.

"If additional resources are needed, we will provide them. The people of our country are united behind our men and women in uniform, and this government will do all that is necessary to assure the success of the historic mission."

Although he did not mention if Marines or soldiers would meet this need specifically, he re-emphasized his resolve to bring peace and freedom to Iraq - a gift he believes comes straight from God.

"So long as I'm the president, I will press for freedom. I believe so strongly in the power of freedom," he

declared. "You know why I do? Because I've seen freedom work right here in our own country. I also have this belief, strong belief, that freedom is not this country's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty's gift to every man and woman in this world. And as the greatest power on the face of the Earth, we have an obligation to help the spread of freedom. We have an obligation to help feed the hungry. I think the American people find it interesting that we're providing food for the North Korea people who starve. We have an obligation to lead the fight on AIDS, on Africa. And we have an obligation to work toward a more free world. That's our obligation. That is what we have been called to do as far as I'm concerned ... My job as president is to lead this

See **PRESIDENT**, page 11

Scholarships set aside for military children

Story by Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - With increased U.S. Marine deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation is stepping up fundraising so it can honor its pledge to award scholarships to all children of Marines killed in combat during the war on terror.

The foundation also has pledged to award scholarships to all children of Navy corpsmen killed in combat while serving with the Marines and to any children of Marines and former Marines killed on Sept. 11, 2001.

Scholarships run up to \$10,000 each, according to Rose Gault, the foundation's director of development.

All of the foundation's scholarships are funded through private donations.

Retired Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Oster, chairman of the foundation's board, called the special scholarships part of the foundation's 40-year tradition of helping young men and women. Since its inception in 1962, the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation has awarded more than \$22 million in

scholarships and education bonds to children of Marines or former Marines.

During 2003, Gault said, the foundation awarded 982 scholarships totaling more than \$1.5 million.

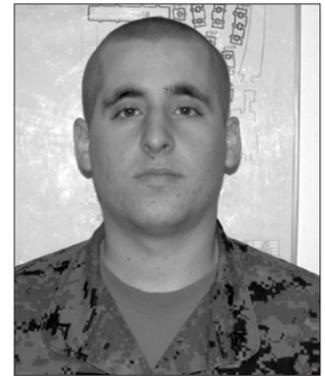
When terrorists blew up the Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1983, the foundation awarded \$10,000 education bonds to every child who lost a parent in the attack, including children of Navy and Army servicemembers. Similarly, the foundation awarded \$10,000 education bonds to all children of servicemembers killed during Operation Desert Storm, regardless of the parent's branch of service.

"We have always given special consideration to children whose Marine parent was killed or wounded in combat, and this policy is a continuation of our support for the Marine Corps family," Oster said.

"We want our warriors to know that we will be there for their family," he said. "Our unwavering commitment to youth, education and the values that have made our country strong will continue."

For more information about the program call the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation at (800) 292-7777.

Miramar Mail



"Why do Marines have to pay out of their own pocket if the clothing allowance is not enough to cover the costs for new digital cammies?"

Lance Cpl. Jeremy Morrisseau
operations clerk
MAG-11

The clothing replacement allowance for active duty enlisted Marines was adjusted to compensate for the cost of the Marine Corps Combat Utility Uniform Oct. 1, 2002.

Male Marines with less than three years time in service receive \$226.80 in their annual clothing replacement allowance. Female Marines with less than three years time in service receive \$255.60. Male Marines with more than three years time in service receive \$324. Female Marines with more than three years time in service receive \$367.20.

The total cost of one set of the MCCUU, which consists of a garrison cover, field cover, blouse, trousers, name tapes and sewing, is \$89.15.

Marines are required to have one set of the MCCUU by Oct. 1, 2004. The minimum requirement for the camouflage utility uniform will decrease annually by one set, while the minimum requirement for the MCCUU will increase by one set until the camouflage utility uniform is phased out by Oct. 1, 2006.



Maj. Gen. Jon A. Gallinetti

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SMP, Soberfest '04 celebrate Alcohol Awareness Month

Story by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The Single Marine Program kicked off the month of April in celebration of Alcohol Awareness Month with Soberfest '04 here April 2-4.

The Soberfest '04 name may be new to many, but the campaign it supports is not, as it recognizes National Alcohol-Free Weekend which takes place the first weekend of April every year, according to Alisa Hertzler, SMP coordinator. Alcohol-Free Weekend is designed to raise public awareness about the use of alcohol and how it may be affecting individuals, families and businesses.

"(Alcohol-Free Weekend) has been done in the past (here), but we wanted to give it a new twist," Hertzler said.

The festivities began with a late night Mud Match at the Sports Complex beginning at 10 p.m. and immediately followed with a basketball tournament beginning at midnight and ending at 7 a.m. With a little break during the day, the weekend concluded with volunteers helping the Designated Drivers Association get drunk drivers off the road in the Gaslamp District and Pacific Beach areas of San Diego.

Although difficult to put together as well as getting people to participate as she handed out event flyers throughout the station, Hertzler was up for the challenge knowing that there would be lots of fun.

"It's a challenge getting people to participate, but I am excited with new events this year that will hopefully draw the crowds in, and if it stops people from drinking, at least

Friday night, then it's a success," she said.

Lance Cpl. Anthony Mendoza, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 361, central technical publications librarian, had intentions of being a designated driver for the night, but instead joined the crowd at the Sports Complex so that he could get dirty in the mud match.

"I think the Soberfest is good idea. It tells people that you can do things without alcohol," said the Lombard, Ill., native. "You don't have to be drunk to have fun."

The month of April has been recognized nationally as Alcohol Awareness Month, sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc., since 1987 in an effort to encourage communities to focus on alcoholism and alcohol-related issues, especially on the effects of underage drinking, according to the NCADD Web site.

'Snakes' commanding officer recognized for achieving 3,000 flight hours

Story by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

It was an unexpected moment of recognition for Lt. Col. Robert J. Charette, commanding officer, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323, Marine Aircraft Group 11, as he was presented with a 3,000 flight hours patch and certificate by the Boeing Company at the MAG-11 Headquarters here April 5.

The milestone is not one that many pilots can say they have been able to achieve, according to John Valovich, manager, Customer Support Marine West Military Aircraft and Missile Systems Group, Boeing Company, who presented the award to Charette.

"Some may get one or two patches, but not many get three," said the retired Marine lieutenant colonel to an auditorium filled with VMFA-323 Marines.

Charette said he knew that he had broken the 3,000-flight hour mark in an F/A-18 Hornet, but was surprised of the informal presentation of the award in front of the Marines who helped make it happen.

It was suppose to be just a general meeting between the commanding officer and his Marines to discuss the current situa-

tion with the global war on terrorism and the readiness that needs to be maintained, according to Charette.

"Usually for flight hours awards we typically don't like to

your last (flight), so when it comes to flight hour stuff you are just thankful."

He started flying in 1987 when he attended flight school at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fl.

He served in Desert Storm and flew sorties in Bosnia. After serving with the I Marine Expeditionary Force on the ground in Afghanistan, he transferred to

VMFA-314 upon his return to the states and was deployed on a Western Pacific and Southeast Asia tour when Operation Iraqi Freedom was underway last year.

Charette praised the Marines past and present who keep the Hornet aircraft maintained and the support Boeing has provided for the fleet while making sure servicemembers get recognized as they fly their products and get through various levels of achievement in the field of Naval aviation.

"Boeing builds them, and the Marines work on them," said Charette after accepting the award. "The Boeing and Marine Corps team is just awesome. I have flown this plane in combat and around the world, and it is just a beautiful plane to be flying in not only because of Boeing but the Marines who work on them and keep them going."

'The Boeing and Marine Corps team is just awesome. I have flown this plane in combat and around the world, and it is just a beautiful plane to be flying in not only because of Boeing but the Marines who work on them and keep them going.'
Lt. Col. Robert J. Charette

get a lot of acknowledgement of them because you always take one (flight) at a time," said Charette, a Scranton, Penn., native. "You are only as good as

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CASEVAC injuries are usually of a serious nature, claimed Petty Officer 2nd Class Corey A. Munshower, CASEVAC corpsman, HMM-161.

"We respond to injuries that threaten life, limb or eyesight," the Raleigh, N.C., native explained. "These are considered priority (and) are usually trauma resulting from (improvised explosive devices) or gunshot wounds."

The first step is to determine the severity of the wound and if the injury rates helicopter retrieval, he described. The next step is to determine which of the two types of retrievals is necessary.

"A (medical evacuation) is bringing a casualty from a secured location to a hospital," he declared. "A CASEVAC is lifting someone from the front lines to wherever they need to go to get treatment."

The Army and Marine Corps are working with their specific equipment to perform each of these missions, the 26-year-old noted.

The Army is conducting MEDEVAC missions because their helicopters are set up specifically for those missions.

The Navy corpsmen jump on one of the "Phrogs," which boast two .50 caliber machine guns and are able to land in an unsecured landing zone while protecting itself from enemy attackers to perform CASEVAC missions.

The squadron has had about three pick-ups per day but has seen a rise in the level of wounded Marines due to the recent upheavals in the cities of Al Ramadi, Fallujah and Baghdad.



A group of Marines carry a wounded comrade onto a CH-46E Sea Knight for casualty evacuation in Ramadi, Iraq, April 6. Photo by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

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Marines support troops with donated blood

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

A blood drive was held for the deployed troops in Iraq and Afghanistan April 7 at the Marine Corps Exchange here.

The Naval Blood Mobile arrived Wednesday to draw blood from the civilians and servicemembers who offered their support.

"I highly encourage fellow Marines to donate their blood," said 1st Lt. Thai N. Nguyen, ground logistic branch officer-in-charge, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area. "If we can't be overseas with them, we can show our support here by giving blood."

The whole process takes about 30 minutes. First, a questionnaire must be filled out to ensure that the blood is good enough to be drawn. Then a hemoglobin test simply examines that there are no iron deficiencies present in the blood.

After completing both tests, a medic looks extensively over the questionnaire and asks additional questions to ensure that the patient is able to give blood. Servicemembers who served in the Middle East during Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom are not allowed to give blood for a period of one year.

"Donating blood is something that I've always felt obligated to do," said Cass County, Mich., native Staff Sgt. Jason M. Fair, aviation ordnance, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11. "You need to get over personal hang-ups. It is important that we show our support."

Once the required prerequisites are met, the blood can be drawn. The next process takes about five to 10 minutes. A medical technologist will clean the arm with iodine and sticks a needle in a vein to begin the transfusion.

"We draw about one-eighth of each patient's blood," mentioned Ryan T. McCarty, a medical technologist at Naval Medical Center San Diego. "It basically takes one good experience to show patients how easy it is, and they will keep coming back."

Each pint of blood is good for 45 days and is divided by the Navy Medical Center San Diego Components Department into plasma, fluids and proteins.

These three vital life-saving components of blood can then be used for patients in the San Diego area, for troops serving abroad or it becomes part of the shared Armed Services Blood Program.



Staff Sgt. Jason M. Fair, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, watches as his blood pressure is taken here April 7. Photo by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

"You really don't know how important it is to give blood until you or someone else you love needs it," stated McCarty.

If you or someone you know is interested in donating blood, call Naval Medical Center San Diego at (619) 532-6650.

Miramar Young Marines host boot camp for fellow youths

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The Miramar Young Marines hosted a boot camp here April 2-4 for children wanting to become Young Marines.

"It is basically a mentorship program between the Marine Corps, parents and children," said San Diego native Richard A. Stewart, a volunteer Young Marines drill instructor and former Marine.

Twentyfour kids, ages 8 through 17, arrived at Miramar Friday to set up camp and begin forming day one.

"They come in worried and scarred, but they leave here happy, bragging and motivated," said Oceanside, Calif., native Staff Sgt. Aaron J. Cross, executive officer for the program and production controller, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11.

The official mission of the Young Marines program is to instill the Corps' values of honor, courage and commitment and to impact America's future by providing a leadership program that fosters high-quality citizens within the communities.

"The Young Marines program is based off all of the Marine Corps traits," explained Cross. "We don't do hand-to-hand combat or deal with live ammunition, but we mirror the Marine Corps."

During the three forming days, the recruits completed an initial strength test and physical fitness test just like the recruits at Marine Corps Recruit Depots Parris Island and San Diego. The future Young Marines ran 1.5 miles for the IST and three miles for the PFT. Pull-ups, crunches, push-ups, a 300m dash and other events were also performed.

For disciplinary purposes, a recruit can also receive "behavioral modification" which is comparable to incentive training. A recruit will have to perform a series of exercises for a certain period of time.

"My favorite part of the weekend was doing push-ups," commented 8-year-old Taylor Lagman. "I found out how strong I am."

Besides individual physical fitness, recruits learned drill movements such as "left face" and "about face."

"Drill is our main source of discipline,"

said Stewart.

When a drill instructor roared out a command, the recruits shouted back a ditty. If an instructor shouted "About face!" the recruits replied, "Trace the 'C'" in order to remember the movement.

"The drills were really repetitive," said 15-year-old Courtney Higby. "They do teach you discipline though. I had very little before I joined, but now I have more respect for myself."

The recruits also participated in various group activities to enhance teamwork.

"The highlight of boot camp was making houses. We all had to hold a push-up and each person had to go underneath us," said 14-year-old Mykal Byrd. "I figured out that I could do more than I thought I could do."

The future Young Marines went through an obstacle course where they had to work together to accomplish the task at hand.

"They all pulled together to get the job done," mentioned Mineral, Texas, native Javier J. Samaniego, volunteer for the Miramar Young Marines.

During the course, a drill instructor would yell, "We're all one unit, right?" and the recruits would reply with a loud and motivated, "Yes, sir!"

Manners and respect are also two principles regarded with utmost importance. When talking, each child must refer to them self as "this recruit" and to each adult and instructor, "sir" or "ma'am."

One mother commented that when she brought her daughter home after the experience, she called her ma'am.

"It's a good program that helps today's youth deal with peer pressure and other issues by increasing their self-esteem and confidence," said Sheba D. Escarsega, mother of a Young Marine and Conway, S.C., native. "They find their place here. I saw a positive change in my son since he first joined the program."

For children wishing to improve themselves, the Young Marines program will undoubtedly provide the essential tools.

"The Young Marines is not a program to

See YOUNG, page 11

Marines graduate from Combat Water Safety course

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Three Marines proved they have enough strength and stamina to graduate the Combat Water Safety Swimmers course here April 7.

The course took place at the Combat Water Survival Training Facility here and trained hopeful devil dogs "to be American Red Cross certified life guards," said Sgt. Stephan R. Crahan, chief instructor of Marine Combat Water Survival Training.

Pre-screening for the eight-day course took place March 26, and six out of the 22 Marines met the minimum requirements for consideration to attend the CWSS course.

"It is a very vigorous course," said Crahan, a San Diego native. "Out of the Marines who do qualify, we will have about two-thirds who will get dropped."

In order to be considered for the course, Marines had to complete a 500-meter swim in less than 13 minutes, a 50-meter life-saving swim with a 10-pound brick, a 25-meter underwater swim and retrieval of a 10-pound weight from the bottom of the pool.

"To some students the course can be extremely brutal. It is designed to push students to their maximum abilities and to give them confidence in the water," said Ryan N. Maus, primary CWSS instructor and San Diego native. "After completing this course, students should be able to handle themselves in any aquatic situation."



A Marine with full combat gear swims laps in the pool during the eight-day Combat Water Safety Swimmers course. Upon completion, they become their unit's safety swimmer. Photo by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

Any water survival-qualified Marine (waiverable to combat water survival, first class) looking for a challenge can try out for the course, regardless of rank.

"I saw my instructors at the pool in boot camp, and I knew that I wanted to do the same thing," said Cpl. Jeremiah C. Vera, Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38 switchboard operator and Fairfield, Calif., native.

During the tough training days, Marines were evaluated on lifesaving rescues, the proper execution of strokes and their aquatic confidence skills. In addition, Marines must swim 500 meters in under 11 minutes and pass all of the written exams. Devil dogs also become American Red Cross Community First Aid and CPR certified.

"It is harder to become a lifeguard in the Marine Corps than in the civilian world," explained Crahan. "Here you have to pass all of the requirements with gear and cammies. Out there you do it with your swim trunks on."

On the final day of training, Marines had to swim 25 meters with their hands

tied behind their backs and then another time with their feet tied up.

The Marines who passed the challenges of the CWSS course automatically become their unit's safety swimmer.

"They will lead any of the aquatic activities that their unit is involved in," expressed Crahan.

These devil dogs are now qualified to go on to the vigorous three-week MCIWS course in Coronado.

"I definitely plan on going to the MCIWS course," stated Vera. "This CWSS course has already given me more confidence in the water."

If a Marine graduates from the MCIWS course, they can instruct and qualify Marines at Combat Water Survival Level 4 through the CWSS level.

The CWSS courses are conducted each quarter. For more information, contact the Combat Water Survival Training Facility at 577-7918.



Not only did the Marines have to prove themselves in the water, but out of it as well. Here, Marines hold up their rifles and do motivating physical training. Mental and physical toughness were a crucial part of the course. Photo by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones



Corey Money, a 9-year-old olympian, gives his all as he throws the same size rock as his bigger peers at this year's Youth Olympics held at Mills Park. *Photo by Cpl. Kristen L. Tull*



A Marine assists Adrian Gonzales, a 5-year-old olympian, with the disk throw during this year's Youth Olympics. *Photo by Cpl. Kristen L. Tull*



Marco Buelna, a 7-year-old olympian, takes his best jump during the long jump event at this year's Youth Olympics held at Mills Park. *Photo by Cpl. Kristen L. Tull*

Miramar hosts Youth Olympics

Story by Cpl. Kristen L. Tull

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Mills Park here became the stadium for this year's Youth Olympics. Events such as the shot put, football throw and a running long jump gave children a chance to show off their skills in hopes of winning a medal.

With spring break in full bloom and April being the Month of the Military Child, this gave olympic hopefuls an opportunity to stay active and learn about different sports.

"The children get a well-rounded view of many different sports which helps them develop themselves mentally and physically," said Ron Hymas, sports director for youth programs here. "This teaches them motor skills, especially things like the dribble, the discus and the running long jump. Anything they wouldn't normally do helps their fine motor skills."

The children worked on their individual skills but also actively cheered their peers on. They were required to participate in all events, but they still had their favorites.

"I'm just trying to do some fun sports like throwing the football for the highest score," said Marco Buelna, a 7-year-old olympian.

Marco said he is the best at football but is looking forward to participating in soccer as well.

"I get to do all the sports I like, and I can try to win a medal to make my parents proud," said Keith Ramirez, an 8-

year-old olympian.

Many parents, such as Keith's, came out to support their children in the olympic events.

"I think it's good because it keeps them busy, active and out of trouble," said Keith's mother, Celeste. "They get to practice all their sports and meet other kids."

The children rotated from one event station to the other and were divided by age groups.

"I especially liked how organized each event was and how they have them divided into age groups so it's fair to all of the children," said Celeste.

Volunteers were at every station teaching the children how to play each sport and making sure things ran as smooth as possible.

"I received notice of this by e-mail," said Cpl. Brian Thompson, air traffic controller here. "I think I was one of the first to volunteer."

Thompson has a 10-year-old brother which compelled him to lend a hand for this event.

"I really like coming out here and helping out the kids," said Thompson. "It's been awesome. I'm having a great time laughing, and I think I'm sweating more than they are."

By volunteering, Marines such as Thompson not only have a good time, but also are given the opportunity to make an impact on all of the children participating.

"They go into the commissary or the exchange or something and these kids will see them, and if they've

introduced themselves and built some kind of rapport, they can wave and tell their parents that a Marine helped them out at the olympics," said Hymas.

The children had a great time, and Hymas said the event turned out much better than he had expected.

"The Marines really made this happen. It was awesome," said Hymas.

Miramar hosts women's basketball championship

Story by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

It had been 12 years since the Army last lost an Armed Forces Women's Basketball Championship game before the Air Force beat them in the final game of this year's tournament, 81-74, at the Semper Fit Center here April 9.

The round-robin tournament began April 4 with teams from the Marine Corps, Navy, Army and Air Force playing six games each. The team with the best record overall by the end of the tournament would be crowned this year's champion. If there were a tie in overall records, then point differential between the two tied teams would determine the winner of the tournament.

The Army had gone unbeaten in every tournament since 1992 when they won their first championship. Every tournament since then, the Army has been the most dominant and was once again the team to beat going into this year's tournament.

Finding a weakness in the Army team was in the game plan set by opposing team coaches and service commanders, especially for the Marines who have gone winless in the last few years.

"The Army has to go down," said Col. P.C. Christian, chief of staff, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area, as he congratulated the women who made the Marine team at the MCABWA headquarters here days before the tournament started.

The Air Force felt they had the best chance to take the title as they were 4-1 going into the final game of the tournament. Their only loss was against the Army earlier in the week by a score of 64-61.

"We have played well in the past," said Thomas Highsmith, Air Force assistant coach and Fayetteville, N.C., native. "We are starting to gel real well together. That's what you want in a tournament is to gel at the right time and that is what we are doing right now."

Because of the possibility of the teams having tying

records, the earlier game between the two teams would fall into play, meaning the Air Force had to win the game by at least four points to win the tournament.

"It's the first time in a long time that we have had the chance to play for first place on the last day of the tournament," said Highsmith before the start of the game. "We are going to give it our all and have fun."

The Air Force came out playing aggressively against the Army by getting out in front with a 13-2 lead early in the first half of the game. Army player Evetta Crawford, who finished with 22 points, had three 3-pointers and 15 points to help Army pull ahead of Air Force by one point to end the first half, 41-40.

Army's Andreia Hinston scored 20 of her game-high 28 points for the game during the second half, but it was not quite enough during the final minutes of the game as the Air Force stuck to the game plan by playing tough defense and kept the offense going with Naomi Mobley scoring 27 points for the game.

The one game the Marines had a chance to win was during the second game against the Army, but lost in the closing minutes, 65-60.

It was disappointing for both Marine players and coaches to go winless for yet another year. Despite not having any star players who could help get the team's first win, nothing can be said about any lack of effort the Marines put forth throughout the tournament, according to James Stewart, Marines head coach.

"I feel good about the effort they put out," said the Baltimore native. "The talent level is an issue and always has been an issue with us. We are competing but we are not at that level."

The Navy fared well in the tournament by beating the Marines twice in the tournament to finish with a 2-4 record.

An all-tournament team was announced at the conclusion of the tournament along with a 12-member All-Star Service Team that will remain here to practice for the up-



Marine guard Nicholette Bolte, attempts a shot in a game against the Navy during the 2004 Armed Forces Women's Basketball Championship at the Semper Fit Center here April 4-9. Photo by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

coming Nationals Tournament to be held in Las Vegas April 21-25. The team members selected for the all-star team included four players each from the Army, Navy and Air Force. There were no Marine players selected for this year's team.



Marines head coach James Stewart tries to get his team back into the game against the Navy during a timeout April 9. Photo by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

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 the chaplain's office for details.
- ◆ Marriage: Call the chaplain for details at least six months before wedding.
- ◆ Instruction in the Catholic faith (RCIA). Call the 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. Young Adults Fellowship at 5:30 p.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.



Miramar Station Theater closed for renovations

The Miramar Station Auditorium/Movie Theater is scheduled to re-open its doors this summer following the completion of renovations. Station patrons can expect a grand opening celebration mid-June.

Renovations include new carpeting, tile and seating, as well as installation of an air conditioning and heating system, a fire safety system and a new roof.

Identity theft

To defend yourself against identity theft and to protect yourself from becoming a victim of identity theft during extended absences or deployments, visit Miramar's Legal Assistance Office or call 577-1656.

Walk-in clients can come in on a first-come, first-serve basis on Mondays and Wednesdays from 8 to 11 a.m. You may also visit your station Financial Management Office for further assistance or call 577-6980.

For extensive information and educational materials on identity theft visit online at www.consumer.gov/idtheft and at www.ftc.gov.



For information on
deployed 3rd MAW Marines
and Sailors, call the
Dictaphone at
1-877-616-8762.
For more information, call
577-7397/7294.

Online dental

Branch Dental Clinic Miramar has created an online dental appointment system in order to help ensure active duty Marines and Sailors receive the best access to care with increased personal readiness.

To access the electronic appointment system, log on to www.miramar.usmc.mil and click on the site index. Click on Dental, then click on the toothbrush icon to make an appointment.

After filling out the information blanks and submitting the request, Dental will contact you with your scheduled appointment.

Miramar circus day

The Culpepper and Merriweather Circus is coming to Miramar May 2.

The circus will take place south of the Commissary, and show times are 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Tickets are available at the Entertainment Office, building 2524, in advance for the cost of \$6 for adults and \$4 for children. Tickets purchased the day of the circus will be \$7 for adults and \$5 for children.

For coupons and more information visit the Culpepper and Merriweather Circus online at www.cmcircus.com.

Youth soccer

Miramar's Youth and Teen Center extended late registration for Miramar Youth Sports Soccer through April 30 for boys and girls ages four through 13.

The registration fee is \$45 and includes individual and team pictures, individual trophies, game jerseys, shorts and socks. The event is open to all children with base access in Miramar housing areas.

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

Alcohol meetings

Open discussion Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are now taking place at the Marine Corps Community Services Counseling Center, building 2274, weekdays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

The meetings are open to all active duty personnel, retirees, family members and Department of Defense personnel.

For more information call 577-7285.

Book signing

The Miramar Exchange is hosting author John J. Gobbell's book signing today from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Jazz on the Green

The Sandtrap Bar and Grill is hosting Jazz on the Green featuring live jazz every Friday from 6 to 10 p.m.

The outdoor grill will serve chicken, salmon or steak for \$15.95, which includes a salad and dessert.

Children's meals will be available, and the event also features a full bar with drink specials.

Check writing

The MCCS Counseling Center is providing classes on the fundamentals of check writing in personal finance on Thursdays starting April 22 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the center, building 2274.

Seating is limited.

For more information or to reserve a seat call 577-9802.

Tackle football

Tryouts for the Miramar Tackle Football Team will be held Monday through April 30 at Mills Park from 5 to 7 a.m.

A command authorization form is required to participate.

Forms will be given out at the tryouts. Contact the Semper Fit Sports Office at 577-1202 for more information.

Aerobathon

There will be an aerobathon Thursday from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Mills Park.

Three moderate to high intensity aerobic sessions will be followed by 20 minutes of Butts and Guts.

For more information call 577-4669 or visit www.mccsmiramar.com.

SMP meeting

Marines are invited to attend a Single Marine Program planning meeting Wednesday at 3 p.m. in the Reserve Support Unit Auditorium.

For more information visit online at www.mccsmiramar.com.

Bench Press Xtreme

The Main Gym is hosting Bench Press Xtreme Wednesday with weigh-ins starting at 5 p.m.

The event is open to men and women. For more information call 577-4129.

VISIT,
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major spent with the Marines was validation of a job well done.

"Both speeches were motivating and informative," said the San Diego native. "It shows me that if it's safe enough for our top two Marine Corps leaders to visit us out here, then we're doing our jobs right."

Estrada encouraged the Marines to continue fighting the good fight, and the outcome will be a positive one.

"Years from now, when this is all over with, you are going to tell your children and grandchildren that you played a significant part in history," he said. "The world has become a safer and better place because of each and every one of your efforts."

PRESIDENT,
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nation into making the world a better place, and that's exactly what we're doing.

"My message today to those in Iraq is: we'll stay the course; we'll complete the job. My message to our troops is: we will stay the course and complete the job, and you'll have what you need ... My message to the loved ones who are worried about their sons,

daughters, husbands, wives, is: you're loved one is performing a noble service for the cause of freedom and peace."

President Bush told the American public he was looking forward to the upcoming re-election campaign and sharing his plan for the war on terror with the people.

"I don't plan on losing my job," he said confidently. "... One of the things that's very important ... as far as I'm concerned, is to never allow our youngsters to die in vain. And I've made that pledge to their parents. Withdrawing from the battlefield of Iraq would be just that, and it's not going to happen under my watch. The American people may decide to change (presidents) – that's democracy. I don't think so, and I look forward to making my case. I'm looking forward to this campaign."

He ended his speech saying he felt confident in the direction the nation was heading and in the outcome in the situation in Iraq.

"I feel strongly about what we're doing," he said. "I feel strongly that the course this administration has taken will make America more secure and the world more free, and therefore, the world more peaceful."

"It's a conviction that's deep in my soul. And I will say it as best as I possibly can to the American people," he added. "One

thing is for certain, though, about me – and the world has learned this – when I say something, I mean it. And the credibility of the United States is incredibly important for keeping world peace and freedom."

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Aside from the obvious difficulties resulting from enemy fire, there are inherent problems associated with the missions, Munshower stated. Stress and miscommunication add to these problems.

"Sometimes people are stressed and they don't see everything or (don't) react correctly," he said. "Most times, my initial reaction is to wonder if everything the initial care providers passed to me was correct."

Sometimes, the patient's friends and brothers-in-arms compound problems by not letting go, he added.

"It's tough. You'll see a huge group of guys carry someone onto the helicopter," he revealed. "They are just trying to help, but you have to be stern and tell them they need to leave. At the same time, you have to have compassion and realize that the person is their brother."

These inevitable problems can be dealt with and things will hopefully turn out for the best, claimed Miller. The crew works hard to protect their corpsmen and the corpsmen work hard to save the Marines, he added.

"The other day a crew picked up a patient that they revived three times," the 28-year-old said. "It's rewarding to save a life. It's our job and why we're here."

Munshower agreed this is the only reward he needs.

"Every time we find out a patient is okay, it's the best reward," he said. "Sometimes you don't find out, but when you do, it's the best we can ask for."

YOUNG,
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mold these kids into lean, mean fighting machines, but into positive members of society," said Samaniego, a detective at the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and former Marine infantryman.

The Young Marine recruits will continue their basic training at Camp Elliot each Saturday for the next three months. The future Young Marines will graduate June 5.

