



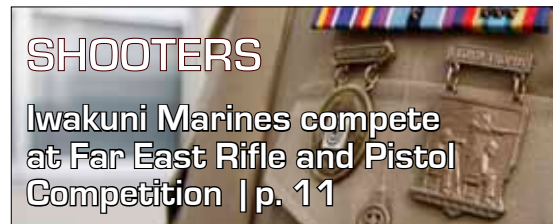
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THE IWAKUNI APPROACH

Issue No. 5, Vol. 3 | Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan

Cobra Gold 2010: Improving multinational interoperability

LANCE CPL. SALVADOR MORENO
IWAKUNI APPROACH STAFF

KORAT ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE BASE, Thailand—Marines and sailors aboard Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni executed orders Jan. 22 to Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, to take part in exercise Cobra Gold 2010, an exercise demonstrating joint and multinational capabilities and improving interoperability between the United States and Thailand.

The exercise was scheduled to commence Feb. 1. However, Marines and sailors arrived early to set up equipment, schedule flight plans, situate missions and organize units.

Cobra Gold 2010 is a regularly scheduled joint/combined exercise in the continuing series of U.S.-Thai military exercises designed to ensure regional peace and strengthen the ability of the Royal Thai Armed Forces to de-

fend Thailand or respond to regional contingencies.

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 115, Marine Aircraft Group 12, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12 and Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242 are all participating in the month-long exercise as well as units from other bases around the world.

To keep VMFA-115 and VMFA(AW)-242 in the air and operable, MAG-12 and MALS-12 Marines have come to aid with the mission.

“There are a lot of different shops that need to work together here to keep the aircraft up and running,” said Cpl. Brent Medina, an ordnance technician for VMFA-115. “We rely on each other for general tasks.”

The training demonstrates U.S. forces’ commitment to peace and



SEE **COBRA GOLD** ON PAGE 3

FEATURE



LANCE CPL. SALVADOR MORENO

A view of the the gallery surrounding the inner courtyard of the sanctuary of the Prasat Phimai shows the false windows adorned with stone balustrades known as “lukmahuat” while the inner walls have true windows. The Marines were allowed to walk through the ruins and take photographs while being taught the history of the Prasat Phimai by a tour guide during a Single Marine Program trip Jan 23. Read the full story on pages 6-7.

Cable access good source for information

LANCE CPL. JENNIFER J. PIRANTE
IWAKUNI APPROACH STAFF

There are numerous ways to access information about news and events aboard the station, but cable access allows service members and their families to receive all of them using one source.

NTT Communications, located on the second floor of the Marine Corps Exchange here, offers a MegaPort Intelligent Outlet that allows a hook up to a personal computer, television or radio to receive Iwakuni-specific cable networks.

The MPO cable modem, equipped with an ethernet cable outlet and two coaxial antenna prongs, is a personal modem registered to

SEE **CABLE** ON PAGE 3

Japanese, American forces improve interoperability during Keen Edge

LANCE CPL. CLAUDIO A. MARTINEZ
IWAKUNI APPROACH STAFF

Japanese and American military forces all over Japan brought the weeklong command post exercise known as Keen Edge to a close Jan. 27.

Senior station officials alongside members of the Japanese Self Defense Force here participated in the annual exercise designed to measure and improve the combat readiness and interoperability of U.S. and JSDF forces in defense of Japan against any threat.

“The main focus (of this exercise) is for us to be able to communicate better jointly so we can come up with a coordinated response to all incidents within our cluster,” said Andrew Samuels, Base Cluster 4 station anti-terrorism officer.

In case of an attack, Japan is split into a base cluster program assigning different re-

“I think (Keen Edge) is a very good exercise for U.S. and Japanese forces to realize mutual needs.”

Maj. Kiyoshi Nakahara
Japan Ground Self-Defense Force
Middle Army headquarters commander

gions of the country to different commanders within those regions.

Col. Michael A. O’Halloran, station commanding officer, along with senior station officials and base cluster JSDF officials, are responsible for the defense of Cluster 4, the area from Shimonoseki to Osaka.

Cluster 4 includes MCAS Iwakuni, U.S. Army Hiro Ammunition Depot, U.S. Army Kure pier number 6, Akizuki Ammunition Depot and the U.S. Army Kawakami Ammunition Depot.

Various scenarios ranging from breaches of defense lines to ballistic missile and terrorist attacks were played out as part of Keen Edge.

Samuels said in between scenarios he was able to have short professional military educational classes in which both American and Japanese officials could learn how each other operated.

“(As a result of the exercise) we are better able to coordinate a response because we are here in person. We can train, teach each other, coordinate, and we can go through the motions ... here together,” said Samuels. “They can better understand how we are trying to do

SEE **KEEN EDGE** ON PAGE 3



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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

'The foundation of the Father'

LT. D. ANTHONY BAKER
MWSS-171 CHAPLAIN

The big day is finally here. When the young boy walks into the kitchen, he finds his mother busily working at various chores.

He notices a box on the table. It is absent a bow and not wrapped in anything in particular, but he knows that it is for him: today is his birthday. He picks it up and it is much, much lighter than he expects. You see, a few weeks earlier he declared to his mom that he wanted a baseball, bat and a glove on his special day.

His examination of the box catches the attention of his mother who tells him to put it down; he could open it later that night. Anxiously, he waits all day, and when the moment finally comes, he opens the box to find that he got what he asked for, but not in the way that he expects. Instead of an actual baseball, bat and glove that he could play with outside, a picture of a baseball, bat and a glove lies in the box instead. He is naturally and understandably disappointed and heartbroken, but that is all that his family thought to give him and could afford. He reaches into the box, takes the picture out and goes to his room to hang it on the wall.

I have heard my father tell that story a number of times in my life. My dad doesn't tell that story to get sympathy or even an "awwww" out of me; he knows me too well. I think he brings that story up to remind me just how far we have come as a family.

You see, my dad grew up in a godless household that was literally dirt poor. His family would move in the middle of the night just to avoid creditors and

collection agencies coming to collect money that his family didn't have. Items of comfort, affection or even love were seldom experienced in that house. It was simply enough to have food on the table and a roof over their head, but neither of those items were in great supply or quality. After high school, my dad enlisted in the military as an E-1. He would go on to serve 30 years in the military, and he rose to the rank of E-9 and earned a bachelor's degree over that time period. He, of course, picked up a wife and a couple of kids along the way, which is where I come into the picture.

When I think about my dad's life, career and the tremendous adversity he has overcome to accomplish what he has, I can't help but acknowledge the fact that the foundation my dad laid for me has allowed me opportunities to become the person I am today. My dad did not have the opportunity to go to college as a young adult, but I did because he gave me the chance. My dad didn't even have the option to play organized sports growing up, but I participated in seven different sports as a youth. Even more than that, my dad taught me work ethic, morals and values, determination; he taught me to never give up, no matter what. The major reason I am the person that I am is because of the foundation that was laid for me by him.

So I will ask the simple question, "What type of foundation are you laying for your family?" Within a parent lies the opportunity to change the entire course of history for future generations in their family, for better or for worse. The reason that my three boys live in a home with love,

affection and provision is because I continue to build upon the foundation that my father laid for me.

If you came from a troubled household where your parents screamed at each other regularly, called you "stupid" or "dumb," abused you, gave you little or no attention, or made you feel worthless, you really have two options as you look ahead. You can either change the course of your family's history by starting a new path or you continue to build upon the negative foundation laid for you. You alter your family direction by making a decision in your heart to change and then actually doing it. Shame on you though if you don't like the way your parents mistreated you growing up yet you find that you are saying and doing the exact same things your parents did to you.

If you are single and unmarried without children, you can start building your family's foundation right now. Spend time educating yourself, learning new skills and saving money. Think about it. Does drinking, playing video games for hours on end and spending your evenings researching useless facts on the Internet benefit you or your future family at all? I think we all agree that the answer is no.

If you are married and/or have children, I encourage you to set your children, grandchildren and the rest of your future generations up for success. Give them the legacy of a good family name that stands for honesty, integrity and godly values. Strong character and moral fiber isn't ingrained in a person by luck or at birth. These things are taught by those closest to the individual and forged over time. When you give your family a strong foundation, who they can become and what they can accomplish for good is unimaginable. Take care and God bless.

Marine Corps History and Heritage

Feb. 6, 1968: Two reduced Marine battalions, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines with two companies, and 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines with three, recaptured Hue's hospital, jail, and provincial headquarters. It would take three more weeks of intense house-to-house fighting, and nearly 1,000 Marines killed and wounded, before the imperial city was secured.



Machine gunner Pfc. Dominick J. Carango, Company H, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, provides covering fire for advancing troops of his company with his M60 machine gun in the Hue street fighting. His assistant, with bandoliers of 7.62 mm ammunition rounds wrapped around him, crouches beside him.

Iwakuni Marines land in Thailand for Cobra Gold

COBRA GOLD FROM PAGE 1

stability in the Pacific region.

"The Marine Corps wants to maintain a forward presence of our fighter attack aircraft in the Far East to defend Japan and maintain alliance with Japan and the Far East," said Capt. Roy Nicka, pilot training officer for VMFA-115.

The exercise will focus on operational readiness and bilateral interoperability in areas such as tactics, equipment and logistics support.

"We are going to fly with the Royal Thai Air Force to build that relationship with us and one of the U.S. allies, that being Thailand," said Nicka.

It's important to do it with another country that is an ally because it proves that the U.S. can operate with them and show they can conduct preflight planning, briefing as a cohesive package, executing the mission as planned and debriefing to get the lessons learned, he added.

Cobra Gold 2010 is not only an air exercise. Units from Okinawa, Japan, are joining the exercise to provide the ground combat element of the exercise as well as helicopters, C-130s and other various equipment.

"Cobra Gold 2010 is really showing it's not just us as the Marine Corps operating, but it's us as allies in the Far East and South East Asia," said Nicka.

Cable beneficial to station community

CABLE FROM PAGE 1

service members and civilians for individual access to Internet, cable and radio.

If the coaxial cable is hooked up to the back of a compatible stereo system, listeners can access station cable FM radio channels such as National Public Radio.

These channels cannot be accessed through something like a car stereo or a clock radio, said Staff Sgt. Dustin A. Dunk, AFN operations chief.

"You have to have an FM radio with the ability to use a coaxial antenna," he said. The station cable FM radio offers 13 channels which broadcast news, sports, rock music and country music, as well as a local Japanese radio station based in Hiroshima.

Those who don't own a stereo system that is compatible with a coaxial antenna can still hook their television to the cable modem to access the radio stations.

Between songs, listeners will be able to hear announcements about upcoming local news and events.

"You're still going to hear spots about what's going on around the air station," said Dunk.

"It's all provided through the base cable system," he said.

A registration fee of \$25 and a monthly fee of \$45 are required in order to apply for the base cable network. The cost of the MPO cable modem is approximately \$80.

For more information about the service, visit <http://www.ntmil.net/>.

R. LEE ERMEY SAYS ...

IF YOU LIVE OFF-BASE, DON'T DISPOSE HOUSEHOLD TRASH ON-BASE!



Anyone who is not residing in on-station living quarters shall use community/neighborhood based trash disposal programs. Trash from off-station residences is not allowed to be disposed of on-station. The following recyclable material from off-station, when properly segregated, may be delivered to the Recycling Center, Bldg. 1322: aluminum cans, steel cans, white paper, newspaper, magazines and cardboard (flat, tape removed).

YOUR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Military families gain access to free, online tutoring

ELAINE WILSON
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS
SERVICE

WASHINGTON – The Defense Department has launched a free, online tutoring service for service members and their families.

The site, <http://www.tutor.com/military>, offers round-the-clock professional tutors who can assist with homework, studying, test preparation, resume writing and more.

Marine Corps and Army families have had access to the program for more than a year. Seeing the value, Defense Department officials decided to expand the service to encompass all service members and their families, officials said.

"Providing 24/7 academic and career support for military families during a time when so many parents have a deployed

spouse has been an important and well-received benefit for Marine Corps and Army families," said Tommy T. Thomas, deputy undersecretary of defense for military community and family policy.

"We are pleased to expand this program to all U.S. military families and provide peace of mind that their children are never alone when it comes to learning – there is always a certified, professional tutor available to help," he said.

Active-duty service members, National Guard and reserve personnel on active duty in a deployed status, Defense Department civilians in a deployed status and their dependents are eligible to participate, officials said. Along with test preparation, the site is open to students of any age – from kindergartners to high school seniors – for one-on-one help in math, sci-

ence, social studies and English. Many of these students, officials said, are making the most of the live, one-on-one help.

"Thanks for having this service when our family is separated at this time due to deployments and training," a 6th grader of a Marine commented. "My father is unable to help one-on-one."

"I really appreciate this," another program participant, a 9th grader, said.

"It really helps me understand my schoolwork. It's going to really help me ace my exams coming up! I am definitely going to use this very often."

Tutor.com's network includes more than 1,800 professional tutors and career specialists who have delivered more than 5 million one-on-one tutoring sessions since 2001, officials said. Each tutor is certified through the site, and all sessions are recorded for quality control.

Command post exercise concludes

KEEN EDGE FROM PAGE 1

business, and I can better understand how they are trying to do business. We see different view points, but we always come up with a happy medium."

Maj. Kiyoshi Nakahara, a Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Middle Army headquarters commander, said while the language barrier was a small problem, it was not something that prevented them from effectively defending their cluster.

"There was no problem," said Nakahara. "I think (Keen Edge) is a very good exercise for U.S. and Japanese forces to realize mutual needs. It's a very important exercise that should continue into the future to improve our working relationship."

BOOT SCOOTIN' ROUNDUP

A live 2-hour radio show featuring the best country music. Kick up your boots 9 - 10 a.m. Mondays - Thursdays on Power 157.5.





PHOTO COURTESY OF IT&T

A wide view of modern-day Himeji atop Himeji Castle. Himeji Castle has been recognized as a world heritage site and is also a trip that is offered by IT&T. IT&T offers train tickets, bus trips, guided tours and reservations.

Explore Japan through IT&T, I&R

CPL. DAN NEGRETE
IWAKUNI APPROACH STAFF

Station residents are encouraged to travel and explore as much as they can while they're stationed overseas.

Information and Referral and Information, Tours and Travel are two great resources service members and their families can use to make the most out of their overseas tour.

Although IT&T and I&R are located inside the same office at the Crossroads Mall, they each provide a different service.

With IT&T, service members can purchase train tickets, bus trips, guided tours and make hotel arrangements.

"Compared to travel agencies out in town, our prices are much cheaper," said Yuji Tanaka, an IT&T representative. "Our bus tours save our customers a lot of money since our buses are owned and operated by MCCS."

Bus tours organized by IT&T include the Tokyo Fun Trip, Space World trip, Universal Studios Japan trip, Kyoto trip, and several other popular destinations.

"At IT&T, we don't only sell tours and tickets, but also give customers additional information regarding their trip," said Tanaka.

Also, IT&T offers a shuttle service to and from the Hiroshima Airport for \$60 per seat.

Information and Referral differs from IT&T in that I&R is not a cash-handling service, said Hiroe K. Ruby, an I&R specialist.

Instead, I&R is a free service offered to the military community for information they may need to get to a certain destination, Ruby said. Their destination doesn't necessarily have to be a paid IT&T trip.

Anyone can speak with an I&R representative to learn more about places to travel in Japan.

"I highly encourage customers if they need any information related to the local community or have something they need to find out, to come by my counter," said Ruby.

Information and Referral can provide station residents with maps, brochures and directions to many local destinations at no charge.

"IT&T and I&R are here to help Marines and sailors go to more places while they're here in Japan," said Tanaka. "We're in the middle between Marines and sailors and the outside Japanese community."

Whether jumping in on a bus tour, buying train tickets, making hotel reservations or simply requesting advice and information on how to travel to a certain place in Japan, IT&T and I&R are here to help service members with all their travel needs.



PHOTO COURTESY OF IT&T

Visitors gaze at the spiral pattern fortification unique to Himeji Castle. Trips to destinations like Himeji Castle can be coordinated through IT&T, and specific information about these landmarks can be obtained at I&R.

Fast Fact: IT&T and I&R are located inside the Crossroads mall, providing separate services.

HAITI UPDATE: MARINES, SAILORS PROVIDE RELIEF, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



CPL. MICHELE WATSON

LEOGANE, Haiti — Staff Sgt. David Charlton, Logistics Chief, Security Cooperation Marine Air Ground Task Force, Africa Partnership Station 10, hands out food to an young Haitian girl. More than 5,000 Haitians have lined up at multiple distribution sites to receive food and water offered by Marines and sailors from the SCMAGTF as they teamed up with Sri Lankan UN workers to help pass out over 10,000 Meals, Ready-to-Eat, Jan. 24-29.



2ND LT. NICOLE TEAT

LEOGANE, Haiti — Staff Sgt. Jeremy Donaldson, amphibious assault vehicle platoon, Security Cooperation Marine Air Ground Task Force, Africa Partnership Station 10, shakes hands with a Haitian boy as he goes to deliver humanitarian assistance to the local community. Marines and sailors with the SCMAGTF teamed up with Sri Lankan United Nations workers to distribute food packages to over 5,000 Haitians, Jan. 24 through 29.



CPL. MICHELE WATSON

LEOGANE, Haiti — Two young Haitian children run back to their families after receiving packages of food, while Marines and Sri Lankan United Nations forces continue to hand out food to a line of waiting nationals. More than 5,000 Haitians have lined up at multiple distribution sites to receive food and water offered by Marines and Sailors from the SCMAGTF as they teamed up with Sri Lankan UN workers to help pass out over 10,000 Meals, Ready-to-Eat, Jan. 24 through 29.

Multinational mission: Marines, UN workers team up to eradicate hunger in Haiti

CPL. MICHELE WATSON
SPECIAL CONTINGENCY
MARINE AIR GROUND TASK
FORCE AFRICA

LEOGANE, Haiti — She was barely three feet tall, clothed only in a diaper and wearing a red ribbon in her hair, but the young Haitian girl walked up with surprising confidence to a Marine, receiving a package of food nearly equal to her in size.

More than 5,000 Haitians have lined up at multiple distribution sites to receive food and water offered by Marines and sailors from Security Cooperation Marine Air Ground Task Force, Africa Partnership Station 10, as they teamed up with Sri Lankan United Nations workers to help pass out over 10,000 Meals, Ready-to-Eat, Jan. 24 through 29.

"I think the relationship between the Sri Lankan UN and U.S Marines is vital to the success of our mission in humanitarian assistance in Haiti," said Gunnery Sgt. James Baum, company gunnery sergeant, Ground Combat Element, SCMAGTF.

The earthquake that hit Haiti left hundreds of thousands of locals homeless and hungry. After picking up 300 boxes of food and 246 jugs of water, the Marines and sailors, along with the UN workers, passed the food out in Carrefour and Leogane to assist the Haitian natives in their recovery.

Together, the group set up security and organized lines for the people to receive the food. "I thought the Sri Lankan

military did an outstanding job working with us," said Baum.

"I was impressed with how efficiently they operated. They had a good routine going and a very good rapport with the people."

Pallets stacked high with boxes of food continue to be delivered to the Beach Landing Site 2, giving the SCMAGTF the opportunity to assist in many more humanitarian operations.

"We are scheduled to receive over 90,000 boxes of food to give to various villages throughout the country," said Baum.

Marines for the SCMAGTF came ashore on Jan. 21 and had previously been surveying the medical treatment capabilities of the local hospitals and clinics while awaiting the delivery of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief supplies for distribution.

"It feels good to be off the ship and assisting those who truly need help," said Cpl. Daniel Lyr-la, a squad leader with the GCE, SCMAGTF.

"I think when the guys get back from their missions, they feel a sense of pride and accomplishment and are looking forward to getting back out there and helping again," he added.

The humanitarian operations ran smoothly, ending with smiles, appreciation, and satisfied stomachs.

The Marines and sailors of the SCMAGTF will continue passing out food, giving them a chance to help out the unfortunate country and lifting the spirits of both the Haitians and Marines.



LANCE CPL. SALVADOR MORENO

Marines weren't the only people to visit the Prasat Phimai; children from local schools around the area toured the ruins as well Jan. 23. After passing through the gallery, the tourists were allowed to walk around the grounds and take photos. The Prasat Phimai was constructed between the 11th and 12th century, and is believed to have been used for the king to prepare for the performance of religious ceremonies.

Cobra Gold Marines explore Thailand's hidden treasures

LANCE CPL. SALVADOR MORENO
IWAKUNI APPROACH STAFF

KORAT ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE BASE, Thailand (January 25, 2010) – Marines aboard Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, participating in exercise Cobra Gold 2010, took part in a Single Marine Program trip to the Prasat Phimai in the Nakhan Ratchasima Province here Jan. 23.

The Prasat Phimai, which is a Mahayana buddhist sanctuary, was constructed between the 11th and 12th century and is believed to have been used for the king to prepare for the performance of religious ceremonies.

Although the exercise didn't commence until Feb. 1, Marines and sailors arrived early to set up equipment as needed. In their spare time, the SMP provided them a chance to experience the local history and culture.

"The SMP will deploy with units if there are at least 300 people going for over three weeks to a location site," said Jay Stovall, SMP coordinator deployment support for Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni.

The Phimai National Museum was featured in the 1995 movie *Mortal Kombat*. The Marines who signed up for the trip had to pay 800 Baht prior to departure. The 800 Baht paid for the round trip as well as a traditional Thai meal at a local establishment near the Phimai National Museum.

"The food there was fantastic," said Sgt. Jonathan Grams, an F/A-18 electrician for Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242. "I've never actually seen anything like that other than on television."

The Phimai Nation Museum was a huge site to explore for the Marines. There was an outer rectangular wall which housed the feature building called the Main Prang.

The Main Prang, which is the most prominent feature of the entire structure, is made of white sandstone. It stands out the most due to its decorations of reliefs of dancing Shiva Ramayana and buddhist figures. The Main Prang was built in the 11th century.

Along with going to see the Phimai National Museum was a stop at the Ban Prasat. The Ban Prasat is an archeological excavation site

as well as a local village in Thailand.

Ban Prasat village is an agricultural community, as are most villages in Thailand. What makes this one stand out above most is the excavation site which has received international awards such as the Pacific Asian Travel Association's Gold award in 1994.

While at the Ban Prasat, Marines were able to observe open excavation sites of skeletons which were hundreds of years old and learn of the local culture.

"I got to see a lot of great stuff," said Sgt. Matthew Orfield, VMFA(AW)-242 ordnanceman. "Not many people get to see this."

The SMP is here to provide recreational support and to improve the quality of life while on deployment. It has already brought exciting cultural experiences to a few select Marines who were fortunate enough to partake.

"I think it's great having the military getting to see all the different places," said Grams. "The Marine Corps with the SMP offers a good way to get Marines out there to see all the world has to offer."



LANCE CPL. SALVADOR MORENO

Marines look down into one of the excavation pits at the Ban Prasat Village. It has received international awards such as the Pacific Asian Travel Association's Gold award in 1994. It is considered a success and pride for all the Thai people.



LANCE CPL. SALVADOR MORENO

Upon moving closer to the Main Prang, Marines were able to get a close up view of the pillars which held the ruins together. The holes in the pillars were used to move the pillars into their current place almost 10 centuries ago. The Prasat Phimai was constructed between the 11th and 12th century.



LANCE CPL. SALVADOR MORENO

A distant view of the Prasat Phimai shows the gallery, which is a long rectangular building surrounding the inner courtyard of the sanctuary. The outer walls of the gallery have false windows adorned with stone balustrades known as "lukmahuat" while the inner walls have true windows. The Marines were allowed to walk through the ruins and take photographs while being taught the history of the Prasat Phimai by a tour guide.



LANCE CPL. SALVADOR MORENO

A close up view of the Main Prang, made of white sandstone, shows the detail of the reliefs of a dancing Shiva Ramayana and buddhist figures. It was built in the late 11th century.

"Not many people get to see this."

Sgt. Matthew Orfield
VMFA(AW)-242 ordnanceman

CORPS NEWS

HIGHLIGHTING MARINES AND SAILORS AROUND THE GLOBE

Marines hit ground with shovels in hand, fortify observation post

LANCE CPL. JAMES W. CLARK
REGIMENTAL COMBAT
TEAM 7

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan — A mounted patrol rolls up a mud path past spools of coiled concertina wire, which are uncurled as the column of vehicles passes and pulls into Observation Post Huskars, in Helmand province, Jan. 14, 2010.

Marines from Alpha and Weapons Companies, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment and attachments from 2nd Combat Engineers Battalion, stand in green short sleeved shirts, cammie trousers and boots painted light brown with mud. Most of the Marines clutch shovels or hold open sandbags, those who don't, man posts and crouch behind M-240 medium machine guns.

The Marines and the Afghan national army soldiers of Alpha Co., 1/6, arrived at the post just days before, taking charge of it in place of 3rd Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment and quickly began reinforcing the defenses and constructing billeting for the incoming troops. Sitting in a freshly-dug mortar pit, Staff Sgt. Nelson A. Adames, a section leader with 81 mm Mortars Platoon, Weapons Co., 1/6, described the first few days at the post.

"When we hit the ground and came out here, it was actually really motivating to see how fast they dug in," said Adames, referring to the practice of building a fortified weapons position for the section's mortar systems. "We had a lot of support and help from everyone out here. The other Marines came out and did more than their part."

Overall the purpose of increasing the number of Marines and Afghan national army soldiers at the observation post is to increase the coalition forces' presence in the area in order to move Marines and soldiers closer to the Afghan people, and in doing so, reduce

the Taliban's control over the region, explained Adames.

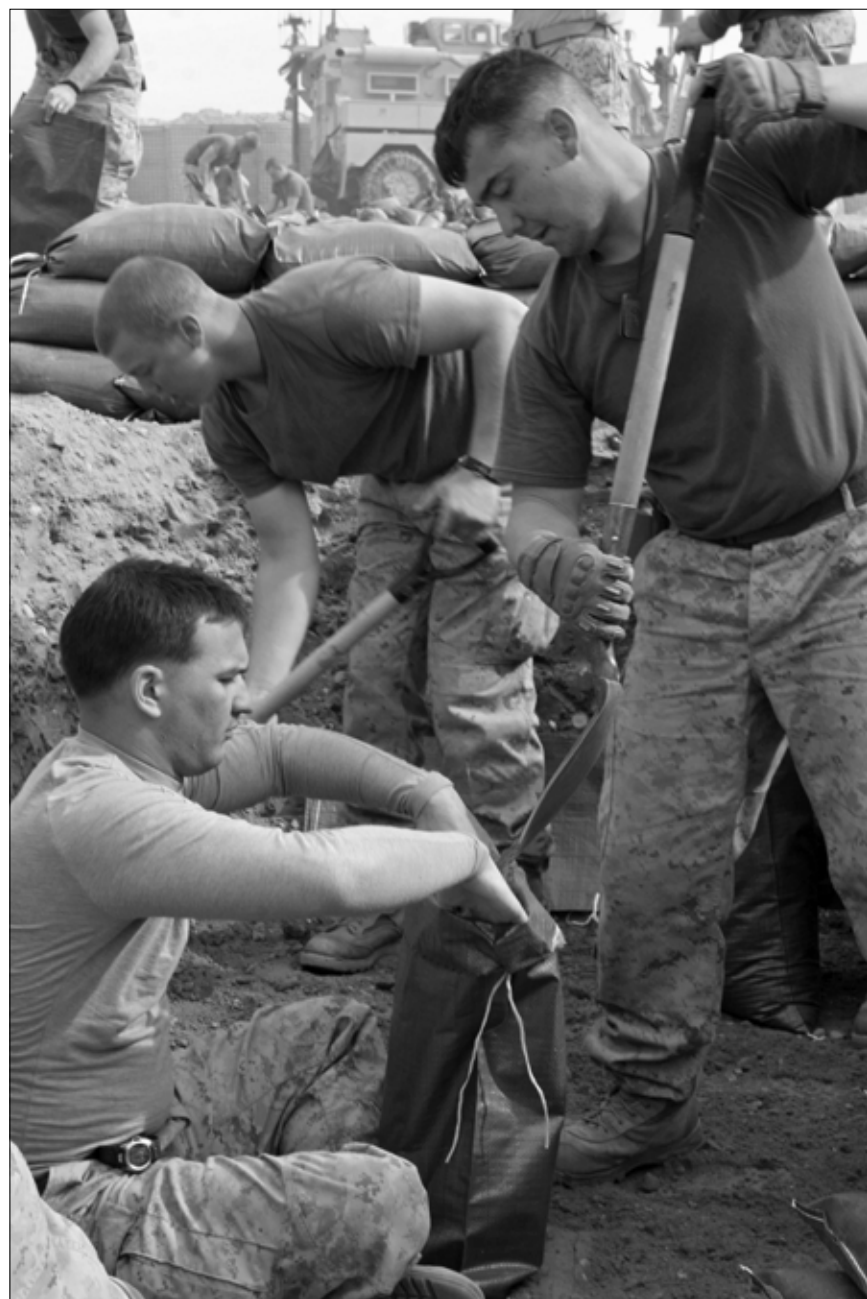
"Although we haven't had any engagements yet, being in theater so far, it's clear to me that these guys will rise to the occasion and do their jobs well," said Adames.

When the Marines from 1/6 first arrived at the observation post, they had only the bare bones of an outpost and quickly set about installing hygiene facilities, a medical center and reinforcing the gun positions, said Lance Cpl. Henry D. Kornegay, an M-249 squad automatic weapon gunner with Alpha Co., 1/6. Although the fortification of positions is a necessity, Kornegay touched on the sense of anxiousness to finally begin combat operations, saying, "Everybody wants to get started, it's why we're here — It's our job."

The outpost will work as a launch pad for future operations in the area, said Staff Sgt. Sean Warren, a platoon sergeant with Alpha Co., 1/6 as he explained the significance of manning Observation Post Huskars.

"We're starting to implement security further west, into the [area of operations]," said Warren, who is originally from Colfax, Calif. "We're about to start patrols in order to give the [Afghan national army] soldiers we're out here with, the chance to get some more experience before larger operations begin."

As the mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles, which pulled in earlier, prepare to leave, a flat boom puts men on their guard, and a second explosion which comes just a few minutes later holds their attention. Out across the flat brown plateau two plumes of smoke rise, and off in the distance helicopters can already be seen as they head towards the impact zone of two improvised-explosive devices. The Marines return to work filling sandbags in earnest, and the vehicles drive back out and down the road. As they leave, they amble past the concertina wire which is pulled back in place barring their return.



LANCE CPL. JAMES W. CLARK

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Marines dig pits, which will serve as their living spaces, and fill sandbags to fortify them out, at Observation Post Huskars in Helmand province, Jan. 14, 2010. The Marines and sailors of Alpha and Weapons Companies, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment and attachments from 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion, have moved deeper into Helmand province in order to limit the Taliban's control over the area, by having a more prominent coalition force presence in the region.



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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Personal Growth CREDO Retreat

The Marine Memorial Chapel will be providing a personal growth retreat from Feb. 25 – 27 for all Marine Corps and Navy active duty, reserve, retired personnel and their families. Army, Air Force and civilian DOD/DoDDS employees and their families are also eligible on a space-available basis. Sign-up by Feb. 23. This retreat is designed to give individuals the opportunity to evaluate their past; think about the present; consider personal and professional progressive steps and goals for the future; as well as explore resources for support. To sign-up or for further details, please contact the Memorial Chapel at 253-3371.

The vaccine is now available for all beneficiaries during normal clinic working hours. It will be administered on a first come first serve basis until all quantities are gone. The season influenza vaccine is also available to all beneficiaries at this time.

Youth & Teens Lego Robotics Club

Club starts Saturday, Feb. 6, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Open to youth ages 10 to 15. Build and program "ROBOTS" that obey your every command! Create thousands of robotic inventions. Interactive Servo Motors make your robot walk and move. For more information, contact the Youth & Teen Center at 253-5549.

Youth & Teens Red & White Dance Party

Slip into your best Red and White attire, dancing shoes and get this party started with the Youth and Teen Center. We will have a live DJ, refreshments, prizes and a chance to vote for the best dress attire. The party will start Feb. 13, 6 – 11:30 p.m. Ages 10 – 12, 6 – 8:30 p.m. Ages 13 – 18, 9 – 11:30 p.m. For more information, contact the Youth & Teen Center at 253-5549.

Youth & Teens Mardi Gras Dance Party

Join the fun! There is no party like a Carnival. There will be music, games, refreshments, beads, masks and trinkets galore! Let's Party! February 20, 6 – 11:30 p.m. Ages 10 – 12, 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. Ages 13 – 18, 9:00 to 11:30 p.m. For more information, contact the Youth & Teen Center at 253-5549.

H1N1 Vaccine

Chapel Services

Roman Catholic

Saturday 4:30-5:15 p.m. Confession
5:30 p.m. Mass
Sunday 8:30 a.m. Mass
9:45 a.m. Religious Education
Tues. – Fri. 11:30 a.m. Weekday Mass
Wednesday 6 p.m. Inquiry Class for adults

Protestant

Saturday 9:30 a.m. Seventh-Day Adventist Sabbath School
11 a.m. Seventh-Day Adventist Divine Worship
Sunday 9:30 a.m. Sunday School, Adult Bible Fellowship
10:30 a.m. Protestant Service
11 a.m. Children's Church
Wednesday 6 p.m. Awana (Bldg. 1104)
6:15 p.m. Adult Bible Study (Capodanno Hall Chapel)

Church of Christ

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Bible Study (small chapel)
10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Latter Day Saints

Weekdays 6:30 a.m. Youth 12-17 Activities

Teen Programs

- High School Meetings (Club – grades 9-12)
- Junior High Meetings (Club JV – grades 7-8)
- HS&JR Bible Studies
- Retreats
- Service Projects
- Missions Trip
- Special Events Volunteer Training & Mentoring
- Parent Support Group

Call at 080-4177-2060 or jletaw@ClubBeyond.org

For information regarding divine services, religious education or any other command religious program or chapel activity, call the Marine Memorial Chapel at 253-3371.

Thomas Keating at 253-3335.

American Red Cross Courses

Upcoming courses for this month: tomorrow: Cat First Aid 1 – 4 p.m. Cost \$40 per person \$55 per couple Thursday: Family First Aid/CPR 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Cost \$20.00 Free to new Parents Feb 13: Dog First Aid 1 – 4 p.m. Cost \$40.00 per person \$55 per Couple Feb 19: Community First Aid 5 – 9 p.m. Cost \$40.00 Feb 25: Red Cross Ready for NEO Evacuation (10 a.m. – noon. Cost FREE. For more information, please call 253-4525.

The Biggest Saver Coupon Contest

Come by Marine and Family Services building room 201 and pick up your coupon packets until April 30, use them along with others available at the commissary to save money off your grocery bill. Save your receipts, put your name and phone number on the back of your receipts and turn them into the Personal Financial Management Office in the Marine and Family Services Building 411, room 201. The person that saves the most money in coupons during the three-month contest will win an hour-long massage. If you have any questions please call the Personal Finance Manager, Bonnie Lewis, at 253-6250.

University of Phoenix Registration

Registration is now open for the on-site MBA program which will begin Feb 15. Registration dead line is Monday. Classes will be held every Monday night from 6-9 p.m. in room 115 Bldg. 411. All UOPX online classes start every Tuesday. For more information, contact

IT&T Service, Snow Days

As long as the expressway is open the Marine Corps Community Service Shuttle Bus service remains the same as normal. If the Expressway is closed, the service will be canceled and 100 percent will be refunded. Customers also need to bring in their luggage three days prior to flight day instead of two for luggage delivery service to the airport. For more information, call 253-4377.

Wood Hobby Shop Temporarily Closed

The Wood Hobby Shop, located on North side, will be closed until further notice. For more information, contact K.C. Rich at 253-5284.

Hornet's Nest Renovations

The Hornet's Nest is currently undergoing renovations scheduled to be completed June 2010. The recreational areas will be under renovation until March 1. The gym area will be closed March 1-June 1. The Cyber Café, located in Building 1345 next to the Wood Hobby Shop, will remain open 24 hours a day seven days a week during the renovations. Single Marine Program trips will continue and can be paid for in the Cyber Café or the Marine Lounge. For more information, contact Jay Stovall at 253-3585.

SAKURA THEATER

Friday, February 5, 2010

7 p.m. Armored (PG-13)
Premiere
10 p.m. Ninja Assassin (R)

4 p.m. Armored (PG-13)

7 p.m. Brothers (R)

Saturday, February 6, 2010

1 p.m. Where the Wild Things Are (PG)
Free Admission
4 p.m. Alvin and the Chipmunks "The Squeakquel" (PG)
7 p.m. The Blind Side (PG-13)
10 p.m. Brothers (R)
Premiere

Monday, February 8, 2010

7 p.m. Old Dogs (PG-13)
Last Showing

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

7 p.m. Ninja Assassin (R)
Last Showing

Wednesday, February 10, 2010

7 p.m. Everybody's Fine (PG-13)
Last Showing

Sunday, February 7, 2010

1 p.m. Amelia (PG)
Free Admission

Thursday, February 11, 2010

7 p.m. Sherlock Holmes (PG-13)

The movie schedule is subject to change. Please check www.mccsiwakuni.com/sakura often for updates, or call the Sakura Theater at 253-5291 for the latest schedule.

General Admission: Ages 12+ are \$2.50/ Ages 6-11 are \$1/ Children ages 5 and under admitted free. For more information, visit www.mccsiwakuni.com or call 253-5291.

STATE OF THE UNION

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA



AIR FORCE STAFF SGT. JOSHUA GARCIA

President Barack Obama gives a speech to a crowd of military personnel and civilians gathered at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, Nov. 12, 2009.

President vows to confront terrorists, succeed in Afghanistan

DONNA MILES
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON – President Barack Obama stressed during his State of the Union address last night the importance of confronting terrorists who threaten the United States and of succeeding in Afghanistan while continuing a responsible military drawdown in Iraq.

Speaking to a joint session of Congress during an address that focused primarily on the economy, the president urged closer cooperation in doing “what it takes to defend our nation and forge a more hopeful future – for America and the world.”

The United States has increased security to disrupt terror plots at home, while continuing to take the fight to the enemy, he said, noting that hundreds of al-Qaida members or affiliates have been captured or killed during the last year alone.

The United States has increased its troop commitment to Afghanistan and is training Afghan security forces so they can begin taking the lead in July 2011, the president said. At that point, he added, “our troops can begin to come home.”

Joined by allies and partners who have increased their own commitments in Afghanistan, Obama said, the United States will strive to help Afghanistan build good governance, reduce corruption and support the rights of all its citizens.

The president acknowledged the challenges to be overcome. “There will be difficult days ahead,” he told Congress. “But I am absolute-

ly confident we will succeed.”

While taking the fight to the terrorists, the United States “is responsibly leaving Iraq to its people,” Obama said. He emphasized that although combat troops will leave Iraq by Aug. 31, the U.S. commitment there will continue.

“We will support the Iraqi government as they hold elections, and continue to partner with the Iraqi people to promote regional peace and prosperity,” he said. “But make no mistake: This war is ending, and all of our troops are coming home.”

In addition to terrorism, Obama recognized what he called “perhaps the greatest danger to the American people” – the threat of nuclear weapons.

He emphasized the importance of international cooperation to keep them from falling into terrorists’ hands, and the need for continued pressure on North Korea and Iran to get them to abandon their nuclear weapons programs.

The president paid tribute to the men and women in uniform who have stood on the front lines around the world protecting U.S. security.

“They have to know that they have our respect, our gratitude and our full support,” he said.

“Just as they must have the resources they need in war, we all have a responsibility to support them when they come home.”

Obama noted resources dedicated to this continued commitment, including increased funding and program improvements at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and a nation-

al commitment to support military families, forged by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden.

In addition to Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Adm. Mike Mullen and the service chiefs, the invitation for this year’s State of the Union address included several military or former military members.

Among those invited to sit with the first lady during the address were:

– Sgts. Kimberly Munley and Mark Todd, civilian police officers at Fort Hood, Texas, whose quick actions are credited with saving soldiers’ lives during the Nov. 5 shooting rampage;

– Army Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Rubin, a twice-wounded soldier from Hunter Army Airfield, Ga., who just returned from his fourth deployment to Iraq and also has served two tours to Afghanistan;

– Army Spc. Scott Vycital, who suffered facial paralysis, deafness and serious post-traumatic stress during combat operations in Iraq, but forged a new career with the Federal Highway Administration after attending a disabled veterans jobs program;

– Janell Kellett, an active volunteer for the Wisconsin Army National Guard, who organized the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team’s family readiness group when her husband, Army Maj. Michael Hanson, deployed to Iraq; and

– Julia Frost, wife of Sgt. Ryan Frost, a Marine stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and a former Marine Corps band member herself.