

Hawaii MARINE

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February 20, 2004

Base Legal wins CAELA Award

Cpl. Monroe F. Seigle
Community Relations Clerk

For the second year in a row, the MCB Hawaii Base Legal Center was awarded the Commandant's Award for Excellence in Legal Assistance for distinguishing itself as the best legal services center in the Marine Corps.

"This award means a lot to us over here at Base Legal," said Capt. Jeffrey S. Dimmig, officer in charge. "This award is a testimony of the enlisted Marines and the hard work they do. They are the ones making everything happen and taking care of the Marines and Sailors."

The Judge Advocate League to legal service centers awards the CAELA annually for superior and quality legal assistance.

Locally, everyday, the Marines at Base Legal assist in wills, powers of attorney, separation and divorce paperwork, along with legal counsel.

"We have a pretty small staff over here at Base Legal," said Dimmig. "We do not have nearly the working staff that bases like Camp Lejeune, N.C., have. These guys do a ton of work and once again, they made it all happen."

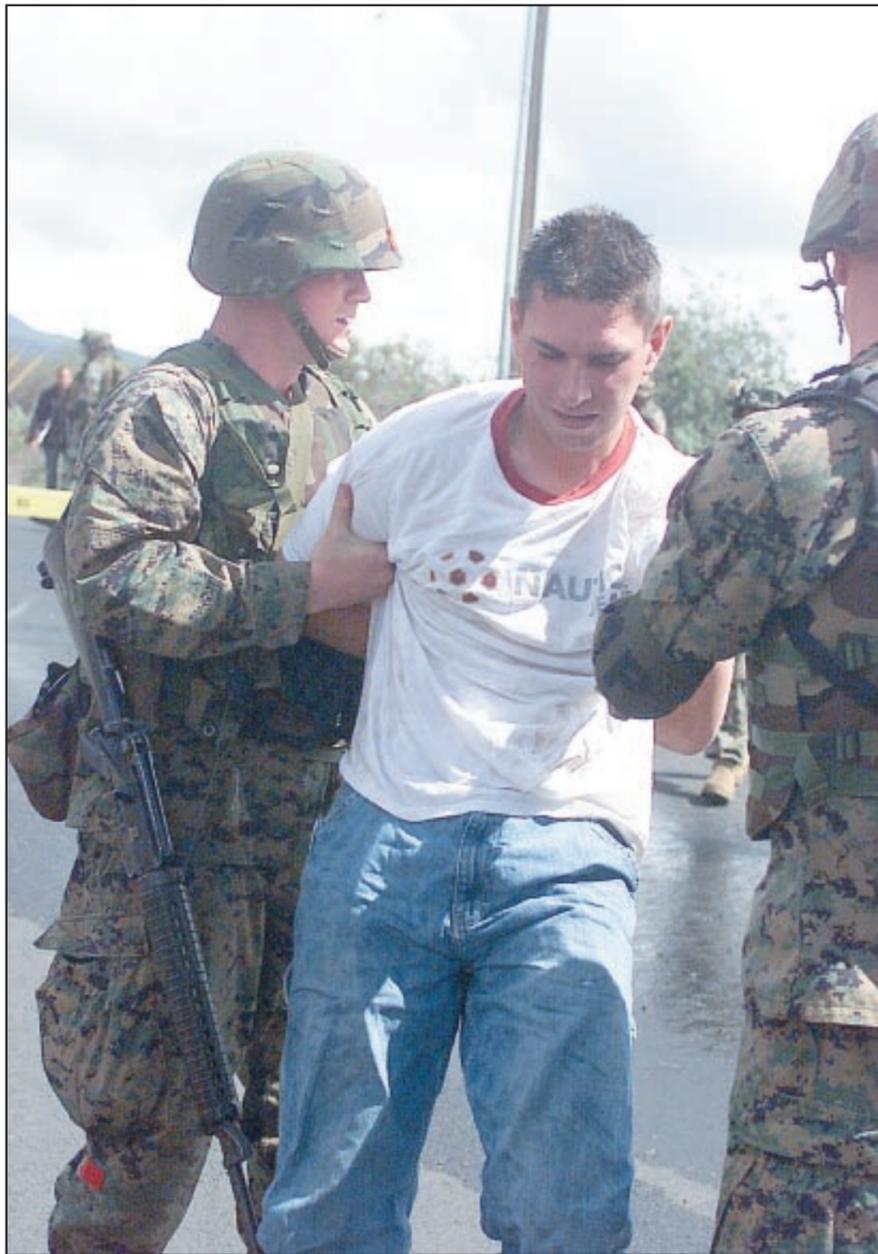
With tax season in full swing, the center is further tasked with the responsibility of providing free tax service and assistance to Marines, Sailors, their families and retirees.

"Most of the service members on this base cannot afford to go out in town and find an attorney, let alone ones that are willing to give free legal advice," said Lance Cpl. David Reinman, the legal assistance noncommissioned officer in charge. "We assist a lot of people, and our hard work has really paid off. It motivates all of us over here to know that we have helped so many people, and have done it to the best of our ability."

Despite obstacles in manpower, the Legal Services Center takes pride in continually providing quality services to its clients.

NEO wraps up HCAx

Lance Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson
Combat Correspondent



Lance Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson

Military police seize hostile Lance Cpl. Justin Whittaker, multichannel communications operator for Headquarters Co., CSSG-3, after he attempts to enter the front gate of the embassy during a Noncombatant Evacuation Operation that was the final portion of the Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise.

POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA — Before the Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise came to a close here, Marines of Combat Service Support Group 3 took part in a Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO). Though Marine Expeditionary Units, or MEUs, generally practice NEO exercises frequently, CSSG-3 Marines could also be confronted with a NEO environment, given today's global tensions.

In the NEO training scenario, the country of Eritrea had deteriorated over time due to interior strife, and U.S. citizens as well as embassy personnel were in grave danger. The Group's mission was to evacuate all personnel, and to protect the embassy and Ambassador Baggett from harm.

First Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, was also on the scene to provide added security around the perimeter. Further, many Marines acted the role of hostile locals and tested the guards' patience to the utmost level during the NEO exercise.

Lance Cpl. Jeffrey S. Ray, a military police with Marine Forces Pacific, demonstrated his ability to think fast and take quick action during the uprising. He ensured the welfare of not only his fellow Marines, but also all the embassy's U.S. citizens inside waiting to be evacuated.

"Before getting out to the NEO site, we were all briefed on the rules of engagement," he said. "We start at the lowest level of force, but of course have to elevate it if the situation should arise."

As the day heated up, so did the tempers of the hostiles as they effectively tested boiling points that could bring the Marines guarding the perimeter to their breaking points. Hostiles tossed

See NEO, A-6

Waterfront Ops responds to rescue

Cpl. Jason E. Miller
Media Chief

When a frantic call for help came through on the morning of Feb. 12 to the bay-watching Sailors of Waterfront Operations aboard MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, the unit was quick to oblige and put a team on the water to assist in any way possible.

The frantic caller claimed a male victim had fallen overboard a 16-foot vessel in Kaneohe Bay, and that the man was in dyer need of rescue. Acting promptly, Waterfront Ops deployed a rescue team to hit Kaneohe Bay and search the area, which was only vaguely described by the caller.

After unsuccessfully scouring the area for many minutes, Waterfront Ops contacted the Federal Fire Department for air support to help track down the victim. With the aid of a helicopter, the victim was spotted, and the Waterfront Ops Sailors moved in to complete the mission.

Once the victim was recovered from the water, it was concluded that the man was suffering from cardiac arrest. Immediately, a Waterfront Ops corpsman began performing CPR on the victim, who at the time of his discovery had likely been in the water for more than 30 minutes.

Unable to revive the victim, the Sailors called in for a medical evacuation helicopter, and the man was taken to a nearby harbor where an ambulance waited to give

him further medical attention.

However, after all the heroic efforts put into the rescue by Waterfront Ops, to give the male victim a fighting chance, he was sadly later pronounced dead at Castle Medical Center in Kailua.

"A lot of people on the base never even hear about Waterfront Ops, until they need a rescue," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Matthew Santos, commanding officer of Waterfront Ops. "We do a lot for the base. We're kind of a jack-of-all-trades, master-of-safety kind of unit."

"I think that the Sailors who were out on the rescue did an absolutely outstanding job with what they had to go off of," added Santos. "They reacted quickly and professionally, and according to the book."

MCCS One Source is one stop for military community

Edward Hanlon V
MCCS Public Relations

Picture the next time you PCS, that is, make a permanent change of station move. Now picture the next time you PCS without much of the associated stress.

If you are finding this difficult to believe, then you might not have heard about Marine Corps Community Services One Source, which provides active duty and their families, reservists, sister services and service delivery staff

with information and resources that can help improve many areas of life — from personal to professional.

The range of One Source's support is grand and diverse. From relocation to education needs, family support to health and wellness, financial matters to everyday issues, MCCS One Source is your one-stop resource to find information, guidance and answers.

One Source support reaches to the



military community in the form of an award-winning Web site with numerous and varied online references and assistance. Those who enjoy one-on-one personal assistance can do so with ease by calling MCCS One Source. Users can even access e-mail assistance with consultants if they choose.

By using credentialed consultants, patrons have confidential access to pre-paid educational materials, and other

reference resources, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Imagine that you have made the move, and your family is now living in a new town attached to a different base. With One Source, you can determine which neighborhood suits you and your family's needs. You are able to find a private school nearby for your children. Your spouse can find the best local college to finish that degree, as well as get employment assistance. You can find a vet for

See MCCS, A-6

MCBH NEWS BRIEFS

BEACH CLOSING

A portion of Ft. Hase Beach aboard MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, will be closed to beachgoers Monday through Feb. 27, for training purposes. The closed area of the beach will be marked to ensure the safety of visitors to the beach.

CCE HOSTS WORKSHOPS

A command brief and two workshops will be held when the director of the College of Continuing Education and his staff visit K-Bay, Tuesday – Thursday, as follows:

- Tuesday, 1 p.m., CCE Command Brief at base theater.
- Wednesday, 9 a.m., MarineNet Training Manager Workshop at K-Bay Learning Resource Center.
- Wednesday, 1 p.m., MarineNet Training Manager Workshop at LRC.

The CCE command brief is intended for all interested personnel and will highlight current capabilities for military occupation specialty & professional military education training and education. The hands-on workshops are intended to target unit/organizational training personnel.

MCI VISITS THURSDAY

MCI West will be aboard MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Thursday, for two briefs at the base theater. All E-8s, E-9s and field grade officers should attend 10 – 11 a.m.; E-6s, E-7s, company grade officers and training NCOs should attend 1 – 2 p.m.

TAX CENTER IS OPEN

Military and their families can make appointments to complete their 2003 federal and state tax forms at the MCB Hawaii Tax Center. Walk-in appointments are available Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Located next to the 7-Day Store, Bldg. 455, on Lawrence Road, be sure to bring W-2s, account and routing numbers, your 2002 tax returns, and other forms required to complete your return(s). Call 257-1534 or visit: www.mcbh.usmc.mil/sja/sja_tax.htm for more info.

Hawaii MARINE

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MPs nab speeders on Mokapu

Sgt. Joseph A. Lee
Combat Correspondent

The largest road through MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, has so many different speed limits that many base drivers find themselves on the right shoulder receiving tickets, unaware that they are violating a posted speed limit.

Drivers need to recognize the different posted speed limits along Mokapu Road because there are many hazards along this route, according to Sgt. Matthew Baughman, traffic bailiff at the Military Police Department.

School zones, pedestrians, housing complexes and recreation fields are located in various places along Mokapu, which require drivers to slow their speed to avoid potential dangers.

"Troops also march along this road," said Baughman, "so people need to follow the posted speed limits to avoid being surprised by a crossing pedestrian wearing dark clothing. People can be extremely hard to see at night."

Military Police give out two basic types of tickets at MCB Hawaii, according to Baughman: the Armed Forces Traffic Citation, better known

as the 1408, and a District Court Violation Notice, better known as the 1805.

Baughman said military members who receive a 1408 could have anywhere from three to 12 points deducted from their base driving record. Three points could be taken for traveling one to 10 mph over the posted limit, and 12 points could be deducted for traveling 20 mph over the posted limit.

"If a service member accrues 12 points in the same calendar year, their base driving privileges may be sus-

pending for a period of one year," said Baughman. "This suspension is applicable at all military installations, not just at MCB Hawaii."

Civilians driving on base can also receive an 1805, which may carry a fine upwards of \$50, according to Baughman, and might affect the offender's civilian driving record.

"Officers are constantly being trained with the use of radar systems on base, so base drivers are cautioned to obey the posted speed limits and adhere to base traffic regulations at all times," said Baughman.



Sergeant Damon Yanez, a military policeman from 3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Regiment, aims his radar gun down the street at oncoming traffic aboard MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

Keep those rifles right!



Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Above — Cadets with Kalaheo High School's Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps rifle team perform manual techniques they learned and practiced throughout the year.

Right — Colonel Richard Roten, deputy commander, MCB Hawaii, commends the cadets on their dedication to the program, Feb. 13. Roten also inspected the cadets and their rifles.



Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Proper disposal of hazardous waste urged

Sgt. Joseph A. Lee
Combat Correspondent

Disposing of household hazardous materials is no longer the mysterious endeavor it once was for service members living aboard MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. With the Reuse Room at the Housing Self Help Store, and publications offered by the base Environmental Compliance and Protection Department, disposing of household hazardous materials is a simple task anyone can do.

According to Karen Balabis, with Environmental, the most important thing for everyone to remember is that we should all try to prevent household hazardous waste from occurring in the first place.

"The best way to handle household hazardous waste is to buy only what you need and use it all up; give away unwanted products to friends, neighbors, co-workers or the Reuse Room; and look for environmentally friendly alternatives," said Balabis. "Alternatives people should look for can be re-refined, recycled oil, latex paint instead of oil-based paints, and citrus-based degreasers and hand cleaners. Vinegar, baking soda and borax are also environmentally safe cleaners."

As stated in the Family Housing Resident Handbook, changing privately owned vehicle (POV) fluids is prohibited in housing areas.

"The only two places on base where you can change fluids [antifreeze/oils] in your POV are the Auto Skills Center and at Firestone,"

Disposal Guidelines for hazardous products

Flush down the drain with plenty of water, then rinse and throw away the empty container in trash: aluminum, ammonia, bathroom, disinfectant, drain, hair permanent, hair relaxer, toilet bowl and window cleaners and lotions.

Empty bug sprays in a plastic bag, being careful not to inhale fumes; leave the can in the bag, then tie and throw away the can in the trash.

Place in secured trash: auto repair products, household batteries, fiberglass, pill medicines, metal with polish solvent, oven cleaner and shoe polish.

Drop off at a Convenience Center: empty propane tanks.

Absorb liquid in a plastic bag with absorbent material such as shredded newspaper, old rags, or sawdust; seal the bag, then throw away in the trash: antifreeze, brake, diesel, floor care, furniture, medicine, oils, paints, primer, transmission and varnish fluids, liquids and polishes. (Paints can be hardened and thrown in the trash, too.)

Return to retailer: vehicle batteries, per law.

(See www.opala.org)

said Balabis.

Most hazardous household chemicals can be disposed of in a safe manner, but there are some materials that require industrial disposal.

"Base residents should take such hazardous materials that cannot be disposed of in the trash or poured down a drain to the Housing Department Reuse Room for proper disposal or reuse," said Balabis.

Housing residents may simply bring in their unwanted materials to the Self Help Store where they will be logged, dated and stored in the Reuse Room. Any military or civilian living or working aboard the installation can then go the Reuse Room and take materials such as antifreeze, wood stain or propane for their own use.

Since movers cannot ship hazardous materials, families transferring off the island have to leave these items behind. Families arriving in Hawaii without any of these items in their household shipment usually have to spend a lot of money restocking their supply of common household cleaners such as floor, tile and window cleaners.

Off-base residents can make an appointment to drop off these wastes at a City and County hazardous waste facility. The next drop-off day is set for Feb 28. To make an appointment, call 692-5411.

The Self Help staff encourages base residents to stop by the Reuse Room, located inside the Self Help Store (Bldg. 1505) on the corner of

See HAZARDS, A-6

1/12 keeps armed, ready

Charlie Battery gets range training before unit deployment

Sgt. Jereme Edwards
Operations/Training Chief

POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA — Marines with Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, got a lot of practice time in, and honed the skills that will be required to complete their high-paced and very demanding job of sending rounds downrange in support of infantry and air units that may call upon their expertise.

The Marines of 1/12 describe their job in three words.

"We shoot, move and communicate," said Master Sgt. Guy Woodard, the battalion artillery chief, explaining that all the moving parts involved in

accomplishing the 1/12 mission makes those three words seem completely inadequate.

First off, 1/12 fires the M198-towed howitzer cannon, which is a massive piece of gear that has stood the test of time and opened windows of opportunity for many who have called upon its might.

"A unit in the field radios for artillery support," explained Staff Sgt. Charles Moore, guns platoon sergeant with Charlie Battery. "We then receive the order to move. The Marines begin packing up the required gear and hitching their weapons to their five-ton truck. Or, sometimes, CH-53D Sea Stallions [helicopters] carry the massive weapon to the location it is supposed to be in."

An advanced party goes out and reconns the area where the guns will be placed, and then the main body moves in to get the fire cap. All the weapons are



Sgt. Jereme Edwards

On Gun 1 Marines with Charlie Battery, 1st Bn., 12th Marine Regiment, fire a round downrange during a training exercise in support of the Hawaii Combined Arms exercise at PTA.

placed on the same plane of fire toward the enemy," said Moore.

The forward observer, who is actually out with the infantry unit, radios back the coordinates to impact the unit's artillery, to the Fire Direction Center. The FDC puts the information into a computer that produces coordinates that are further relayed to the gun line. The rounds are then sent downrange.

It sounds like a lot to go

through, said Moore, but 1/12 uses every precaution necessary to ensure that rounds it lets loose land where they're needed and when they are needed.

"Our Marines have learned a lot during the Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise. It allowed us to stay up on our qualification," said Capt. Brian Russell, commander of Charlie Battery, 1/12. "HCAX has given the battery its last opportunity to get some good training

in before our unit deployment later this year.

"It also allowed us to complete our training and readiness evaluation, but most importantly, it gave us a chance to work together with all the other command elements participating in the exercise."

"We don't have time to make mistakes," said Woodard regarding the extensive training. "It's all about the fire mission."

Charlie, 1/3, raids HCAX enemy camp in darkness

Sgt. Jereme Edwards
Operations / Training Chief

POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA — Tension is high and adrenaline is pumping for the Marines of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, as the inevitable probability of a close combat conflict becomes more and more prevalent. Charlie Co. finds itself in the country of Erita at the bequest of the nation's ambassador, where all attempts to ease tensions of an already rapidly deteriorating situation have pretty much failed.

New intelligence comes down from the higher command: A small contingent of the enemy force known as the Ogdenses has taken over a nearby airport and a large enemy's weapons cache is believed to be there. To make matters worse, there is also reason to believe that this enemy contingent has the capability to create weapons of mass destruction.

As expected, the order to move is authorized. The stage is set and the mission becomes clear. Charlie Co. is to insert and infiltrate the enemy stronghold under the cover of darkness. It must capture, interrogate or eliminate all hostile aggressors at the site, find and destroy the enemy's weapons cache, and

seek out all forms of intelligence or things that have been identified as high interest to the intelligence community.

Last, but not least, the intelligence community says there are two high priority people who must be found and extracted. One is a possible chemical weapons expert, and the other is an embassy employee who has been identified as missing by the ambassador of Erita.

As the sun hides behind the mountains of PTA, darkness creeps in and the time for action approaches. Charlie Co. gets its final intel brief, filled with the latest information from the sniper platoon, which has already set a perimeter around the objective and double checked all gear and personnel to ensure all are ready for the events that are about to unfold.

When darkness falls, a group of helicopters with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463, "The Mighty Pegasus," arrives at the landing zone. Marines file into the aircraft, and with the ease of the wind from which they arrived, the heli-



Sgt. Jereme Edwards

Members of Charlie Co., 1st Bn., 3rd Marine Regiment, listen intently as the intelligence officer briefs them of the situation around the area they are about to raid or assault.

copters depart and the raid is underway.

"I went with the assault element [that] moved in front of the hangar and to the company objective," said Cpl. Steven Ullom, the acting section leader for the assault section with Charlie Co., 1/3. "Our mission was to destroy the weapons cache and gather intel. My team and I found the weapons cache in a small perimeter fence at the objective.

"We found two stinger missiles and 20 or so RPK 47s alongside three briefcases

deemed to be of some importance. We relocated the weapons cache, took down the serial numbers on the stingers and destroyed the weapons," Ullom explained. "I thought everything went well; we did everything as fast as we could."

"I think the raid went well due to the small-unit leadership," said Sgt. Michael Chambers, platoon sergeant for Charlie Co.'s 1st Platoon. "This raid was definitely an eye opener for what we can expect to be tasked with while assigned to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit Special Operations Capable, as the

helo company."

"This is the first time we have gotten to conduct a helo raid, so we have many learning points to cover being it's our first time," added 1st Lt. Jared Laurin, executive officer for Charlie Co., 1/3. "The Marines were aggressive and motivated.

"We have a few months before we take over the 31st MEU. We should be able to focus our training on these type of missions."

Word on the Street

"What is one way you display your patriotism?"



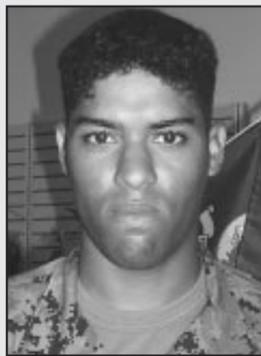
"By being proud to be a Marine, and serving my country."

Pfc Joshua Ploetz
Machinegunner
3/3



"I have worked with Marines since 1965, and after I retired, I volunteered to keep working with them."

Soonie Yeehoy
Sales representative
Office Equipment Co.



"I walked in the military appreciation parade last year."

Lance Cpl Geoff Sholly
Signals analyst
3rd Radio Bn.



"Sending e-mails to friends and family about how my husband is doing."

Wendie Thomsen
Family member



"After 50 some years, I have shown my patriotism in many, many different ways."

Ralph E. Cook
Navy veteran

MAG-24 secures skies over HCAX

Lance Cpl. Rich Mattingly
Combat Correspondent

The first Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise of 2004 featured special training from an aviation perspective, thanks to Marine Aircraft Group 24 and an all-star cast of supporting squadrons from around the Marine Corps.

Six squadrons joined MAG-24 at the Marine Corps Air Facility aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, to support HCAX with fixed and rotary-wing aircraft, as well as jets from the 1st and 3rd Marine Aircraft Wings.

Aircraft from Marine Corps Air Stations Miramar, Calif.; Iwakuni, Japan; and Futenma, Okinawa; in addition to Stewart Air National Guard Base in New York, were active in HCAX. Ten squadrons flew support for the exercise, including P-3 Orions from Patrol Squadrons 4 and 9.

"The variety of air frames involved in missions gave us, at MAG-24, a much better idea of how to schedule various types of aircraft, and how to use them

together to accomplish the mission," said Capt. Thaddeus Berry, assistant future operations officer with MAG-24. "It also gave guys on the ground a better idea how to use different aviation resources."

Local squadron, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463, known as "Pegasus," trained at HCAX by supporting troops during night flights, simulated Nuclear, Biological, Chemical attack evacuations, and completed a live-fire course.

The CH-53D Sea Stallion helicopters from Pegasus also participated in company troop-lifts and the noncombatant evacuation operation at the end of HCAX, said Berry.

Reserve units got in on the HCAX mission, too. Marine Air

Refueler Transport Squadron 452, the "Yankees," flew refueling support missions at the Big Island.

F/A-18Cs and F/A-18As from Marine Fighter Attack Squadrons 212 and 134, respectively, flew close air support missions, an air-combat maneuvering mission and a live missile-fire exercise.

The two squadrons, the "Lancers" and "Smoke," are from Iwakuni and Miramar, respectively.

"Having the F-18s and the other planes up at the same time helped us train for situations where the MAG might have more than one type of aircraft assigned to it," said Berry.

The exercise helped improve Marines' warfighting skills through the better use of close air support.



Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner



Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Above and Right — Marine Aircraft Group 24 gained valuable experience as aircraft from 10 squadrons joined in HCAX training on the Big Island. The Marines took part in simulated NBC attacks, in addition to a live-fire course.

SALUTES

3rd Radio Battalion

Navy/Marine Corps

Achievement Medals

Staff Sgt. Roger Esteban

Petty Officer 1st Class

Ryan Lisec

Sgt. Jason Elson

Cpl. Jay Belmarez

Cpl. Nicholas

Hollingsworth

Certificates of Commendation

Staff Sgt. Benjamin

Mensah

Petty Officer 2nd Class

Brian Lawton

Sgt. Michelle Maceaastacio

Sgt. Rainbow Pence

Cpl. Leah Eberle

Cpl. Gabriel

Castillofernandez

Cpl. Justina Grant

Cpl. Kevin Martin

Cpl. Sean Slaven

Lance Cpl. William Ferris

Lance Cpl. Ernesto

Guevera

Lance Cpl. Timothy Ooley Jr.

Lance Cpl. Christopher

Thompson

Meritorious Masts

Cpl. Bret Graham

Cpl. Joel Paula

Lance Cpl. Karen

Clendaniel

Lance Cpl. Simon

Dominquez

Lance Cpl. Mariusz

Mendykowski

Lance Cpl. Teal Peterson

Lance Cpl. Fernando

Roman

Pfc. David Munoz

Corporal's

Course 3-04

Honor Graduate

Cpl. Ryan D. Groves,

3/3

2nd Place

Cpl. Juan A. Arredondo,

MAG-24

3rd Place

Cpl. Edward W. Lovato,

3/3

Gung Ho Award

Cpl. Michael L. Starr Jr.,

3/3

(Editor's Note: Per the commanding general of MCB Hawaii, those convicted of DUIs or drug-related offenses shall be publicized in the Hawaii Marine newspaper.)

•Staff Sgt. Joseph P. Collins of Headquarters Bn., MCB Hawaii, was taken into custody Feb. 4 for driving under the influence with the blood alcohol content of 0.137 percent. His license was suspended Feb. 5, and his decal and vehicle were removed from base the same day.

•Seaman Marlon A. Diaz of Patrol Squadron 4 was taken into custody Tuesday for DUI with a BAC of 0.160 percent. His license was suspended, and his and decal and vehicle were removed Tuesday.

•Private First Class Jeffrey R. Hayhurst of 3rd Marine Regiment Supply, was taken into custody Feb. 13 for DUI with a BAC of 0.070 percent. His license was suspended Tuesday, and his decal and vehicle were removed from base the same day.



DUIs are career killers

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reminds that impaired driving is not merely a traffic offense. Don't be fooled. Impaired driving is no accident, nor is it a victimless crime.

Too many people still don't understand that alcohol, drugs and driving don't mix. If you also find this too hard to figure out when you've had too many drinks to drive, don't risk it. If you're feeling "buzzed," you are most likely impaired. And, if you drive impaired, law enforcement will arrest you.

You drink & drive. YOU LOSE

TO DO LIST

With any activity that involves alcohol:

•Plan ahead.

•Choose a sober designated driver.
 •Take mass transit or a taxicab, or ask a friend to drive you home if you didn't plan in advance.

•Spend the night where the activity is being held.
 •Celebrate responsibly.
 •Report impaired drivers to law enforcement.

Coast Guard buoy tenders aid K-Bay range

Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner
Combat Correspondent

Buoy tending may sound like a small task for a 225-foot ship such as the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Walnut (WLB-205), but its 43 crew members on board are dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of the more than 115 buoys and lights they are accountable for.

The Walnut, stationed in Honolulu, is primarily responsible for approximately 60,000 square miles, which include the Hawaiian Islands, American Samoa and the Central Pacific Exclusive Economic Zones. Other than buoy tending, the Walnut's missions include law enforcement, marine environmental protection, national security, and search and rescue.

The Walnut is a relatively new ship with an array of technologically advanced navigation, safety and operating systems. Built in 1999, the ship was equipped with automated monitoring, alarm and dynamic positioning systems, as well as with safety detection that includes fire, smoke and flooding notification monitors. The bridge is also significantly larger than the previous ship, allowing for more crew members to observe and control the ship's actions.

Since the Walnut's return home from Iraq, the crew has been getting back in the swing of things with routine buoy maintenance. Then on Feb. 5, the Walnut changed its course for the day, in order to recover and return to position a runaway buoy that had drifted almost two miles away from its regularly fixed position near Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay's rifle range, earlier that morning.

The 13,000-pound buoy, found floating beyond Pyramid Rock Beach, was a K-Bay rifle range safety buoy. The waters surrounding the range are home to five buoys, three of which are yellow in color, signifying that they are safety buoys. The buoys are an important safety precaution to warn and prevent swimmers and boats from traveling too close



Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Deck riggers aboard the USCGC Walnut inspect various parts of a recovered buoy. The tenders must regularly check the buoys to ensure they are working properly. Once inspected, the buoy is returned to the water so it can help keep boats away from danger.

to the danger zone — in the direction that bullets are shot from the range.

The procedure for recovering a buoy is a task that requires teamwork from the entire crew onboard.

"The best thing about working in the environment that we do is the camaraderie among the entire crew on deck," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Derrick E. Borel, deck supervisor. "It is a challenge everyday, but we all pull our weight and it always works."

Before every event that involves the entire crew, the bridge holds a meeting to make sure all hands know what they are in charge of, and what the safety factor of the task before them involves.

As the boat deck supervisor, Borel is in charge of the 1,335 square feet of the buoy deck area where buoys are brought on board. With support from the deck safety supervisor, he keeps the other deck riggers informed on what is happening at all times to ensure everything runs smoothly.

"The weight of the buoys, and the fact

that we have people working on them trying to secure them to the deck, makes moving the buoys the most hazardous

part of tending them," said Chief Petty Officer Kevin E. Kleisath, buoy deck safety supervisor.

"Working with thousands of pounds of concrete swinging above and around you can be a bit unsettling at times," said Seaman Eric J. Fialkowski, deck rigger and crane operator. "It can be an adrenaline booster though, too."

"Although safety is a main concern, we do not get overly worried about it," said Lt. Cmdr. Chris M. Smith. "We have not had any injuries related to buoy tending since we have been at sea."

Smith explained the deck crew goes through a lot of hands-on training to qualify for their positions on the deck. He said it is a very methodical process to bring buoys onboard and set them back in the water. The sequence is almost identical each time, so the crew gets used to the process.

"It is a fun job, and it is really important that it gets done," said Seaman Sarah R. Morris, deck rigger. "Not a lot of people know how much work goes into buoy tending."



Lance Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson

Snapping and popping

Marines and Sailors from various commands aboard MCB Hawaii were recognized Feb. 13 by Deputy Base Commander Col. Richard Roten, during the monthly flagpole ceremony.



Lance Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson

Sergeant Lauren A. Owens, a refrigerator mechanic for Engineer Co., is held down after putting up a fight at the front gate.

NEO, From A-1

boxes and other items towards the guards and shouted vulgarities. They also attempted to break through guard lines and get into the embassy.

All attempts were unsuccessful.

Lance Cpl. Jeffrey J. McDowell, an engineer equipment operator with CSSG-3's Engineer Co., played the part of a Marine Security guard. His duties included guarding the front gate, checking for identification cards and accompanying the ambassador during excursions.

"You really had to keep on alert the whole time," said McDowell. "One of the women had what looked like a baby, but you just can't be sure. And you're not sure how close to let them get. It got pretty stressful at times."

Despite the level of aggression the hostiles displayed, CSSG-3 Marines never lost control of their mission. They safely evacuated American civilians out of the area aboard CH-53D Sea Stallion Helicopters for

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463. Navy corpsmen attended to all, as needed, and Group Marines provided them food and water.

"The Marines did outstanding out there," said Staff Sergeant Caleb Eames, a Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Chief with Engineer Co., and the detachment commander during the NEO. "They dealt with every situation that they were hit with in a very successful manner."

"I have been to one actual NEO, and two training NEOs in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina," he continued, "and this is the most successful one I've ever seen. The cooperation between the Federal Fire Department, Department of Defense police and CSSG-3 resulted in the most outstanding NEO exercise ever."

Eames believes that CSSG-3 will be practicing more and more NEO training, especially with many present-day conflicts. Indeed, the next NEO exercise could take place when Marines train in the Republic of Korea during Operation Freedom Banner.

MCCS, From A-1

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HAZARDS, From A-2

Cushman Avenue and Lawrence Road. It is open from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. The Reuse Room is also open on Saturdays from 8 a.m. until noon for base users to check out materials only.

A list of hazardous products and guidelines for disposal can be viewed at www.opala.org, or the list can be picked up at the Housing Self Help Store.

For more info, contact the Self Help Store at 257-2042 or Karen Balabis at 257-6920, ext. 239.