

MCBH NEWS BRIEFS

TAX CENTER OPENS MONDAY

Beginning Monday, service members, retirees and family members can make appointments to complete paperwork required for their 2003 federal and state tax forms at the MCB Hawaii Tax Center.

Walk-ins are also available at the Center, which will be open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Wednesday hours of operation will be 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

The Tax Center is located next to the 7-Day Store, Bldg. 455, on Lawrence Road.

Be sure to bring your W-2 forms, bank account routing and checking/savings account numbers, a copy of your 2002 tax returns, and any other forms that will be required for your tax application(s).

To schedule an appointment, call 257-1534 or visit www.mcbh.usmc.mil/sja/sjtax.htm.

COUPLES WORKSHOP SCHEDULED JAN. 31

The base chapel, MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, will be the location of the one-day workshop "Couples Communication and Problem-Solving Skills," Jan. 31 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All married or engaged couples are encouraged to attend this workshop, chockfull of engaging activities and handy information.

Participating couples will receive a copy of the book "Fighting for Your Marriage," two PREP (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program) one-day notes for couples, and a magnetic speaker/listener technique floor tile, as courtesy mementos for attending.

Call Chaplain (Lt. Cmdr.) Nestor Nazario or Chaplain (Lt.) Winnie Walmsley at 257-3552, exts. 4 or 5, for more information.

HAIKU STAIRS

REMAIN CLOSED TO PUBLIC

The City and County of Honolulu has closed the gate to the Haiku Stairs and posted liability and warning signs.

The Honolulu Police Department will greet would-be trespassers who attempt to access the stairs despite the closure.

HAWAII MARINE

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SCRA gives military more legal protection

Lance Cpl. Regina D. Shelley
Legal Assistance Office

On Dec. 19, 2003, President George W. Bush signed into law the Service Members' Civil Relief Act (SCRA), which provides many new legal rights to military members. It is an expansion and replacement of the previous Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act (SSCRA).

The SSCRA was often considered the "cure-all" for legal ailments of service members, as serving in the military can frequently affect a person's ability to meet legal obligations.

The recent SCRA allows those who dedicate themselves to active military service to put certain legal obligations aside so that they can "devote their entire energy to the defense needs of the Nation." As such, it is important for our military men and women to understand the ramifications of this law and its applicability.

The SCRA protects members of the Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard on active duty (including reserves ordered to duty), and National Guard members called to Federal active service in

excess of 30 days. Several sections also extend protections to the service members' family members.

The SSCRA has been in existence since 1940; however, the exceptions it provided for military members were often misinterpreted by creditors and other plaintiffs.

The SCRA was drafted to correct those misinterpretations and to provide new protections for service members.

For those military men and women who have pre-service loans and obligations, they cannot be charged more than six percent interest by their creditors. The SCRA now makes clear that creditors cannot simply defer the interest until the end of active service.

Home renters can breathe a sigh of relief knowing that they cannot be evicted from their housing for nonpayment of rent without a court order, regardless of the fine wording of the rental contract.

This protection applies to rents of \$2,465 and below for 2004. If your inability to pay rent is materially affected by your military service, you may apply to the court and it must either grant you a 90-day stay in evic-

tion proceedings, or adjust obligations under the lease in a manner favorable to both parties.

An important improvement for renters was the right the SCRA gave to service members to terminate real property leases pursuant to permanent change of station or deployment orders of at least 90 days.

This law holds true in all 50 states and even extends to those leases that have not included the military clause.

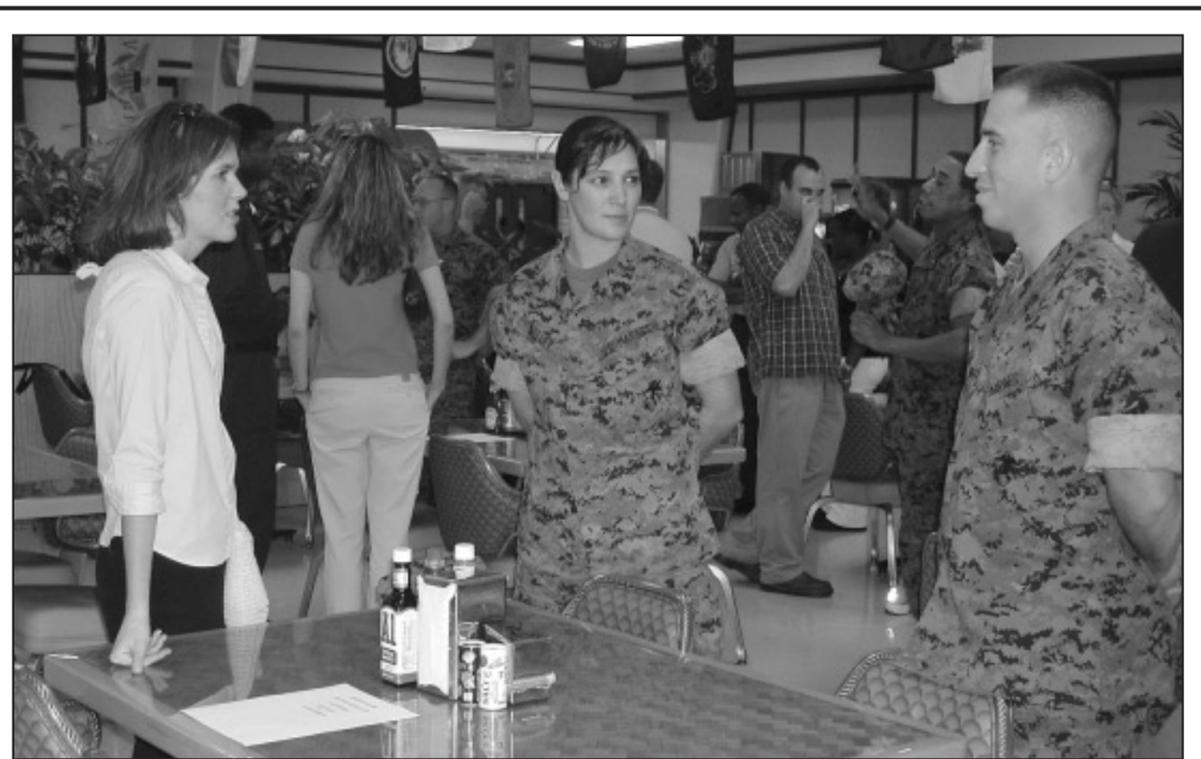
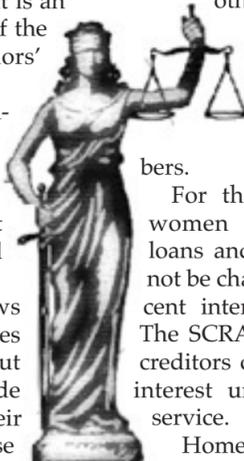
In addition, the SCRA allows for the termination of pre-service automobile leases for the military and their family members if they receive orders for 180 days of active duty or more.

Likewise, auto leases entered into while on active duty can be cancelled if one receives orders for a permanent change of station or deployment of 180 days or more.

You can apply for general relief on other matters including liabilities and obligations incurred before service, and taxes due before or during enlistment, by filing for relief with the courts while still in the military, or no later than 180 days after release from military service.

If military personnel have a non-criminal judicial or administrative

See SCRA, A-5



Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Bridging the gap

Representatives and delegates from various states around the country came to visit with the Marines and Sailors of MCB Hawaii during a luncheon Jan. 9 at the Anderson Hall dining facility aboard Kaneohe Bay. One of the visitors from the state of California met with Lance Cpl. Regina Shelley (center), a scopist and legal assistant with base legal, and Sgt. Timothy Wolf, an ammunition technician with base ordnance, to learn about and compare their views.

IRS gets military new tax breaks

Internal Revenue Service

Press Release

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service is helping taxpayers use a new law providing income exclusions for death benefit payments and certain home sales. Both provisions are retroactive, so some qualifying taxpayers must file amended returns to claim these tax breaks. If either exclusion applies to you, the IRS asks you to put the words "Military Family Tax Relief Act" in red at the top of your return to speed processing.

The new law doubled the benefit paid to survivors of deceased armed forces members to \$12,000, made the entire amount tax-free and made the changes effective for deaths occurring after Sept. 10, 2001. Previously, only \$3,000 was tax free.

Recipients who have already paid tax on benefits received for deaths after the effective date may file an amended return on Form 1040X, reducing their adjusted gross income by the \$3,000 they had reported as taxable. Those who receive such "gratuity" benefits in 2003 and future years will not have to report them on their tax returns.

Taxpayers may also exclude gain on a home sale, provided they have owned and used the home as a principal residence for two of the five years before the sale. A

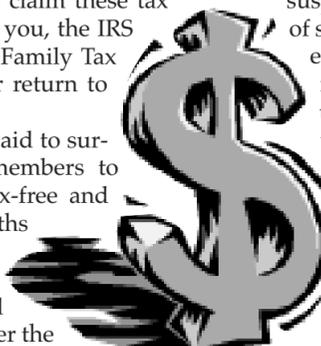
reduced maximum exclusion may apply to those who satisfy part of the two-year rule, as military personnel often retain ownership of a home while away on duty, but eventually sell it without returning to live in it, perhaps failing the use test completely.

The new law allows persons on qualified extended duty in the U.S. armed services or the Foreign Service to suspend this five-year test period for up to 10 years of such duty time. A taxpayer is on qualified extended duty when at a duty station that is at least 50 miles from the residence sold, or when residing under orders in government housing, for more than 90 days or for an indefinite period.

This change applies to home sales after May 6, 1997. A taxpayer may use this provision for only one property at a time, and may exclude gain on only one home sale in any two-year period.

Although an amended return must usually be filed within three years of the original return's due date, the law gives qualifying taxpayers who sold a home before 2001 until Nov. 10, 2004, to file an amended return claiming the exclusion.

A taxpayer may use Form 4506, "Request for Copy or Transcript of Return," to get an earlier year's tax return. This form and Form 1040X are available on the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov, or by calling 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676).



Saint Barbara's Day



Saint Barbara is the "Patron Saint of Protection" for all who serve in the artillery field.

Artillerymen keep the traditions of St. Barbara alive

Lance Cpl. Rich Mattingly
Combat Correspondent

Saturday night, the Lanai Room of the Officers' Club, MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, played host to the annual St. Barbara's Day celebration. Enlisted service members, officers, distinguished guests, and their families, gathered for a night of spirited entertainment and serious commemoration of the patron saint of artillery.

After refreshments and dinner, Col. Scott Campbell, 12th Marine Regimental commander, 3rd Marine Division, who flew from Okinawa, Japan, for the event, thanked the attendees and introduced the night's entertainment.

Guests were treated to an irreverent and hilarious take on the "Dating Game" by the lieutenants of 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment. Poking fun at themselves and their seniors, the lieutenants set the tone for the evening of celebration for the artillerymen.

After the side-splitting show, it was time for the serious task of preparing the "Artillery Punch." Overseeing the preparation was "Master of the Punch," Master Sgt. Garland D. Woodward, battalion field artillery chief. Unit noncommissioned officers in charge added items to the punch such as the "blood of the American eagle" to represent the blood shed by artillerymen, past and present, and the "bile of a leprechaun" for luck.

Lieutenant Col. Patrick Redmon was honored to drink of this year's first swig of the artillery punch, and all guests toasted both artillery — known as the "King of Battle" — and those units that support it.

Saint Barbara was the beautiful daughter of a wealthy man named Dioscorus in the 4th century in present-day Turkey. Dioscorus locked Barbara in a tower before embarking on a long journey. Subsequently, she learned about Christianity while imprisoned, then converted. Barbara ordered the towers' twin windows changed to three, representing the Trinity.



Lance Cpl. Rich Mattingly

Lieutenant Col. Patrick Redmon, commanding officer of 1/12, takes a drink of the field artillery punch as the 'Master of the Punch' Master Sgt. Garland D. Woodward, field artillery chief for 1/12, looks on.

When he returned — Dioscorus, enraged by his daughter's conversion — dragged Barbara behind a horse to the top of a mountain where he beheaded her. He was struck dead at the moment of her death by a lightning bolt.

In the 7th century, the Catholic Church venerated St. Barbara, and she became the "Patron Saint of Protection" from sudden death — something known all too well to the artillerymen of old, who mixed combustible black powder and nitrate. Over time, Barbara became known as the artillery battlefield protector.

Usually celebrated on Dec. 4, the feast day of St. Barbara is a time to honor the components of artillery and its support elements.

"Tonight we honor the memory of St. Barbara and her sacri-

fice for her beliefs," said 1st Sgt. Jamie Deets, Headquarters Battery first sergeant, 1/12, speaking to the assembly.

The evening's ceremonies took a more formal turn with the presentation of the "Order of Saint Barbara" to those Marines who had demonstrated long-term excellence and achievement in service to a field artillery command, and the presentation of the "Artillery Order of Molly Pitcher." The Order of Molly Pitcher celebrates the role of women in support of field artillery. The courageous Molly Pitcher's heroically supported artillerymen at the Battle of Monmouth during the Revolutionary War. Both orders are very prestigious, and nominees may only be approved by a colonel or above.

After the final awards were presented, Deets humorously recalled the legend of "Fiddler's Green," a sacred spot in Heaven reserved just for the "red legs" of the artillery. According to folklore, artillerymen never go to hell because they run out of artillery punch halfway there, and must return to Fiddler's Green. Amid raucous laughter, the assembly then adjourned for socializing and congratulations.

For more information on St. Barbara's Day, visit the U.S. Field Artillery Association's Web page at www.usfaa.com.



Word on the Street

"What was your New Year's resolution, and have you kept it?"



"I wanted to quit smoking. I haven't yet."

Lance Cpl. John T. Byrd
Rifleman
Bravo Co.,
1/3



"...To get in better shape. It is hard if you work at McDonald's."

Corey J. H. Pagaduan
McDonald's manager
MCB Hawaii,
Kaneohe Bay



"I want to be nice to my brother; I am trying."

Aitanna C. Ferrez, 7
Family member



"...To keep my husband happy. We just got married."

Valerie M. Beebe
Family member



"I wanted to learn how to snowboard, and I did."

Chief Petty Officer Charles W. Hardy
Independent duty corpsmen
3/3

Destroyer named in honor of former Marine



Petty Officer 1st Class William R. Goodwin

Illuminated by holiday lights, the newly commissioned guided missile destroyer USS Chafee (DDG 90) is moored at Merry Point, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 30, 2003.

Headquarters Marine Corps

Press Release

PEARL HARBOR — The newly commissioned guided missile destroyer USS Chafee (DDG 90) has been named in honor of Senator John Chafee, who served as a Marine in World War II and then as Secretary of the Navy from 1969-1972.

USS Chafee is the 40th Arleigh Burke class destroyer and was commissioned Oct. 18, 2003, in Newport, R.I.

Senator Chafee was born Oct. 22, 1922, in Providence, R.I. Though he entered Yale in 1940, he left in his sophomore year to join the Marine Corps.

During World War II, he was part of the first waves to hit the beaches of Guadalcanal and Okinawa. After the war, he completed his bachelor's degree from Yale and a law degree from Harvard.

He was again called to active duty service in the Marine Corps in 1951 and served two years as a rifle company commander during the Korean Conflict.

Chafee was governor of Rhode Island from '62

to '68. President Richard Nixon appointed him Secretary of the Navy in January '69, in which capacity he served until 1972. Chafee then became a Rhode Island U.S. senator in 1976.

He died Oct. 24, 1999.

(Editor's Note: Biographical information for Senator John Chafee was gathered from the University of Rhode Island Library Web site.)



Petty Officer 1st Class William R. Goodwin

The USS Chafee sails past Diamond Head Crater as she arrives in her new homeport of Pearl Harbor.



Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Juan Castillo, a motor vehicle operator for the Kaneohe Klipper Golf Course, uses a chainsaw to move heavy tree limbs that had fallen and burst a water pipe.

STORM, From A-1

docks also received damage from the choppy waves that caused the boats to slam into the docks.

The marina was not the only location to feel the storm's wrath, however. As roofs ripped from numerous buildings aboard the base, structural debris scattered everywhere. Two hangars on the flight line received roof damage, the base commissary suffered roof damage, and numerous other

buildings including many in base housing and barracks areas suffered the same fate.

Despite all of the damage to the installation, not one single service member, base resident or base employee was injured by the storm, though there were several close calls. Luckily property remained the only victim.

One Marine who was nearly injured, Cpl. John Shearer of Headquarters Bn., MCB Hawaii, was riding in a car when it was struck with a

large piece of his barracks building's roof.

"This whole piece of the roof just came crashing down on the car I was inside of," Shearer said. "It kind of smashed in the windshield and then went sliding off the back. It really messed up the car."

In wake of the storm, residents of Kaneohe Bay, found that even though some of the buildings on base were ill prepared to handle such gusts of wind, those who work and live here are prepared to handle any situation that may arise.



Lance Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson

Above — The high Kona winds during the storm on Jan. 14 caused both trees and roofs to fall, including the roof of Mackie Hall.

Below — A large tree was uprooted by high Kona winds beside the Combat Service Support Group 3's barracks aboard MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.



Lance Cpl. Rich Mattingly

SCRA, From A-2

proceeding pending, and their military duty "materially" affects their ability to appear at the proceeding, the SCRA now requires the courts to grant an automatic 90-day stay when requested by the service member.

If you request a second stay and the court denies that stay, the court must then appoint an attorney to defend your interests in the proceeding.

The SCRA also provides the opportunity for service members to reopen default judgments entered in a proceeding where the members' military service materially disadvantaged their ability to make a defense.

If you find out that

you have been ruled against in court, seek assistance from a legal assistance attorney immediately as you may have a very short window of opportunity to protect your military rights.

The recent changes to the SSCRA have been more than a name change. They directly affect the legal requirements of our military members, even in areas not mentioned in this article.

If any service men or women, or their family members, have any questions or concerns regarding the SCRA, it is recommended that they seek advice from their base Legal Assistance Office, or visit our Web site at www.hqmclegal@hqmc.usmc.mil.

VOLUNTEER, From A-1

the criteria, or would like additional information, contact Mr. Dennis Fujii, U.S. Pacific Command, Community Relations, at 477-6282..

Nomination forms are due to U.S. Pacific Command, Office of Community Relations (J01PA), no later than Friday, Feb. 27, 2004.

SURVEY, From A-1

involvement, satisfaction, and student safety and well being.

When interpreting survey results, response rates should be considered. The higher the response rate, the more likely the results are representative of the whole group. However, even

low response rates may provide useful information about a school.

COURTS MARTIAL



(Editor's Note: The Legal Services Center, MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, sent notification to the commanding officers of the following Marines of punishment awarded in the following courts martial.)

Special Court Martial

•Sergeant Donald E. Harple of Headquarters and Service Bn., Marine Forces Pacific, Camp H. M. Smith, was convicted at a Special Court Martial for committing assault with enough force

to produce death or grievous bodily harm with his fist.

His actions were in violation of Article 128 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, disorderly conduct that was of nature to bring discredit upon the armed forces. Harple was sentenced to eight months of confinement, forfeitures of \$700 pay per month for eight months, reduction to pay grade E-1, and a Bad Conduct Discharge.

(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.)

•Private Joseph H. Cox of 3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Regiment, was taken into custody Jan. 9 for driving under the influence, and underage consumption of alcohol. He refused blood alcohol content testing. His license was sus-

pending and his decal and vehicle were removed from base on Jan. 9.

•Lance Cpl. Roland R. Ivan of 1st Bn., 3rd Marine Regiment, was taken into custody Jan. 10 for driving under the influence with a BAC of 0.15 percent, and underage consumption of alcohol. His license was suspended and his decal removed on Jan. 10. His vehicle was removed from base Jan. 11.



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.




1-800-899-0089

We need your help.

Oklahoma City Federal Building reopens

Story and Photos by
Staff Sgt. Skip Osborn

RS Oklahoma City

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. — At 9:02 a.m., April 19, 1995, a titanic explosion rocked downtown Oklahoma City, destroying the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, killing 168 men, women and children, and injuring approximately 400 others.

Two days later, the flag-draped remains of Capt. Randolph A. Guzman, executive officer, Recruiting Station Oklahoma City, and a day after that, Sgt. Benjamin L. Davis, the RS operations clerk, were carried from the ragged debris of the building.

Four former Marines assigned to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Task Force 1 (which organized police, firemen and emergency medical service specialists from around the nation for recovery efforts following the tragedy), took the bodies of the Marines out of the wreckage.

After the devastation of what was, at the time, the country's most damaging terrorist attack, the remaining federal employees relo-

cated their offices throughout the city. Eight and one-half years later, they have started moving back into the new Oklahoma City federal building, across the street from where the Murrah Building once stood, and less than a block from what is now the memorial site.

For some, like RS Oklahoma City's Recruiter Instructor Master Gunnery Sgt. Patrick M. Waters, the new facilities are a statement about the strength of our government.

"I think it sends a message that you can damage someone's life, but you can't break their spirit," said Waters. "You may kill a Guzman or a Davis, but you can't beat America. It's a statement that the Corps is an institution and is more enduring than any terrorist organization."

Waters was lucky on the day of the bombing. He and several others were attending a career-recruiter conference in New Orleans. After hearing news of the bombing, they were sent back to Oklahoma City, assisted Task Force 1 in recovering their co-workers and set up a temporary processing station so they could continue strive to make mission. An example of their fortitude is that they were back in business at the Armed Forces Reserve Center one day after the bombing.

"Moving in here brings back a lot of memories," said Waters. "In the Corps you lose good friends all the time, and life has to go on. We can't bring them back, but our willingness to go on is a testament to their legacy."

The RS has recovered and preserved the original colors, and also pieced together the shattered, ceramic Marine Corps Seal that used to hang in its old office. The seal is now on display in the RS's new reception area, and key parts of the RS are named after the Marines who lost their lives because of terrorism.

"The RS conference room will always be the Guzman Room, the [operations] room will always be the Davis Room, and now we have a new room to dedicate," said Maj. Kendal A. Martinez, commanding officer, RS OKC.

The sergeant major's office will be dedicated to Sgt. Maj. Michael S. Curtain, Marine Corps Reserve, the New York City police officer and one of the emergency workers who pulled Guzman and Davis from the wreckage.

Curtain, a hero many times over, fell victim to terrorism during the Sept. 11, 2001, bombing of the World Trade Center.



Above — Passersby can see the new federal building from the Oklahoma bombing memorial.

Below — One hundred sixty-eight chairs line the reflection pond at the Oklahoma bombing memorial, in observance of those men, women and children killed in the tragic blast.



The memorial honoring those killed in the Oklahoma City bombing casts its mirror image in the reflecting pool.