

# Hawaii MARINE

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## Presidential order speeds citizenship

**Sgt. Robert Carlson**  
Press Chief

During a Fourth of July address in Ripley, W. Va., President George W. Bush announced an Executive Order he signed that grants expedited citizenship consideration to non-citizen members of the United States military.

The Executive Order applies to those serving on active duty in the military since Sept. 11 and potentially affects up to 15,000 service members who will immediately be able to apply for citizen-

ship.

Current laws allow for expedited citizenship consideration during peacetime as well. Active duty military members are eligible for consideration after three years, rather than the five-year wait required of non-military applicants.

"They deserve the gratitude of all people who cherish freedom," the president said during the celebration.

Immigration laws have traditionally allowed for expedited citizenship consideration for members of the military during times of conflict. President

Bush's order follows similar ones issued by past administrations.

More than 143,000 non-citizen participants in both World Wars, and more than 31,000 service members who fought in Korea, became naturalized citizens under Section 329 of the Immigration and Naturalization Act.

Presidents Clinton and Carter issued similar orders after the Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars.

"In addition to rewarding these brave men and women for fighting the war on terror, citizenship will encourage them to

remain in the military," a White House press release said. "Naturalization will allow them to advance their careers into positions requiring citizenship, including service as a commissioned or warrant officer, and in special warfare programs such as the Navy SEALs."

Legal Assistance will give two briefs concerning the presidential order: Wednesday at 9 a.m. and July 23 at 1:30 p.m. Both will be held in the Kaneohe Bay base theater and should last approximately 15 minutes. All interested in naturalization should attend a brief.

## Sending rounds downrange at PTA



Sgt. Alexis R. Mulero

Corporal Daniel L. Pierce, 2nd squad leader, Weapons Platoon, Fox Co., 2/3, screams out instructions and braces PFC Tyler Brown as the team assaults targets during a live-fire exercise July 5 at the Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA). See page A-3 for more on the Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise.

## Training mishap injures 8 at PTA

**Sgt. Alexis R. Mulero**  
Community Relations

**POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii** — Eight Marines from MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, were injured in a training incident while clearing a trench line at Range 10, here July 5.

The injuries were the result of a grenade detonation, when a grenade inadvertently deflected back into a trench where Marines were huddled.

Five Marines were released from Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC), July 8. Two Marines embarked on the USS Rushmore for return to training on the Big Island.

Three Marines returned to MCB Hawaii in a limited duty status, until full recovery, and the other two Marines involved remain at TAMC for further treatment.

The Marines, part of Echo Co., 2nd Bn., 3rd Marine Regiment, were training here in support of Rim of the Pacific Exercise 2002.

The details of the accident are still under investigation.

## K-Bay Marine dies in accident

**MCB Hawaii**  
Press Release

An MCB Hawaii Marine died July 7 near Fresno, Calif.

Gunnery Sergeant Noel J. Ramirez, 38, a native of Fresno, was a communications chief assigned to 4th Force Reconnaissance Co. and on Fourth of July liberty from temporary additional duty orders to communications chief school at Marine Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

The Fresno County Deputy Sheriff's Department is currently investigating the accident.

## RIMPAC makes K-Bay skies busier

**Cpl. Jason E. Miller**  
Combat Correspondent

In the recent weeks since the beginning of the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise 2002 — a multi-national training exercise bringing together Pacific rim nations — the skies above MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, have been a lot busier due to the added number of aircraft stationed here.

Seven F-18 Hornets from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 321, stationed at Andrews Naval Air Base in Maryland have been using the airfield at K-Bay for several training exercises in support of RIMPAC and the Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise (HCAX) on the Big Island.

The squadron has been conducting live-fire missions on the range at Barking Sands Missile Range on Kauai, and flying in support of the 3rd Marine Regiment as part of HCAX.

Along with the F-18s, came Marine Air Hercules Squadron (VMGR) 132 C-130 Hercules from Okinawa, Japan, and P-3 aircraft from Australia, Canada, Korea and



Cpl. Jason E. Miller

Japanese, Canadian, Australian and U.S P-3 Orion aircraft currently line the airfield at MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

Japan to conduct RIMPAC missions with K-Bay's Patrol Squadrons (VP) 4 and 9, P-3 Orion squadrons.

The C-130s of VMGR-132 have been working hand in hand with 3rd Marine Regiment in support of HCAX to move troops and equipment to the Big Island, all the while saving the regiment the costs of commercially transporting the Marines.

The P-3s of all the countries have been flying several missions every day in support of RIMPAC, practicing the main objective for the platform, reconnaissance missions.

"The whole deal is to get everyone integrated and working together," said Chief John Gay, air traffic control leading chief and RIMPAC coordinator for Marine Corps Air Facilities.

"There are a lot of differences in the way we operate, even between the Navy and Marine Corps.

This exercise gives us an idea of what it would be like to work with these countries in a real-time scenario," he explained.

In all, some 36 P-3s are now here training at Kaneohe Bay.

## MCBH NEWS BRIEFS

### NEW IMMUNIZATION POLICIES

#### GOVERN ALL 7TH GRADERS

Hawaii has new school immunization requirements for all 7th graders who attend school here.

The new law requires that all students entering the 7th grade must have completed the following vaccinations by the first day of school:

- 3 Hepatitis B,
- 2 MMR, and
- 1 or 2 Chickenpox (Varicella, or a physician-documented history of chickenpox disease).

A 7th grader may only attend school on the first day if their school has received one of the following:

- A yellow 7th grade Student Immunization Record card, signed by the student's doctor, indicating that he or she has completed all required vaccinations (or the documented history exception),
- A signed note from the doctor, indicating that the student has started but not yet completed the vaccination series, or
- A physician note indicating that the doctor does not currently have a supply of required vaccine and the student will be recalled when the shortage has improved.

Students who have not complied with the new school immunization requirements will not be allowed to attend school.

"It is important that parents do this now and not wait until doctors' offices get busy during the summer," said Dr. Paul Effler, Communicable Disease Division, Hawaii Department of Health (DOH).

There are also new immunization requirements for children entering preschool and kindergarten, and children who are entering school for the first time ever in Hawaii.

Visit the DOH Web site at [www.VaxToSchool.com](http://www.VaxToSchool.com) or call 586-8323 for details.

### MASS TRANSIT COSTS REIMBURSED

Active duty military, appropriated and nonappropriated fund civilian personnel, and members of the reserve serving on active duty are eligible to receive up to \$100 reimbursement for commuting costs spent on mass transportation via the VanPools or The Bus.

Eligible commuters must complete an application form for reimbursement and provide copies of their used or unused bus passes. Obtain applications at [www.fmo.navy.mil/services/tip.htm](http://www.fmo.navy.mil/services/tip.htm). Contact Roger Badua for more information at 257-8807.

## Hawaii MARINE

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## CG'S MAIL BOX

"...the base should stop worrying so much about seat belts, more about speeders."



BRIG. GEN.  
MCABEE

- Submitted by Sgt. Chris Highcock, Food Service Specialist, MCB Hawaii

"I am writing about my concerns of the careless drivers who speed down roads in residential areas on base.

My name is Sgt. Chris Highcock, I am a food service specialist stationed at MCB Hawaii, and I live in Manana Housing Pearl City.

The other day I was outside with my 2-year-old son, and he started running toward the street. Along came a car going at least 45 miles an hour. If I was not paying attention, and quick on my feet, he would of been hit.

This is an ongoing problem here in this housing area, and there are kids all over this neighborhood.

For one thing, there is no speed limit posted on my street. Second, there is no "Children Playing" sign, and there are no speed radars to stop speeders.

My suggestion would be to post military police with radar on the streets of the housing areas, and maybe even speed bumps.

I feel as though the base should stop worrying so much about seat belts and worry more about speeders.

Does it have to take the death of a child before the Safety Center on base does something? I hope not.

Thank you for your time."

Sgt. Chris Highcock

Sgt. Highcock,

I have been asked by the commanding general to research and respond to your email of May 28, since your recommendation falls within my staff's responsibilities. He appreciates that you've taken the time to participate in the CG Mail program.

Your Provost Marshal's Office, in conjunction with the Base Safety Center, aggressively pursues unsafe driving practices aboard MCB Hawaii, especially within our housing areas.

Last month alone, the Military Police Department (MPD) issued 446 speeding citations.

In addition to aggressive traffic safety countermeasures, like radar enforcement, MPD and the Base Safety Center routinely provide traffic control information at unit safety stand-downs.

Our goal is to provide a balanced and effective traffic control program for the entire MCB Hawaii community. Your experience, although unfortunate, is not the norm.

The Military Police Department continually reevaluates radar enforcement to ensure maximum base coverage. We also ask for the public's assistance in identifying speeders aboard MCB Hawaii.

Any person aboard MCB Hawaii can call my department and participate in the 'third party ticket' program. This is accomplished by reporting the vehicle, license plate information, time, date and location of

offense. Upon your completing a witness statement at PMO, we will issue a third party ticket to the offender.

The offender will then be required to appear at Base Traffic Court and have his/her case heard.

Additionally, the person witnessing the offense is required to appear at Base Traffic Court to testify concerning the traffic offense witnessed.

In light of your recommendation, I have been directed by the commanding general to increase both unmarked vehicle radar and bike patrol radar in the Manana Housing area.

I have also directed that my traffic section conduct a traffic survey to ensure appropriate signage is posted at parks and crosswalks.

In addition, we will publish high traffic offense locations in the *Hawaii Marine* newspaper.

The bottom line is that your Military Police Department and Base Safety Center are committed to providing the most effective traffic control countermeasures available. This is serious business, and we take it seriously.

Again, thank you for taking the time to participate in the CG Mail program. If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me at 257-3110, ext. 1.

Maj. Marc Lambert  
Provost Marshal

**"I just have a quick question: How come there are no Navy Federal Credit Union ATMs on this base?"**

It seems to me that every person I talk to banks with them. Yet, if you need to pull money while on base, you are hit with the surcharges from the local Hawaiian banks.

Most people tend to pull \$20 here or there, and when you add the \$1.50 to \$2 surcharge, plus the 75 cents charged by the credit union for using a non-credit union ATM [automatic teller machine], you end up paying more than 10 percent in fees — just to get at your own money.

Not to mention that if there were a Navy Federal Credit [NFCU] ATM on base, you could do basic banking such as deposits and balance inquiries, at any time, instead of having to stand in the incredibly long lines inside and outside the branch during lunch.



Sgt. Robert Carlson

Is there any way to place at least one such ATM here on K-Bay? I believe many Marines and Sailors and dependents would be grateful."

Sincerely,  
Pascale Trotta

Ms. Trotta,

The commanding general has asked that I respond to your email of June 7 since your question falls within my staff's responsibilities. He appreciates you taking the time to participate in the CG Mail program.

There have been many inquiries about bringing NFCU ATMs aboard MCB Hawaii.

Currently, two banks have contracts to operate on the base: Bank of Hawaii and Windward Community Federal Credit Union [WCFCU]. These banks were awarded contracts under the Department of Defense [DoD] regulation which states, "no more than one bank and one credit union shall be permitted to operate on a DoD installation."

Legally, an ATM is considered a "branch office" of their bank. If NFCU established ATMs here, we would then have two credit unions aboard the base, and we would be in violation of the DoD regulation quoted above.

As you note, ATM fees do add up quickly. I would like to point out that WCFCU does not charge customers ATM fees. Your bank, however, may charge you to use the WCFCU ATM. In the case of NFCU, the fee is 75 cents.

Although not located on base, NFCU is not far away. There is a multi-service branch office located less than a mile outside of the Mokapu gate, at 970 North Kalaheo Ave., in Kailua.

If I can be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me at 257-7724, and again, thank you for taking the time to participate in the CG Mail program.

Lt. Col. Jeff Zeller  
Comptroller

*(Editor's Note: Letters of any length may be trimmed and edited in the interest of good taste and brevity.)*

The commanding general invites input from the base community via C.G. Mail on the following topics: What are we doing that we shouldn't be doing? What are we not doing that we should be doing? What are we doing that we should be doing better?

Responses should include a recommendation that will help solve the problem and must include your name and return address so that staff may respond.

For more information about how to send C.G. Mail, see the MCB Hawaii C.G. Mail page at [www.mcbh.usmc.mil/command/cgmail.htm](http://www.mcbh.usmc.mil/command/cgmail.htm).



**Sergeants and below** who dare to become Combat Correspondents and would pride themselves on telling the Marine Corps story can seize the opportunity with a lateral move into the 4341 occupational field. Contact Gunnery Sgt. Rhys Evans, base public affairs chief, at 257-8832 or 257-8840, for more information.



All photos by Sgt. Alexis R. Mulero

**Above** — First Lieutenant Scott Anderson, weapons platoon commander for Bravo Co., 1/3, calls for live-fire support.

**Right** — Marines from Echo Co., 2/3, help each other through an obstacle during the exercise.



## Rocks tremble while Marines roll

**Sgt. Alexis R. Mulero**  
Community Relations

**POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii** — A heart-stopping explosion was heard and a strong tremble felt throughout the green pastures and lava rocks at Range 10, here on the "Big Island" July 2, when a team of more than 50 Marines from Echo Co., 2nd Bn., 3rd Marine Regiment, executed an attack on a strong point.

The scenario repeated itself on July 5, when more than 50 Marines from Fox Co., 2/3, accomplished the same feat.

As part of the ground

combat element for the Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force 3.

Their training evolutions consisted of three element phases: the support element, the maneuver element and the supporting of the repellent counterattack element.

Weapons platoons in both companies laid down suppressive fire using M249 light machine guns and M203 grenade launchers to support the assault from the maneuvering element to their objective.

"There is very little room for error when dealing with support by fire," said Cpl. Daniel L. Pierce, 2nd squad

leader, Weapons Platoon, Fox Co., 2/3.

"The team performed real well, accomplishing the mission and hitting their targets."

Once the supportive elements accomplished their mission, the maneuver elements began clearing a 200-meter trench line.

"Second squad exploded when the warrior spirit took over," said Sgt. Obom Bowen, maneuver element leader, Fox Co., 2/3.

"[They] breached the wire obstacle to gain access to the trenches and concluded with a fantastic **S h o u l d e r - L a u n c h e d M u l t i p u r p o s e A s s a u l t**

Weapon shot, neutralizing the enemy's light armored vehicle threat."

Once the maneuver elements accessed the trench line, mortar sections from both companies led a repellent counterattack that congested the mechanized targets of Light Armored Vehicles and secured the area.

"It was a great evolution," said 1st Lt. D. J. Thomas, Fox Co., executive officer.

"The company showed great teamwork and proficiency in its ability to coordinate both fire and maneuver with its organic support systems."



**Sergeant Joseph M. Evans**, a forward observer for 2/3 during the training evolution, watches a site he laser targeted with the MULE laser system go up in smoke.

## Laser-guided missile fire shakes PTA

**Story and Photos by**  
**Sgt. Alexis R. Mulero**  
Community Relations

**POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii** — Locate, target and destroy the enemy.

That was the mission given to more than 100 Marines from Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force 3 during an Air Support Coordinating Exercise at Range 15, here July 5.

The exercise integrated battalion Fire Support Coordination Center (FSCC) control and continued the progression of company Fire Support Teams (FST) in Combined Arms Training.

"This training allows Marine FSTs to exercise their mission by coordinating artillery and mortar with fixed wing aviation," said Capt. Todd Baker (known by his call sign "Skipper"), 3rd Marine Regiment's assistant air officer. "The FST members gain experience by preparing nine-lines [briefs] and communicating them to the pilot."

To accomplish their mission, the ground-based Marine forward observers from 1st and 2nd Bn., 3rd

Marines, used a Modular Universal Laser Equipment (MULE) system to locate, identify and designate targets for attack by 155mm artillery and F/A-18A Hornet aviation assets from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 321, which is based out of Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

"There are munitions and systems on the aircraft that are laser guided," said Sgt. Joseph M. Evans, field radio operator, Headquarters and Service Co., 2/3, and a forward observer during the evolution.

"With the MULE Laser System, I can show the pilots what we want to destroy, and then we pulverize it," he explained.

However, before the fire missions got underway, the FSCC coordinated, deconflicted and approved the fires for each team.

"The FSCC has to approve all fire missions in order to deconflict fire for overall safety during the operation," said Capt. Mauricio J. Nieto, assistant fire support coordinator, 1st Bn., 12th Marines.

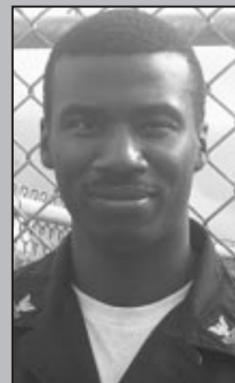
## WORD ON THE STREET

*"What was your favorite movie this summer?"*



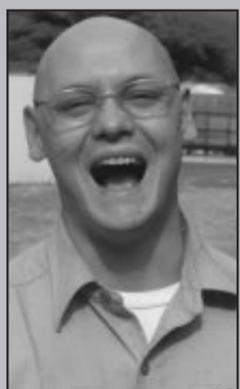
*"...Lilo and Stitch.' It was a really great movie for the whole family."*

**Ozeal Way**  
Groundskeeper  
Base Facilities



*"...Lilo and Stitch.' It was a great family movie for me and my five children."*

**Petty Officer 2nd Class Henry Wade**  
Component repair supervisor  
MALS-24

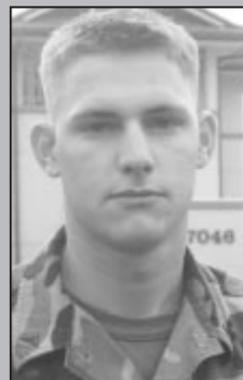


*"...Men in Black 2.' It had great special effects and took off where the last one ended."*

**Seaman John Wasilewski**  
Admin clerk  
VP-9

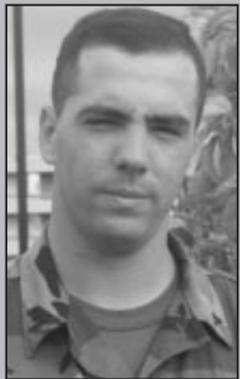
*"...We Were Soldiers.' It was a good action flick, and it was based on an awesome book."*

**Lance Cpl. John Walker**  
Rifleman  
2/3



*"...Mr. Deeds.' It was a good comedy, and I'm an Adam Sandler fan."*

**Lance Cpl. René Floresbergmann**  
Rifleman  
1/3



## COMMENTARY

# 'A young Marine restored my faith'

**Ann Baker**

*Real Estate Agent*

HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif. — It was our normal Thursday morning business meeting at our real-estate office. No big deal.

Before the meeting, we hung around the bagel table, as usual, with our coffee.

He stood aside, looking a little shy and awkward, and very young — a new face in a room full of extroverted salespeople.

He was an average looking guy, maybe 5 feet 8 inches — a clean-cut, sweet-faced kid.

I went over to chat with him. Maybe he was a new salesman.

He said he was just back from Kabul, Afghanistan: a Marine.

Our office (and a local school) had been supportive by sending letters to him and other troops, which he had posted on the American Embassy door in Kabul.

He had stood guard there, for four months, and he was shot at daily.

He had come to our office to thank us for our support, for all the letters during those scary times.

I couldn't believe my ears.

He wanted to thank us?

I pondered, we should be thank-

**"This young Marine, this clean-faced boy, had no qualms stepping up to the plate and dodging bullets..."**

**Ann Baker**

*A Huntington Beach, Calif., real estate agent*

ing him, but how?

How could I ever show him my appreciation?

At the end of the sales meeting, he stepped quietly forward. He was no incredible hulk. As a matter of fact, he looked, for all the world, 15 years old to me. (The older I get, the younger they look.)

This young Marine, this clean-faced boy, had no qualms stepping up to the plate and dodging bullets so that I might enjoy the freedom to live my peaceful life in the land of the free. No matter the risk.

Suddenly the most stressful concerns of my life seemed as nothing. My complacency flew right out the window with his every word.

Somewhere, somehow, he had taken the words honor, courage and commitment into his very soul and laid his life on the line daily for me and us — a man of principle.

He wants to do it. He relishes it.

And he came to thank us, for a few letters?

I fought back the tears as he spoke so briefly and softly.

He walked forward to our manager and placed a properly folded American flag in our manager's hands. The flag had flown over the embassy.

He said thanks again.

You could hear a pin

drop.

As I looked around I saw red faces everywhere, fighting back the tears.

In a heartbeat, my disillusionment with today's young people quickly vanished.

In ordinary homes, in ordinary towns, kids like him are growing up proud to be an American and willing to die for it.

Wow!

We'll frame the flag and put it in our lobby.

Though he only came to my office once, for just a few minutes, I realize I rubbed shoulders with greatness, in the flesh.

In the twinkling of an eye, my life is forever changed.

His name is Michael Mendez, a corporal in the U.S.M.C.

We are a great nation.

We know because the makings of it walked into my office that day.

# MALS-24 gunny claims 'best' honors

**Cpl. Jason E. Miller**

*Combat Correspondent*

Gunnery Sgt. Edmund S. Kos, the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24 substance abuse counseling officer (SACO), received the award for excellence as the Substance Abuse Counseling Officer of the Quarter at Kaneohe Bay.

Kos' field requires not only in-depth knowledge of substance abuse issues, but also the compassion to work with troubled service members, and the discipline to advise commanders of appropriate action in dealing with such issues.

Substance abuse has been a problem in all branches of the military, including the Marine Corps.

It is the job of the SACO to provide information about drugs and alcohol for Marines and Sailors in their respective units, so as to help prevent them from becoming dependent on alcohol or drugs and to avoid incidents that could be detrimental to their military careers and families.

Good SACOs meet with their Marines and Sailors, keep them informed of possible problems regarding substances and assist service members when they have personal problems, said Roger O'Guin, program manager at the Substance Abuse Counseling Center (SACC) at K-Bay.

Kos has done an outstanding job of fulfilling his duties as the SACO for MALS-24, O'Guin added. He explained that since Kos took over the duties for the unit. He has assisted many military members who have been sent to him or sought out his guidance.

Kos is efficient in his duties and is known as a "most involved" unit representative by the base SACC and Tripler Army Medical Center's Tri-Service Addictions Recovery Facility, O'Guin said.

"It's always nice to be recognized when you do a job well," commented Kos. "But, I think the unit should really win the award, not one person.

"It's a team effort, and I have lots of support from members of the unit, from the C.O., all the way down to junior Marines."



**KOS**

## Legal Assistance temporarily changes its operating hours, Monday

**Press Release**  
*Hawaii Marine Staff*

Legal Assistance will not be taking walk-ins nor appointments, beginning Monday through Aug. 1, while the Legal Assistance attorneys will be studying the Hawaii State Bar Exam.

The office apologizes for the inconvenience; however, the result of this closing will allow Legal Assistance to improve the quality of service offered to all Marines, Sailors and family members aboard MCB Hawaii.

For urgent matters, the point of contact during this time is 1st Lt. Hamilton at 257-2110 ext. 254.

# EVERY CLIME AND PLACE

## Jungle survival skills honed in SERE Course

Story and Photos by  
Cpl. James S. McGregor  
MCB Camp Butler

CAMP GONSALVES, Japan — A cool breeze flows over the ocean as Marines sit around a tiny fire on the beach next to a crudely-made shelter. They huddle together to keep warm.

As they crowd the fire, they nibble carefully on a small piece of goat meat given to them earlier in the day by their instructors. The meal was not much, but it was a treat for the Marines, who had grown accustomed to eating morsels of crabmeat, plants and bugs. Here in the jungle, they have to use any resource to survive.

The 28 students who conquered a two-week Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) Course here recently, have learned what it is like to live in the jungle with limited tools and gear, according to Cpl. Luis G. Menchaca, instructor, Jungle Warfare Training Center (JWTC).

After the Marines took their physical fitness and water assessment tests, they spent three days receiving instruction about the course.

Next, they moved to the jungle environment to learn how to construct various shelters from trees, branches, bamboo, ferns and "elephant ears." They al-

so learned how to make a fire to dry out clothing and cook a meal.

During this portion of the course, they had to eat what they could find in the field. This included animals, reptiles, bugs and plants.

All these skills learned during the Marines' time in the field was part of the practical application needed to understand the importance of SERE training, according to Lt. Col. Zene Fearing, commanding officer, JWTC.

"Our goal is to expose Marines and Sailors to harsh jungle conditions and teach them that they can live in the jungle by using what we teach them," Fearing said. "It's no good if you teach it in a classroom with no practical application."

The lessons learned through the SERE course are used to give Marines proper training to survive and evade capture in the event they become isolated from their unit. If captured, the Marines are trained to resist attempts by the enemy to pry information from them and to escape from the control of their captors.

This training to survive, evade, resist and escape was conceived after the Korean War, when four SERE schools, tailored to the needs of each service, were implemented nationwide. Subordinate schools were also founded around the world.

Initially, those schools were intended simply for instructing Marines in the Code of Conduct, which came about after the Korean War.

Today, SERE schools train more than 6,200 service members a year. The course varies from 12-19 days, depending on service needs.

In a realistic setting, service members develop their survival skills during the training, Menchaca said.

Some of these skills include using different types of snares

for catching animals, making shelters, fishing with self-made spears, making baskets with small branches and starting fires with magnesium blocks.

Marines also learn what to eat and what not to eat, how to signal with reflective items or by fire, and how to perform self-aid in the field.

The students learn to communicate with other prisoners of war, if they are taken captive, and how to handle captivity.

Menchaca said all these things are incorporated into surviving, evading, resisting and escaping.

Lance Cpl. Levi C. Avera, rifleman, 3rd Platoon, Co. I, 3rd Bn., 2nd Marine Regiment, said practicing these skills was challenging, but it served as a good learning experience that he will be able to use and pass on to other Marines.

"The real challenge is trying to get up and do stuff when you're starving with no energy," Avera said. "I probably won't ever complain about the lack of food in the field."

Fearing added that this training was especially beneficial for Marines in jungle environments.

"In jungle warfare, it's the most diffi-



Lance Cpl. James L. Mason, machine gunner, Heavy Machine Gun Platoon, Weapons Co., 3rd Bn., 2nd Marine Regiment, makes a trap during the survival portion of the SERE course at the Jungle Warfare Training Center.

cult place to fight, and you can be cut off easily where you would be forced to live off the jungle," Fearing said.

"So, we teach the military to survive.

"What makes the course successful is you can use the same techniques in any climate or region.

"Those who complete this course are leaders in their own right, because they used the skills and survived, and that's something to be proud of," he explained.



Lance Cpl. Jeremy P. Dennis, machine gunner, Weapons Platoon, I Co., 3rd Bn., 2nd Marine Regiment, makes a hammer from crude supplies

# Upcoming changes make TSP more user-friendly

Army Sgt. 1st Class  
Kathleen T. Rhem

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Upcoming improvements to the Thrift Savings Plan, for both military and federal civilian employees, will make the program easier to use.

Lieutenant Col. Tom Emswiler, the Army lawyer who directs the Armed Forces Tax Council in the Pentagon, said the most significant change will be that accounts will become daily valued, instead of the current monthly valued. All transactions will be updated daily, he said.

Other changes include better online access to accounts and receiving participant statements expressed in shares and dollars, instead of just dollars, as the current statements are.

All changes are due to be implemented Sept. 16.

Emswiler said no action is required from participants. However, he cautioned, there will be a two-week period, from the end of August until Sept. 16, during which participants will be unable to make certain changes to their accounts or make withdrawals.

“For that two-week period, when they’re actually transferring accounts into the new record-keeping system, there’s going to be a pause in your abil-



ity to do certain things,” he said. “But otherwise, this is basically going to be seamless.”

Thrift Savings Plan participants will gain the ability to make changes daily, “but this isn’t meant to make you a day trader,” Emswiler said. “Think about your long-term investment needs, and don’t move your accounts simply based on short-term market fluctuations.”

He noted that the Thrift Savings Plan is intended to be a retirement investment plan.

“That means it’s a long-term investment. You don’t want to just jump around based on short-term needs,” he explained. “You want to develop your investment strategy based upon what level of risk you’re willing to accept — whether your needs are long-term or short-term — and then stick with that plan.”

For more information on the Thrift Savings Plan, visit the Web site [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov).

A chart outlining the upcoming changes is also available online at [www.tsp.gov/forms/tsplf11.pdf](http://www.tsp.gov/forms/tsplf11.pdf).

## ON THE MEDICAL FRONT:

# Streamlined enrollment makes ‘open season’ for long-term care handy

Gerry J. Gilmore

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Military members, federal employees and their spouses, have a six-month window, starting today, to take advantage of a streamlined application process for the Federal Long-Term Care Insurance (FLTCI) Program.

Federal personnel officials estimate that 20 million people may be eligible to enroll. The insurance is offered by the John Hancock and MetLife insurance companies through a contract with the Office of Personnel Management.

“The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is pleased to sponsor this important new benefit program, which is likely to be the largest employer-sponsored long-term care insurance program in the nation,” OPM Director Kay Coles James noted on the program Web site page at [www.opm.gov/insure/ltc](http://www.opm.gov/insure/ltc).

Long-term care insurance helps people with chronic health conditions to pay for caregivers and services that help them do such things as get out of bed, wash, dress, eat and other activities that the ill and frail find difficult, according to the OPM.

Long-term care may be provided at home, in a nursing home or in an assisted-living facility.

Long-term care is not medical care and usually isn’t covered by medical

insurance plans. Likewise, the long-term insurance program does not cover medical care expenses or medicines.

During the program’s first “open season,” from July 1 through Dec. 31, eligible military members, federal civilians and their spouses need to answer a few health questions as part of the streamlined underwriting process.

Underwriting is key: It determines an applicant’s level of risk, eligibility to participate, premiums and benefits.

On the other hand, because premiums for long-term care insurance are based upon age and state of health, all federal civilian and military retirees must undergo full underwriting, which involves answering more health-related questions and providing more information.

The Long-Term Care Partners Web site, [www.ltcfeds.com](http://www.ltcfeds.com), slated to debut July 1, will feature open season information kits and instructions.

There may be additional FLTCI Open Season enrollment windows, but none are scheduled or promised at this time, program officials said. Procedures and rules may change for future open seasons, they added.

The long-term care insurance program for federal employees “establishes the federal government as a pacesetter in the marketplace,” James noted, “and reflects our commitment to and concern for you, the men and women who work for America.”



Courtesy of NAPS

## SUMMERTIME BLUES?



FEEL DEPRESSED?... TALK ABOUT IT