

Hawaii MARINE

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COLA rates to increase July 1

U.S. Pacific Command
Press Release

CAMP H. M. SMITH — Some service members stationed in the state of Hawaii will be seeing changes in their cost of living allowance, or

COLA, beginning July 1. The changes include increases for service members stationed on the islands of Oahu and Maui. There is no change in the COLA rate for service members stationed on the islands of Hawaii and Kauai.

With the new rates, an E-5 stationed on Oahu with eight years of federal active service and three dependents will see an approximate increase of \$45 a month in COLA. An O-3, under the same criteria, will see a \$61 dollar increase, according

to Eddie Fowler, a personnel policy analyst in U.S. Pacific Command's Manpower, Personnel and Administration Directorate.

The changes to Oahu and Maui's COLA rates are the result of this year's COLA

Retail Price Survey, which is based on the results of a COLA Living Pattern Survey. The Living Pattern Survey, conducted in January 2003, established where military personnel shop.

See *COLA*, A-5

NMCI begins system cutovers

Lance Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson
Combat Correspondent

Navy Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI) began cutting over computers, May 17, to provide an enterprise-wide service that supports Marines and Sailors here with reliable, universal access to data information exchange services.

The switchover is occurring in three-week increments of different sections. Workstation migration training is being scheduled through the base G-6, or Communications personnel, and contractors are providing training at least one week prior to changeovers.

Scheduled training will explain the cutover phase and prepare users to consolidate their data, as the reconfiguration of hardware may consist of changing out computer systems entirely, said Evelyn Flores, the regional contracting officer's representative for Marine Corps Systems Command.

When fully implemented, the NMCI system will be in use on more than 300 Marine Corps and Navy bases located in the mainland United States, Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Japan, Guam, Hawaii and Iceland. NMCI will support an estimated 360,000 Marines, Sailors and civilian personnel.

The \$9 billion contract was signed in October of 2000, by then Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig. The goal is to standardize information technology services across the Department of the Navy and reduce the haphazard IT purchasing processes throughout the Marine Corps and Navy.

Additionally, the program intends to begin the transition of IT-related military occupational specialties (computer repairmen, maintenance, help desk) and civilian employees to free up Marines for deployments and other military-specific duties, while the contractor supports billets in garrison. According to military officials, this transition should increase combat readiness, enhance security, boost productivity and reduce costs, along with a variety of other improvements.

Workstations will be refreshed every three years to ensure the highest quality available is provided to the military, and software will be updated periodically, said Flores.

"Once cutover, Marines and Sailors will receive new e-mail addresses and the Help Desk phone number will be 1-866-THE-NMCI [1-866-843-6624]," said Flores.



Lance Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson

Marines and Sailors of Combat Service Support Group 3 drink to one of many toasts during the Field Mess Night, Saturday evening. The night of camaraderie gave the Group a chance to eat, drink and remember those who could not be there.

A night to remember

Mess Night celebrates Marine Corps tradition in field environment

Lance Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson
Combat Correspondent

Officers and staff noncommissioned officers of Combat Service Support Group 3 held a Field Mess Night, or "Warrior Night" here, Saturday at LZ Boondocker.

With great formality, a mess night celebrates traditions and customs of Marine Corps history, and remembers Marines from years past.

A field mess holds the same traditions, but in a field environment, in

camouflage gear as opposed to dress uniforms.

It took approximately a month of planning with a team of about 12 Marines making the arrangements for the Field Mess Night, said Sgt. Maj. David C. Strowmatt, sergeant major of CSSG-3.

"All the support from volunteer NCOs of the group really made things run smoothly for the evening," he explained.

Two functional officers, known as the president and vice president, over-

see the planning and execution of the event.

The president is usually a senior Marine within the mess. This year Col. James E. Harbison, commanding officer for CSSG-3, held that position. The vice president is usually the junior noncommissioned officer within the unit. Staff Sgt. Phillip E. Shadden, shore party chief for CSSG-3, held the position, and was responsible for the planning, coordination and execution

See *MESS NIGHT*, A-5

Algae smothers Hawaii's coral reefs

Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner
Combat Correspondent



Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

The field trip portion of the "Aliens on the Reef" environmental awareness presentation took students to Hale Koa Beach, where they searched for and identified different species of alien algae.

Coral reefs earned the nickname "the rain forests of the sea," due to their incredible biological diversity. Unfortunately, as with other rain forests worldwide, the reefs' habitat is under attack at an alarming rate.

"Recently — mostly over the past five years — alien species of algae have been introduced onto the coral reefs, causing significant damage along many of the islands' coral reef beds," explained Dave Gulko, coral reef biologist from the Division of Aquatic Resources, Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Reef and algae experts spoke at an environmental workshop here at the Environmental Protection and Compliance Department building May 28. Beginning with slide presentations on the various types of seaweed found in the waters surrounding Oahu, the

See *ALGAE*, A-5

MCBH NEWS BRIEFS

Tuesday, Power Outage Scheduled Aboard K-Bay

Due to the construction of the new 212 Unit Housing Project at Kaneohe Bay, an electrical outage will occur from 8 a.m. until noon on Tuesday.

Affected locations will include all of Capehart Housing, all of Nani Ulupau Housing, all of the Ammo Supply Point areas, all of the Rifle Range, Bldg. 4088 (the Medical Warehouse), Bldg. 6076 (Verizon Hawaii), and traffic lights at the intersection of Mokapu Road and Harris Avenue.

The gas station and Firestone Service Station will also be affected by the outage, but an electrical generator will provide power for these facilities so they can remain operational.

Hotline Takes Pothole Calls

Base employees and residents can report potholes and burnt-out streetlights to the Base Facilities Department by calling 257-2380.

Next Week, Sections of H-1 Close for Repairs

Tuesday from 9:30 p.m. until 4 a.m., State Department of Transportation crews will be working in the following areas, which necessitates the following closures:

- On the H-1 eastbound from the Waimalu on-ramp to the Kaonohi Street Overpass. (The right lane and shoulder of the freeway will be closed.)

- The two left lanes of the H-1 eastbound at the Gulick Overpass. (Both will be closed.)

DOT crews will also be re-stripping several intersections along Nimitz Highway and Ala Moana Boulevard at Hobron Lane, Puuhale Road, Mokauea, Kalihi and Waiakamilo Streets, which may cause rerouting of traffic.

PWMA Accepting Brick Orders

Due to continued interest in the "Walkway of Honor" bricks located at the Pacific War Memorial adjacent the entrance to MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, The Pacific War Memorial Association is accepting orders online at www.PacificWarMemorial.org, or call 533-3759.

Hawaii MARINE

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IN THE CG'S MAILBOX



BRIG. GEN.
MCABEE

As a concerned shopper, a Marine Corps wife, and a member of the AESC (All Enlisted Spouses Club), I am overjoyed at all the positive things we are doing. But I feel if everyone knew all these wonderful things, we would not be in this bind (at the AESC Thrift Shop).

We need more volunteers to be able to continue to do these great things for the MCB Hawaii community. We are nonprofit, and we are here for the people. They donate wonderful things. It would be nice if they donated their time as well.

We are more than just spouses, we are part of the Marines, too, the married part.

Thanks for your consideration in this matter.

Mrs. L. Kelly



Dear Mrs. Kelly:

The commanding general asked me to respond to your April 11 e-mail because your concern falls within my staff responsibilities. He appreciates that you took the time to participate in the "CG Mail" pro-

gram.

Volunteers are undoubtedly one of our tremendous resources that help extend the services that Marine Corps Community Services provides Marines, Sailors and families aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii. I am also pleased to inform you that the All Enlisted Spouses Club was one of more than 30 agencies honored during our annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony in April.

The volunteer program has recently undergone changes that should allow us to provide enhanced support for volunteers and the programs that employ them. Some of the initiatives we will use to increase volunteers include the following:

- Providing information about volunteer programs at the New Arrivals Orientations and pre-deployment briefs.

- Developing an AESC flyer for inclusion in Welcome Aboard packages for inbound personnel and families.

- Promoting volunteer programs in the *Hawaii Marine* and on the base television channel.

- Creating and developing posi-

tion descriptions for individual volunteer assignments with the assistance of volunteer agencies like the AESC.

- Planning an annual Volunteer Fair in order to provide increased visibility of volunteer programs and organizations aboard the base.

- Using electronic mail to disseminate information about volunteer programs and events to key individuals within base units. These will include executive officers, sergeants major and command master chiefs, chaplains, Single Marine & Sailor Program representatives, etc.

The commanding general and MCCS are committed to promoting and supporting volunteers. I believe our plans and initiatives will help to re-energize the MCB Hawaii volunteer program and result in increased volunteer participation.

We appreciate your thoughtful comments and concerns. Thank you again for taking the time to participate in the CG Mail program.

Sincerely,

Mr. William B. Lindsey
Assistant Chief of Staff

Marine Corps Community Services

(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.

See next week's paper about volunteerism

Volunteerism is an act of individual selflessness that not only benefits others, but can also help to improve your own outlook on life.

"When you become detached mentally from yourself and concentrate on helping other people with their difficulties, you will be able to cope with your own more effectively," says Norman

Vincent Peale, author of "The Power of Positive Thinking."

A plethora of volunteer options exists on base and locally for those interested in volunteering their time for a worthwhile cause. See next week's *Hawaii Marine* to discover how you can get involved as a base and local community volunteer.

Getting it Straight



The Joint Civilian Orientation Conference (JCOC)-68 will convene in Honolulu, in September 2004, not Washington, D.C., as reported incorrectly in last week's *Hawaii Marine*.

Parking, traffic problems plague Camp H.M. Smith

Pfc. Bernadette L. Ainsworth
U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific

CAMP H.M. SMITH — If there's one thing Camp Smith is known for, it's the parking, or lack thereof. But, parking here isn't a new problem at the headquarters command, according to Sgt. Amber D. Shipley, with Physical Security at Camp Smith's Provost Marshals Office during the last two years.

Most of the legal parking stalls on Camp Smith fill up by 7 a.m., which causes service members, civilians and visitors to park illegally, said 1st Lt. Christopher P. Lanum, operations officer at Camp Smith's PMO. "If a car is illegally parked and blocking the flow of traffic, we will do our best to contact the owner. If we fail to contact him, we'll call a tow truck to get the car removed," he said. "We can't have unsafe parking conditions."

If a military tow truck from Marine Corps Base Hawaii can't tow the vehicle, a civilian tow truck is called to remove it.

Presently, Camp Smith actually boasts 1,800 parking stalls; however,

the combined base workforce and daily visitor count is approximately 3,500 vehicles on any given workday.

At one time, a section of Bordelon Field was open to create extra parking, but it is now closed. Yet, a few plans are on the table to alleviate the parking problem.

Requests to pave a portion of Bordelon Field would provide approximately 200 stalls. If approved, these would probably come with an end-of-the-year funding program.

Another plan that's been discussed is a parking structure, which would be built where the tennis courts are now. If approved, the structure would not be completed for several more years, according to Lanum.

Congestion has also been an ongoing traffic issue at Camp Smith, since only two gates are open during the peak hours of 5 to 8 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m.

"If more people used Echo Gate, located past the Main Gate on Halawa Heights Road, it would alleviate much of the congestion," said Lanum.

Lanum said it would also help if people would have their identification cards ready when they proceed through the gate.

Two plans exist to relocate the Main Gate here. Both plans include new gates, while still using the current gates. What differs is the direction of the flow of traffic through each.

The last big traffic issue on Camp Smith, according to Lanum, is motorcyclists who do not wear the appropriate gear on and off military installations.

"We're still seeing people riding motorcycles and not following the base regulations on reflective and protective gear," he said. "Regardless of where motorcycles are registered, this is a Marine Corps base, and regulations must be followed."

Motorcyclists riding without the proper safety gear will not be allowed on base, Lanum added.

Although traffic issues can be frustrating at times, PMO said it will continue to enforce base regulations and provide community service aboard Camp Smith.



Food service specialists work hard, long hours to prepare meals for MCB Hawaii

Story and Photos by
Lance Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson
Combat Correspondent

Every day, more than 1,400 Marines and Sailors pass through the Anderson Hall dining facility and the Satellite dining facility here, without giving a second thought to what effort goes into preparing their meals.

The job of a food service specialist is anything but easy; however, the Marines and Sailors who work in the mess halls dedicate their time to getting healthy food served, without delay, and allowing their patrons to fill up on a great meal and continue with their day.

"The best part about my job is seeing Marines smiling as they finish their meals," said Lance Cpl. Kentrell J. Allen, food service specialist with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, currently working at the dining facility. "When I see that [smile], I know I did my job."

The New Orleans native has been cooking since he was 10 years old, and food service is the career he chose when he joined the Corps.

"I would cook for my family every Sunday after my mom taught me how to cook, and I've just been loving it ever since," said Allen. "There is no stress for me with this job; I just love to cook."

Food service specialists work in shifts, a work schedule that combines long hours and nonstandard workdays, said Staff Sgt. Daniel P. Flinton, chief cook at Anderson Hall and a member of Combat Service Support Group 3.

"This job doesn't provide for too much time off, and the time you do receive, you have to make sure you get all of your training taken care of," said

Flinton, who grew up in Saratoga, N.Y., and has been cooking since he was 7. "It makes it all worth it, though, when someone comes up to you and tells you that they really liked the meal you made."

According to Flinton, it takes an average of three hours to prepare each meal every day for service members, and a staff of 13 workers on hand to help out. For special meals, such as the Marine Corps birthday meal, preparation begins the day before and continues for six to seven hours the day of.

"That [the special occasion meal] is everyone's favorite; we always get the biggest turnout for something like that," said Flinton, explaining that steak and lobster is a surefire menu selection.

Each food service specialist must bake pastries; cook meats, vegetables and gravies; work in subsistence supply; and use and maintain field gear.

"When a cook is sent into the field, the ratio is one cook for every 75 other Marines in the field," said Flinton. "The hours are longer and the food is dehydrated. The cook also has to maintain the same sanitation standards [in the field environment]."

Sanitation is one of the most important responsibilities of the food service specialist job, said Flinton.

"If something is spilled, it is cleaned up immediately. They wear gloves all the time and wash their hands constantly," Flinton explained.

A two-month school teaches food service specialists to follow sanitation rules strictly, and provides instructions for preparing menus and meals. Even the finer arts such as garnishing food items are thoroughly covered at the school.

"My favorite part of this job is joking with Marines when I serve them chow," said Allen. "Everyone can feel down, sometimes, and I take that as my opportunity to make their day a little bit brighter."

According to Flinton, the Marines he works with are hard workers and are ever willing to devote the extra effort required to prepare a scrumptious meal.

"They're just like any other Marines," said Flinton. "They'll work as hard as they can for you."



Above — Lance Cpl. Lorenzo L. Capel, a food service specialist with 1st Bn., 3rd Marine Regiment, mixes noodles at the Anderson Hall dining facility.

Left — Private First Class Xavier Greaber, a food service specialist with Combat Service Support Group 3, mixes tuna salad for hungry Marines at the chow hall.

Below — Streusel topping is prepared by hand.



Word on the Street

Who is your personal hero and how have they changed your life?



"Myself. The day I signed myself up for the military changed my life."

**Petty Officer 2nd Class
Robert Markley**
Aviation mechanic
VP-U2



"My dad, because he taught me everything I know in life."

**Private First Class
Andrew G. Riedel**
Rifleman
Bravo Co., 1/3



"My father who was in the Navy for 20 years and received a Navy Cross for actions at Vietnam."

**Petty Officer 3rd Class
Michael Williams**
Musician
Navy Pacific Fleet Band



"My husband, because he is a retired colonel in the Marine Corps and saw a tour in Korea and three tours in Vietnam."

Janet Wilkinson
Retired registered nurse



"My mother. She's shown me that if she can make it as a single mother, that I can do whatever I want to in life."

Sgt. Sergio Barrios
Heavy equipment operator, 3rd Marines

Strand moved up the ranks quickly

Cpl. Monroe F. Seigle
Community Relations Clerk



STRAND

With 13 promotions and 32 years of experience under his belt, an MCB Hawaii legend says goodbye.

If you ask Lt. Col. Danny Strand, former antiterrorism officer here, how he managed to be promoted so many times, he will just smile and tell you, "I had some of the best officers and noncommissioned officers in the Marine Corps teach me everything I know."

Strand was only 16 when he decided he needed to find a job. His grandparents, with whom he lived, were struggling financially. Although he was between his sophomore and junior years of high school, he decided the military would be a job he could perform in well.

"I remember I called the Air Force recruiters first," recalled a smiling Strand about his youth. "I told them I wanted to join, and the first thing they

asked me was if I had a high school diploma. When I told them 'no,' they hung up on me, and all I heard was the line go dead."

Attempt number two was a call to the Army. The recruiter asked him if he graduated high school as well. The recruiter told him that since he didn't graduate high school and he was so young, he would more than likely not pass the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test.

"The last call I made was to the Marines," said Strand. "I told the recruiter I wanted to join and he asked me three questions: He asked me where I lived, how to get there and how long it would take from where he was [to get to where I was]."

"Once I gave him the directions to my house, he told me he would be there in 45 minutes. I remember him arriving in 35. When he arrived, I was standing in the driveway," Strand continued. "He had a clipboard in his hand, and he looked at me and said, 'Are you Strand?' I told him I was, and he handed me that clipboard and said, 'sign here.' That was my recruiting speech," Strand said with a chuckle.

Strand turned 17 years old, Aug. 25, 1972. Three days later, he was at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C., to begin recruit training. Although he was the youngest recruit in the platoon, he earned the rank of private first class upon graduation.

It was shortly afterward that Strand decided he loved the Marine Corps. By the time he was age 18, he had already attained the rank of corporal. More impressive still, he was a sergeant by 19. Strand often says he is both "married to the Corps" and his wife, Wendy Strand, whom he married at 19.

"I told my wife I could not afford to be married until I made sergeant," said Strand with a voice that demands attention. "I remember I was promoted to sergeant May 1, 1975, and 17 days later, my wife and I got married. She has been a good wife and stood by me through all the hard times."

"Life in the Marine Corps has not been easy," recalled Wendy Strand. "I remember the long hours my husband put in while he was on the drill field. Life in the Corps takes a toll on spouses just like it does the Marine. Through all the hard times, he has always been the kind of Marine you expect Marines to be."

Strand was selected for the rank of gunnery sergeant during his tour as a

drill instructor. Upon completion of drill instructor duty, he was promoted to warrant officer by the commanding general of MCRD, San Diego.

He earned the rank of chief warrant officer 3 before earning a temporary commission as a first lieutenant, in the status of limited duty officer. He became a permanent officer in '90, when he was promoted to the rank of captain.

Although Strand was promoted to the rank of major in '96, he didn't think he would attain the rank of lieutenant colonel before retiring.

"The year I was promoted to lieutenant colonel, there were 50 other officers up for promotion in my [military occupational specialty] and only 26 were selected," he said with a solemn look on his straight-edged face. "There were 24 Marines that were passed over, and I honestly think that some of them had a better record than I did. Many of them were great officers and outstanding Marines. I was really surprised when I was informed that I was selected."

Strand is scheduled to retire from the active duty ranks in approximately two years, after he completes a tour as executive officer of Marine Corps Logistics Base, Barstow, Calif., his next duty station. Many here say that MCB Hawaii is losing a great Marine.

Details, details



Pfc. Rich Mattingly

Marines from Headquarters Battalion, here, detail a car in the Kahuna's parking lot during a fund-raising car wash there Saturday. All proceeds from the car wash go to plan and put on the Marine Corps birthday ball this fall. Future car washes are scheduled June 15 and 26.

DUIs are career killers



(Editor's Note: Per the commanding general of MCB Hawaii, those convicted of driving under the influence [DUI], driving while intoxicated or drug-related offenses shall be publicized in the Hawaii Marine newspaper.)

The Military Police Department added the following names to the DUI roster, suspended the license of the driver, and removed his or her vehicle and its DoD decal from the installation.

•May 27, Lance Cpl. Jermaine A. Coburn of Alpha Co., 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, for underage consumption with a blood alcohol content of .068 percent.

•May 31, Lance Cpl. William A. Ehrlich of Marine Helicopter Training Squadron 301, for driving under the influence with a BAC of .140 percent.

Click It or Ticket gets results

NAPS Featurettes

Twice each year, law enforcement agencies nationwide conduct intensive, high-publicity "Click It or Ticket" campaigns with zero-tolerance enforcement of safety belt laws. These efforts, coupled with paid advertising and the support of government agencies, local coalitions and school officials, work to create dramatic increases in safety belt usage and help defend us against one of the greatest threats to us all — traffic crashes.

The new campaign will have a special focus on getting teens and young adults

to buckle up. Vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Americans 15 to 34, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2002, approximately two-thirds of all 15 to 34-year-olds killed or seriously injured in crashes weren't wearing a safety belt.

The Click It or Ticket efforts work. Research shows the campaign to be a key factor in raising safety belt usage rates. In 2003, more states ran campaigns than ever before, and usage rates indicate there was an unprecedented four-point jump in safety belt use nationwide, from 75 percent in 2002 to 79 percent in 2003.

Each percentage point increase in usage saves about 270 lives nationwide.

ALGAE, From A-1

workshop educated students on the biological marine life in the Kaneohe Bay area.

"Hawaii is home to 15 percent of the nation's coral reefs," Gulko explained. "That is more than any other state in the U.S."

During his presentation, Gulko primarily discussed the importance of Hawaii's eco-structure and why it is so imperative that the coral reefs in this area are protected and saved. According to Gulko, Hawaii is biologically rich with various creatures and other organisms. Oahu has many native species, organisms that can be found around this island and nowhere else.

Out of the millions of organisms found on Hawaiian coral reefs, nearly 25 percent are native to Oahu, therefore making the island an extremely important ecosystem for marine biology.

Gulko added, not only are these organisms important for science, but also they are important to Oahu's economy, which affects the local community as well as the thousands of tourists who visit the island every year.

Although many people enjoy the beauty of the reef beds, he continued, many others are unaware the reefs are in danger of extinction and are disappearing at a rate faster than rain forests.

Experts from the Waikiki Aquarium, the

University of Hawaii and the Nature Conservancy, joined representatives from the state's Department of Land and Natural Resources for the workshop, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency. For some time, these experts have been conducting their environmental awareness program known as "Aliens on the Reef" in diverse organizations.

The group has traveled to various places around the island of Oahu and shared knowledge of the damage caused by invasive seaweeds (algae) in Hawaii. During its brief stop here, the group not only presented a plethora of information to ocean enthusiasts that attended the class, but also led a hands-on field trip to Hale Koa Beach.

To visually provide a better understanding of the direct effects of the algae, the class geared up for the shoreline. A caravan of cars headed to Hale Koa Beach where the experts explained to students what to observe before giving them free range of the beach to explore and see what they could find. Nearly every student found an organism that they had seen before, but had never realized was dangerous to the environment.



Lance Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Hundreds of different types of alien algae species have caused significant damage to the coral reefs surrounding Oahu.

Programs involved in the clean up and disposal of these foreign organisms have recently been established in the Oahu area. Community outreach and public awareness organizations removed more than 60 tons of "Gorilla Ogo," a type of algae, from Queen's Surf Beach in Waikiki. After the volunteers collected the materials, they were recycled and turned into mulch.

"We are constantly looking into more ways to help out the Oahu area," Gulko said. "With the help of the community, we are slowly removing the aliens species from the island's beautiful coral reefs. We hope to continue to make the public more aware of the situation, and we are doing our best to restore the island back to its rich, biologically diverse ecosystem that so many people enjoy."

MESS NIGHT, From A-1

of the entire mess night.

Traditional features must be followed during a mess night, as it is a carefully planned event. Therefore, cocktail hour began at 5 p.m. to encourage social rapport with guests.

Once the call to dinner was made, all marched to their assigned seats and stood as the chaplain said grace. Then once everyone

was seated, the floor opened for fines and all had the opportunity to call out anyone in the mess for punishment — anything from eating pizza under a certain time frame to singing and dancing "I'm a Little Teapot."

During the meal, which consisted of steak, salad, vegetables and dessert, Marines and Sailors shared friendly conversation, before toasting fallen Marines and Sailors, as well as service members who are fighting around

the world today.

The guest of honor, retired Master Sgt. Steven P. Parker, formerly of Supply Company, CSSG-3, spoke to everyone in the mess and commended the Group for the outstanding accomplishments it has achieved.

"Mess Night really establishes a fellowship with all who attend," said Strowmatt. "The camaraderie between everyone during the evening is a great experience."

COLA, From A-1

The U.S. Pacific Command then conducts a Retail Price Survey each year for the next three years at the retail locations identified in the Living Pattern Survey.

The raw data collected through the surveys is sent to the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee, in Washington D.C. Based on this year's data, the committee determined changes were due for Oahu and Maui.

"What made the difference in January 2003 was the fact that people took the time to fill out the Living Pattern Survey correctly, showing us where they shop in their local community," said Army Maj. Eric Hunke of USPACOM's Personnel Programs Branch. "We [in the military] seem to spend a lot of money in the commissaries and exchanges, out of necessity, but we also do about 40 percent of our shopping at local markets, out of convenience."

More information about COLA, including calculators and explanations on how COLA is determined, is at the "per diem" Web site located at www.dtic.mil/perdiem/index.html.