

Hawaii MARINE

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Volume 31, Number 22

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June 7, 2002

'Fire mission, fire mission!'



Sgt. Robert Carlson

Lance Cpl. Willy Turner, a gunner with Charlie Battery, 1/12, lays Gun 3 during a demonstration at the battalion's family day event May 31. Read the full story on page B-1.

CSSG-3 says 'aloha' with 15-mile trek

Sgt. Robert Carlson
Press Chief

The first word in their name is 'Combat,' and the Marines and Sailors of Combat Service Support Group 3 increased their readiness May 30 with a group march from Marine Corps Training Area Bellows to MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

More than 480 Marines and Sailors made the late-night, 15-mile trek from the sandy shores of MCTAB to the CSSG-3 armory.

"Combat is about assaulting the enemy and winning," Col. Paul Adams told the group after the hump. "The bottom line is that when we need to fight, we'll be ready to do that, and we will win."

The hike started just after 9 p.m. and took the Marines through Waimanalo and Kailua. Because of careful coordination with the Honolulu Police Department, the group was able to accomplish their mission and arrive at K-Bay by 1 a.m.

Corporal Timothy Anderson, chief dispatcher at the CSSG-3 motor pool, said the hike from Bellows to K-Bay is something he's always wanted to do, and was good for the Marines and Sailors in his company.

"This was a tremendous effort by a tremendous group of Marines and Sailors," said Sgt. Maj. Juan Sandoval, CSSG-3 sergeant major.

For Sandoval, this was

See CSSG-3, A-4

HMH-363 Red Lions celebrate the "Big 50"

Lance Cpl. Jessica M. Mills
Sports Editor

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 363 celebrated its 50th birthday May 31, during a Mess Night at MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay's Fairways Club.

According to Sgt. Bruce Ranstadler, a maintenance controller with Maintenance Control, HMH-363, the squadron, also known as the "Red Lions," is one of the oldest Marine heavy helicopter squadrons in the Marine Corps.

"Not many squadrons have 50 years of history behind them; it gives the Marines and Sailors a lot of pride and motivation to be part of it," said Ranstadler.

The squadron was activated June 2, 1952, at Santa Ana, Calif., as the Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron 363.

Over the next 20 years, it was redesignated and reassigned five separate times before finally becoming HMH-363 in January 1969.

According to Ranstadler, the squadron went through so many redesignations because of military aircraft upgrades. It changed from the UH-34 to the CH-53D Sea Stallion helicopter. Though the Corps has now upgraded to the CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter, the squadron still maintains CH-53Ds.

The squadron has been attached to Marine Aircraft Group 16, MAG-36 and the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. In August 1996, it was reassigned to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Aviation Support Element at MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. Earlier this year, the 1st MAW ASEK was redesignated as Marine Aircraft Group



Photo courtesy of Maj. Bruce Brahe

HMH-363 drops troops from a CH-53D during operation KITP-01, November 2001, in Pohang Korea.

24.

The Red Lions have participated in many operations over the last 50 years including Vietnam, from September 1965 until January 1969, where it was actively

involved with operations in Da Nang, Khe Sanh, Hue City and many others.

While in Vietnam, the squadron re-

See RED LIONS, A-5

21st Dental Co. readies itself for mobile capabilities



Sgt. Robert Carlson

Navy Captain Charles R. Fairchild, commanding officer, Naval Dental Center Pearl Harbor, hands the keys of the Mobile Dental Unit over to Cmdr. Lee E. Niemeyer, company commander, 21st Dental Co.

Sgt. Robert Carlson
Press Chief

The 21st Dental Co. aboard MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, will take its clinic on the road to commands around the base soon — thanks to a new Mobile Dental Unit.

The mobile clinic has the capability to support routine dental procedures, and it will greatly increase dental readiness among the Marines and Sailors of MCB Hawaii.

"This gives us the capability to drive right up to the squadrons and the battalions and take care of dental readiness issues right outside their door," said Senior Chief Petty Officer Roland Manahan, command senior chief for Combat Service Support Group 3 and the 21st Dental Co. "It will take a lot less time, and there won't be any excuse for any Marine or Sailor to be Class 4."

Manahan knows the program will be a success because he started the Mobile Dental Unit program when he was in San Diego.

"We had five vans in San Diego, and we were able to help a lot of people stay up-to-date on their treatment," he said.

The Mobile Dental Unit is actually a Class-A motor home that is fitted with hydraulics and dental chairs. The unit is equipped to handle exams, basic X-rays, and even quick cleanings.

If a patient needs only an exam and a quick cleaning, the clinic staff will be able to make that person Class 1, right on the spot.

The 21st Dental Co. should be ready to take its show on the road within a few months, Manahan said, and with it, the clinic hopes to keep more Marines and Sailors in better dental shape.

Drug Task Force stands up at MCBH

Marine Corps Base Hawaii is standing up a drug prevention task force to better educate Marines and Sailors about the dangerous realities of illegal drug use.

Headed by Lt. Col. Michael O'Halloran, deputy commander, MCB Hawaii, it will include members of the base staff and representation from tenant commands.

"We want to dispel a lot of the commonly held myths about drugs, and we want to make sure that our Marines and Sailors understand the policy regarding drug use and the

consequences for not following this policy," said O'Halloran.

The task force will also assess causes, the extent of illegal activity and interagency and interdepartmental cooperation.

MCBH NEWS BRIEFS

POST OFFICE CHANGES HOURS ABOARD K-BAY

The Kaneohe Bay U.S. Post Office has changed its hours to better serve customers. New hours of operation are as follows:

Monday thru Friday: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Saturdays, Sundays & Holidays: closed.

Unit Mail Call: 9 - 11 a.m.
Official Mail Service: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Parcel Pick-up: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

SCHOOL SURVEY EXTENDED

The Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command has extended the time frame for the customer satisfaction survey to measure perceptions regarding military dependent children's education in Hawaii.

All military parents of school-aged children (public, private and homeschool), as well as military dependent students in grades 5 - 12 (public and private schools), are encouraged to participate in the survey at <http://www.hawaii-survey.com>.

The full study is projected for completion by the end of November 2002, and feedback will be provided to all military communities by December 2002.

NAVY TO HOLD AUCTION, JUNE 15

The general public is invited to the Enlisted Navy Ball Auction, Saturday, June 15 at Richardson Field, from noon till 4 p.m. (or later, if all items aren't sold by 4 p.m.).

Bargain hunters can name their price and choose from various items. As well, several concessions such as Huli Huli chicken will be available during the auction.

Items are still being accepted for the auction and may be delivered June 13, 14 or 15.

If you'd like to make a donation, or have questions about the auction, contact Senior Chief Mike Brookover at 477-3733.

BACK GATE HOURS EXTENDED

The MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, back gate, on Mokapu Road, is now open seven days a week, from 5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The hours were extended to better support the base and its military community.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

On-Base Emergencies	257-9111
Military Police	257-7114
Crisis Hotline	521-4555
Child Protective Services	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188

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NCOs choose Corps' reforms

Sgt. Daryl G. Sanford
MCB Quantico Public Affairs Office

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. — The Corps' best noncommissioned officers gathered at Quantico last week and decided on 18 ways to improve the Corps.

Units from around the world chose their best Marines to decide on these issues. Many won their unit's non-commissioned officer of the year or quarter boards before their selection to this Noncommissioned Officer Symposium.

Prior to their arrival, the NCOs gathered more than 90 topics of concern at their units and submitted them to the office of the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

At the start of the symposium, the Marines received classes on major topics affecting the Corps.

"We had the subject matter experts come down to give briefs on the topics submitted," said Staff Sgt. Darby Carter, executive assistant to the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. The purpose of the briefs, said Carter, was to inform the Marines on the topics they would discuss.

"The classes gave me a broader view of the Marine Corps," said Sgt. Russ Gordon. "There is a lot of opportunity out there. If you look at all the benefits, there is no other company out there that will give you as much as the Corps gives you."

The focus of the final classes was not to impart knowledge, but to help the Marines think of imaginative and creative ways to help solve issues.

"The process is designed to bring them up a level," said Debbie Dietrich, head, Organizational Development Section, Headquarters Marine Corps. "They come here with agenda items



Lance Cpl. Joseph Price

Several noncommissioned officers throughout the Marine Corps came to a "meeting of the minds" during an NCO Symposium May 20 - 24 in Quantico, Va.

from fellow Marines and their commands. When the NCOs give their out brief, they are talking on the Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps level.

"They should see things at a higher level, and must be open to all perspectives."

After the classes and the team building exercises, the Marines were split into four groups, each with their own set of recommendations, with assistance from the Organizational Development Section to guide them.

"This is their work, their time to shine," said Dietrich. "For some, it will be the high point in their career to brief the CMC and the sergeant major. We just support them."

After each group was completed,

Gen. James L. Jones, Commandant of the Marine Corps, visited the symposium to praise the Marines.

"The reason you are here is not for you to hear from me, but for me to hear from you," he said. "You are here representing a very important part of the Corps ... your NCOs, your peers and your subordinate Marines. It doesn't end here with the symposium."

General Jones also informed the Marines that Headquarters Marine Corps would keep in touch with those who attended, and over the next year, they may be contacted for their point of view on general subjects that affect the Corps.

When the final list was completed, the NCOs briefed their findings to Sgt. Maj. Alford L. McMichael, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

"During the group discussion, there were some wild-hair ideas that came up. Everyone had a different idea," said Sgt. Michael Almandarez of the Quantico Food Service Branch. "But at the conclusion, we all came together."

Many of the questions were removed from the list because of propriety such as those that need to be addressed at the unit level. Others were combined, modified and presented to McMichael during an out brief May 24 at Liversedge Hall.

"I was very impressed with the out brief," said McMichael. "I thought their recommendations were within our vision. Their desire for change is for the better, not just a selfish goal."

McMichael added that some of the topics were already at the attention of Headquarters Marine Corps.

"It shows that the Corps is still looking at these things that need to be changed and implemented," he explained.

Symposium forwards recommendations

Sgt. Daryl G. Sanford
MCB Quantico Public Affairs Office

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. — After the close of the Noncommissioned Officer Symposium, Sgt. Maj. Alford L. McMichael, sergeant major of the Marine Corps, presented collected concerns to Gen. James L. Jones, Commandant of the Marine Corps, who will make the final decision on each topic.

The official message announcing those decisions will be posted this year; however, a brief review of the topics chosen by the NCOs shows the depth of their discussions.

Body Fat Measurements

Discussion: The current method of body fat measurement (taping) is inaccurate. The current measuring method does not take into consideration an individual's frame size (i.e., bone structure).

Recommendation: The Marine Corps should employ the caliper and do

away with the taping method.

Height Standards

Discussion: Current Marine Corps Orders (MCO 6100.10B w/chs 1 - 4 and MCO 1610.7E) do not offer weight guidance for all Marines.

Recommendation: Implement weight guidance for Marines that are shorter or taller than the reference states.

Marine Rifle Qualifications:

Discussion: All Marines should be afforded the opportunity to sustain and improve marksmanship training.

Recommendation: Require all Marines to qualify on the range to the extent of using other services' facilities (emptying non-accommodating special duties such as Marine Security Guard duty).

Swim Qualifications

Discussion: Associate programs with promotion, to ensure sustainment of those programs

Recommendation: Include in IRAM and PES Manuals more guidance on

the evaluation of MCMAP/swim qualification as they pertain to assigning proficiency marks and fitness reports.

College Loan Repayments

(Reference: Army Regulation 621-202; www.af.mil; and www.navy.mil)

Discussion: As a part of their enlistment incentives, all other branches of the military offer to repay college loans acquired prior to members entering the service. Repayment depends on the length of the contract signed and other options.

Recommendation: Match or better the offers of other services to repay college loans as an enlistment incentive.

Base Housing Process

Discussion: Current base housing procedures require inbound Marines to physically report in. Marines often get on a six-month to two year waiting list.

Recommendation: Implement a

See SYMPOSIUM, A-7



COMPTON

HMH-463 gets new sergeant major



Sergeant Major Stefone Compton, formerly of the Inspector and Instructor Staff at Buffalo, New York, assumed duties as sergeant major of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463 at a post and relief ceremony April 29. Compton relieved Sgt. Maj. Arthur Taylor who took enlisted command of Marine Corps Air Facility.



TAYLOR



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.

HMM-265 relies on instruments

Pilots must demonstrate they can fly, land solely depending upon equipment



Cpl. Jason E. Miller

An HMM-265 pilot prepares to lift his CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter off the ground for an instrument-only flight.

"In Thailand, flying by instruments requires a good map study for hazards."

Lt. Col. Kevin L. Sullivan
Commanding Officer, HMM-265

Cpl. Jason E. Miller
Combat Correspondent

U'TAPAO NATIONAL AIRFIELD, Thailand — Each year, Marine Corps pilots must complete a designated amount of flight hours using instruments alone, instead of sight, to fly and land their aircraft.

On May 19, pilots from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265, out of Okinawa, Japan, got a chance to fly their CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters on instrument only missions, while on deployment to Thailand for Exercise Cobra Gold 2002.

"In Thailand, flying by instruments requires a good map study for hazards," said Lt. Col. Kevin L. Sullivan, commanding officer of HMM-265.

"A lot of the maps we have here needed to be updated. It's much more difficult to fly in unfamiliar terrain."

Flying in Thailand has given the pilots a better chance to properly rely on the use of their equipment, since flights take place in unfamiliar areas.

Contrasting, in areas common to the aviators, it is often difficult to truly rely on instruments when much about the area's terrain is already known.

When visibility is at a minimum,



Cpl. Jason E. Miller

A CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter prepares to take off on a mission during Cobra Gold 2002.

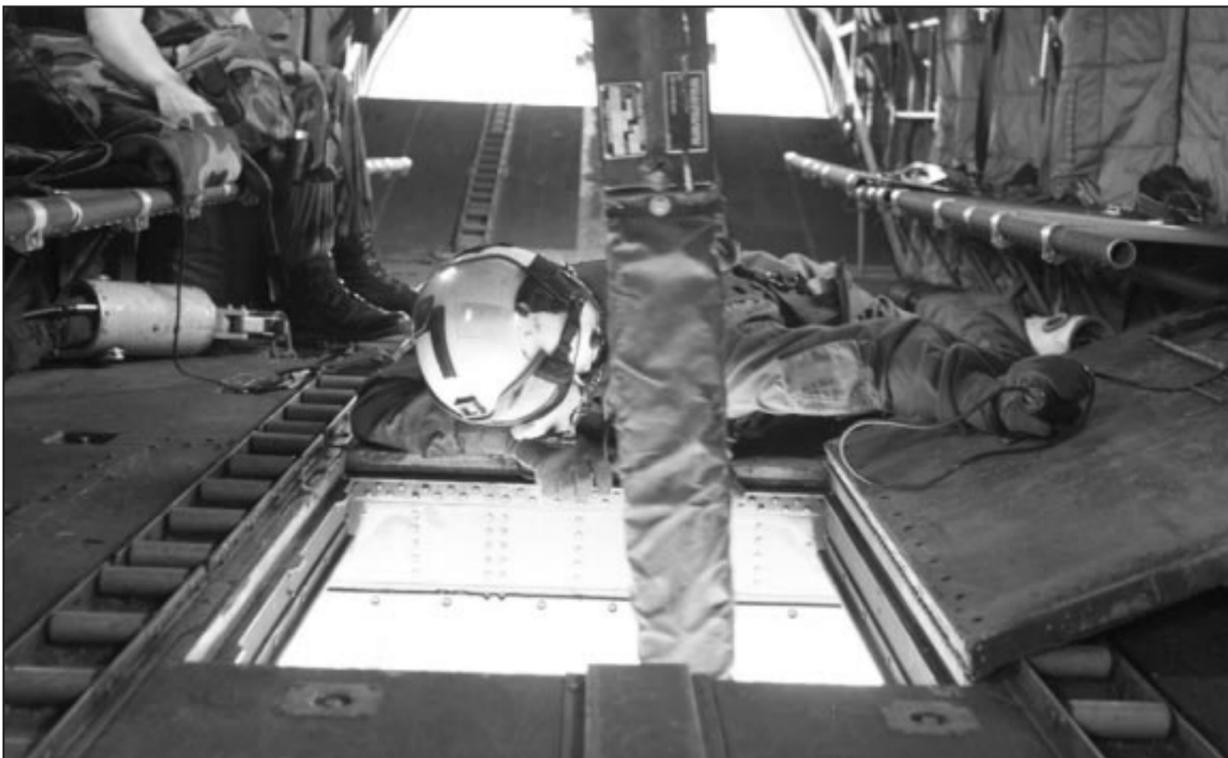
the instruments in the cockpit can be the only medium pilots have to find their way safely through a flight.

Meters that measure speed, altitude, fuel and power must all be taken into consideration when making judgments during and instrument-only flight.

When flying over areas such as the open ocean, pilots must rely solely on their instruments to guide them, because there are no landmarks to serve as reference points on the terrain.

"Flying by instruments is a very perishable skill," said Capt. Ken Gardner, a CH-46 pilot for HMM-265. "Pilots often don't dedicate enough time to training like this, but it is imperative that we keep up with at least our minimums each year.

"If you don't get your practice in, you can definitely lose aptitude fast," he explained.



Cpl. Jason E. Miller

A crew chief peers through the bottom of a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter, making sure all is well with the vehicle dangling below.

HMH-462 practices external lifts

Cpl. Jason E. Miller
Combat Correspondent

U'TAPAO NATIONAL AIRFIELD, Thailand — External lifts, as one pilot put it, are the bread and butter of missions for the CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter.

Marines from Heavy Marine Helicopter Squadron 462, out of Miramar Air Station, Calif., recently deployed to U'tapao National Airfield, Thailand, for exercise Cobra Gold 2002, to provide air support for the two-week event.

The Super Stallion, a Marine Corps heavy-lift helicopter, is designed for the transportation of troops, material, equipment and supplies.

The squadron sent one CH-53E on an external lift mission May 18, to help ground Marines move targets onto a nearby live-fire range. The targets consisted of several junked cars, stripped of all their parts and loaded onto cargo nets.

The aircraft left for the four-hour mission around noon to pick up several Marines at one camp and drop them off at another, before proceeding on to the mission's main objective at the range in the bush of Thailand.

A large carrying hook, centered on the aircraft, hung through a hole on



Cpl. Jason E. Miller

Marines on the ground attach a vehicle to a hovering CH-53E during the external lift mission.

the bottom to attach to the targets below. A crew chief lying on the ground guided the hook to loaders on the ground, who then attached the stripped vehicles.

Once the bird picked up its cargo, it began gaining altitude and making its way to the range. The vehicles were dropped from the air onto pieces of plywood designating the target areas.

The helicopter is capable of lifting 16 tons at sea level, transporting the load 57.5 miles and returning. A typical load is a 16,000-pound, M198 how-

itzer or a 26,000-pound Light Armored Vehicle.

The loads on this particular mission only weighed about 1,000 pounds, but proved to be difficult in their own way, as they whipped around in the wind and made the mission a little harder for the pilots.

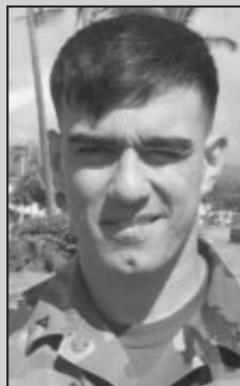
"It's more difficult lifting something that's light," said Capt. Thomas L. Page, CH-53E pilot, who led the mission. "Things that don't weigh a lot tend to swing around a lot in the wind. Also, this bird has a lot of power, so it doesn't like to hover in low-weight situations."

Once all of the targets were moved, the Sea Stallion helicopters made their way back to U'tapao National Airfield within the mission time frame.

"Externals, after a while, can become kind of routine, because we do so many of them," said Page. "Today we were lifting something that we were not used to, but on a scale of one to ten, I'd rate the mission about a six."

WORD ON THE STREET

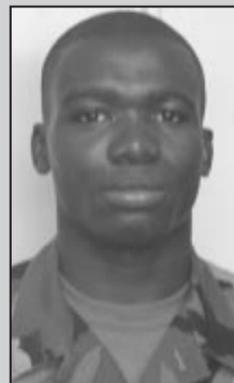
"Who will win this weekend's boxing match: Mike Tyson or Lennox Lewis?"



"...Lennox Lewis. Tyson doesn't deserve to win, in my opinion."

Lance Cpl. Lee Bailey

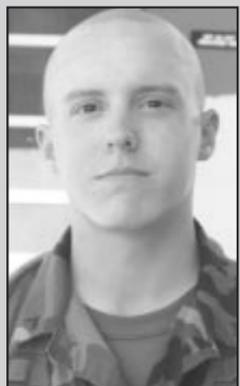
Telephone technician
Headquarters
Bn., MCB
Hawaii



"...Tyson. I've been a fan of his all my life, and I think he will win."

Sgt. Jace Peters

Supply NCOIC
CSSG-3



"...Tyson. I think he's been training hard enough that he can pull out the victory."

Pfc. Josh Cockerell

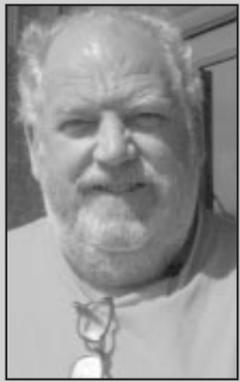
Mortarman
Echo Co., 2/3



"I'm going with Tyson. He has more experience in the big fights."

Maj. David Stokes

Executive officer
196th Infantry
Brigade,
Schofield
Barracks



"Lewis will win. Tyson is getting too old."

Roger Bulger
Military family
member

Corps remembers hero of Iwo, Chosin Reservoir

Sgt. Robert Carlson
Press Chief

"One bullet doesn't stop a man," he said at a press conference in 1952 after receiving his Medal of Honor from President Harry S. Truman. He proved that during two of the Marine Corps' most horrific battles.

Retired Colonel William E. Barber died April 19 at his home in Irvine, Calif., after a long struggle with bone-marrow cancer, and was honored with memorial services at the Marine Corps Center in Arlington, Va., and the Marine Corps Memorial in Quantico, Va.

Barber, a captain during the Korean War, was commander of the 2nd Marine Regiment, during the Chosin Reservoir campaign. He was wounded by enemy fire and spent 120,000 Chinese soldiers crossing the Yalu River into North Korea and began their attack on the Marines.

Unable to walk, he commanded his Marines from a stretcher, directing fires and successfully holding his position, even though he had been ordered to withdraw. Barber said he knew he could hold the position, and that if he withdrew, he

would endanger the lives of almost 8,000 Marines.

Fighting in temperatures that sometimes dipped under 20 degrees below zero, Barber's actions — including his refusal to abandon a key supply route despite difficult odds — enabled 8,000 Marines to escape an onslaught by Chinese forces allied with the North Koreans.

In addition to the Medal of Honor, Barber was a Silver Star for his service on Iwo Jima, and was honored with memorial services at the Marine Corps Center in Arlington, Va., and the Marine Corps Memorial in Quantico, Va.

Barber, then a first lieutenant, was a member of Echo Company, 2nd Bn., 26th Marine Regiment. The Marines of 2/26 suffered heavy casualties during the landing on Red Beach 2. Four officers and 68 enlisted men were wounded during the landing operation. Barber, one of the four officers, heard of the diminishing numbers in his battalion's officer ranks, declared himself "fit for duty," and returned to his company.

During his service, which began in 1940 and spanned 30 years and three major wars, Barber was also awarded two Purple Hearts, three Presidential Unit Citations, and the



Photos Courtesy of The Chosin Few

Above — William E. Barber as a major, wearing the Medal of Honor he received for his actions during the Chosin Reservoir campaign in the Korean War.

Right — Barber addressed guests during a recent function of the Chosin Few.



Legion of Merit.

After serving as a psychological operations officer during the Vietnam War, Barber retired in 1970 and worked as a military analyst with Northrop Corp. in Anaheim, Calif.

Close friends describe Barber as someone who was willing to help anyone at a moment's notice.

Ray Dooley, who also served

on Iwo Jima and was awarded a Silver Star, was Barber's neighbor for many years.

"He was the kind of man who would never turn down a request," Dooley said. "He was willing to help anyone, anytime."

The Colonel Bill Barber Marine Corps Memorial Park, in Irvine, Calif., was dedicated in 1998. During the ceremony,

Retired Maj. Gen. Jed Pearson described Barber as a living legend.

"He told me the hardest battle of his life was staying in the hospital while the ball park was dedicated and named for him," said Dooley. "It was unusual for a park to be dedicated to a person still living, but I went to the committee meetings and showed pictures of Marines at the Chosin Reservoir, and they voted unanimously to name it for him."

Barber fought many difficult battles during his life, and all who served with him considered him a hero and a brave leader.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Ione, his son John and daughter Sharon.

Barber was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, after a memorial ceremony May 22.



Sgt. Robert Carlson

The CSSG-3 Marines and Sailors march into the field adjacent to their armory at the end of the 15-mile march.

CSSG-3, From A-1

the first hump with the Group, since arriving from Headquarters Bn., MCB Hawaii. For Adams, it was the last before his change of command.

This was my best march, he explained. "When the call comes, you've got to be able to pack your gear, be ready to fight, and come home a winner."

Saving megadollars

Twelve 1st Radio Bn. Marines were recognized by Brig. Gen. Jerry C. McAbee, commanding general of MCB Hawaii, Tuesday. They saved the base \$34,000 by recycling materials and by creating a warehouse loft office.



Cpl. Jason E. Miller

RED LIONS: HMH-363 reveres Mess Night traditions at 50th



Photo courtesy of Maj. Bruce Brahe

Two CH-53D Sea Stallion helicopters from HMH-363 circle Mt. Fuji, Japan, while en route to MCAS Iwakuni.



Lance Cpl. Jessica Mills

Sergeant Bob C. Ranstadler (above), a maintenance controller, read the squadron's lineage prior to the cake cutting (right) by Lt. Col. Edward Yarnell, commanding officer, and Sgt. Ivan Colon, a CH-53D crew chief.



From A-1

ceived its Red Lions designator from the Koreans, because the symbol of the red lion stands for strength.

During the late 1970s and '80s, HMH-363 was involved with many different unit deployment programs.

In July and September of 1990, the squadron participated in disaster relief operations in the Republic of the Philippines. Then from December 1992 until March 1993, it was involved with Operation Restore Hope in Somalia.

Most recently, the Red Lions reestablished the CH-53D Unit Deployment Program to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan — the first UDP to utilize CH-53Ds instead of CH-53Es and CH46s in more than a decade.

"Ten years ago, the CH-53D was the premier aircraft in the Marine Corps, but the next, newer airframe CH-53E was developed and became the standard," said Ranstadler. "HMH-363 was chosen to be the only squadron in the Corps with the Deltas.

"The CH-53Ds will provide support to the III Marine Expeditionary Force, and remain in readiness to



Lance Cpl. Jessica Mills

Just after the cake cutting ceremony, Marines from HMH-363 listen intently while members of the head table address the mess.

support operational contingencies, provide disaster relief and humanitarian support as directed by the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command," said Major Bruce Brahe, the executive officer.

In celebration of HMH-363's 50th anniversary, Ranstadler read the squadron's lineage prior to the cut-

ting of the birthday cake by Lt. Col. Edward Yarnell, the commanding officer.

"My heart is pretty close to this squadron," said Ranstadler. "It's an added bonus to be part of a group within a group. We have our own legacy and our own pride and lineage."

Orphaned Marine reunites with family during Cobra Gold 2002

Cpl. Jason E. Miller
Combat Correspondent

U'TAPAO NATIONAL AIRFIELD, Thailand — When Cpl. Matthew Scott, an electrician for Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, returned to Thailand, he hoped at best to see the country and orphanage from which he was adopted.

On May 20, Scott was treated to a surprise bigger than anything he had imagined. He was reunited with his natural mother and family after an absence of more than 20 years.

Scott met his mother, Thom Horn-ngam, along with his sister, cousin and aunt in front of an inquisitive press conference of Thai and U.S. media officials at a hangar on the airfield.

The estranged family members emotionally embraced in a flurry of hugs and tears as flashbulbs flickered around them.

"I never thought I would ever get to meet my real

mother," said Scott, before the meeting. "This is a very big day for me.

"I'm very nervous and excited at the same time. I just wonder how she's going to react when she sees me," he said to reporters.

The reunion was enough to make many of the U.S. and Thai military members in attendance well-up with tears.

Scott had previously visited the Pattaya Orphanage,



Cpl. Jason E. Miller

Corporal Scott greets his long-lost mother and sister at the airfield.

from which he was adopted 20 years ago, about a week prior to the meeting. There he met with the founder of the orphanage, who supplied him with paperwork about his natural parents.

"I'm not really sure how they went about finding her," Scott said. "All I know is that the Thai military coordinated this meeting, and I'm very happy to finally meet my family."

Scott also said he hopes to someday return for an extended visit.

Although the family hadn't previously met, they stood together like they'd known each other all of their lives.

"I never thought I would have the opportunity to meet my son," said Horn-ngam. "I am very proud to see him as a U.S. Marine."

EVERY CLIME AND PLACE

Thais receive recon training from U.S. Marines

Story and Photos by
Cpl. Jason E. Miller
Combat Correspondent

SATTAHIP, Thailand — Thai and U.S. Marine reconnaissance units trained together recently, as part of an amphibious training evolution designed to improve both units' beach surveying skills.

United States Marines from 3rd Reconnaissance Bn., out of Okinawa, Japan, took time while participating in Cobra Gold 2002, to cross-train with the Thai recon Marines on several fronts, including parachute operations, live-ammunition drills and amphibious recon exercises.

The units combined on a local beach, where they received bilingual classes in surveying beachfront areas for the possibility of amphibious landings. Classes consisted of many topics ranging from water depth, beach gradient and even bottom composition, all of which play important roles in the beaching of amphibious vehicles.

Several two-man teams departed rubber rafts nearly 100 meters from the shore. The swimmers, staying low to the water, measured depth and studied the shorelines for intelligence as they made their way slowly to the sand.

The first swimmers to land on the beach set up perimeter security and kept watch, while other Marines surveyed the terrain for the possible approach of amphibious vehicles.

Normally, beach surveys are nighttime operations, but for training purposes, the event was held during the day, to provide the waterborne forces a better understanding of how a real operation would unfold.

Still, the Marines practiced the operation with utmost care, even covering each other with sand to break up moonlight, which is known to reflect off of wet camouflage utilities.



Above — Two Thai recon Marines stand security watch as other Marines survey the area. Below — United States and Thai recon Marines receive a class on how to measure beach gradient with a marked stick, as part of an amphibious training evolution.



"Many of the Thai Marines that we're teaching here are senior leaders," said Capt. Chris Brown, Alpha Co., 3rd Recon Bn., commander. "These Marines will go back and teach their subordinates exactly how to perform this kind operation." Though Cobra Gold is only a two-week exercise, the Thai and U.S. recon Marines have spent the last month training and living together in an effort to



A 3rd Recon Bn. Marine emerges from the water to take aim at a nearby beach.

build upon their already superior skills. United States Marines even bivouacked with the Thai Marines at a local Buddhist temple, where they donated funds and made friends with the monks who call the temple home.

Physical training and gift swapping sessions have also been common between the two units over the past few weeks.

"The Thai Marines are really motivated, and they're always ready to get out and train," said Brown. "Recon Marines get out and put up with being cold, tired and hungry. They'd rather die than fail to complete a mission. That's what makes these guys what they are."

While the U.S. Marines were full of compliments on the toughness and abilities of their Thai counterparts, the Thais themselves were not without sentiments for their training partners.

"What's most impressive about the U.S. Marines, is the amount of discipline that goes into a single day of training," said Somsak Wanmuang, a warrant officer in the Royal Thai Marine Corps.

"It's something that is not very well observed in the Thai Marine Corps, but I try to teach that type of discipline.

"Also, U.S. Marines are very safe about all of the training they do. Welfare of the troops stressed and every precaution is made to keep them safe," he observed.

CALFEX culminates MEU training with Thais



Sgt. Stephen D'Alessio

A BLT 3/5 Marine with the 31st MEU(SOC) mans an M-220 Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided (TOW) missile system during the final CALFEX of Exercise Cobra Gold 2002, an annual, multi-national combined and joint arms exercise.

Gunnery Sgt. Marlon J. Martin
31st MEU Public Affairs

UTAPAO, Thailand — The 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) Special Operations Capable (SOC) recently displayed its ability to "Strike from the Sea" during a Combined Arms Landing Force Exercise (CALFEX) for Exercise Cobra Gold 2002.

The CALFEX was the culmination of a series of cross-training events. It afforded U.S. and Thai forces the opportunity to train and learn from each other on all leadership levels.

The evolution also marked an end to the annual Cobra Gold exercise, held May 14-28 in various Thailand training areas.

According to Col. James M. Lowe, commanding officer, 31st MEU (SOC), there are only a few places in Southeast Asia such as Thailand that offer the MEU such a unique opportunity to train.

"Training such as this is invaluable and essential to us as a regional contingency force. Combine this superior training with working side-by-side with our allies and friends from Thailand and Singapore, and you find an exercise that is very difficult to replicate elsewhere in the Pacific region," the MEU commander said.

The MEU conducted a series of events during the CALFEX, to include fastroping and air strikes, landing amphibious assault vehicles and conducting aerial refueling. The Marines stormed ashore in their amphibious vehicles, as jets screamed overhead and bombs exploded on the beachfront.

As much as it was a grand finale to the events of Cobra Gold, with explosions and huge displays of firepower, it was a critical point in training for both Marine forces. They came together in an hour-long exhibition of force that made the Corps' amphibious landing doc-



Sgt. Stephen D'Alessio

Above — Royal Thai Marines hit the beach during the CALFEX, which culminated the Exercise Cobra Gold 2002 cross training. Below — Marines of the 31st MEU (SOC) suspend from a CH-46E "Sea Knight" helicopter during a Special Purpose Insertion and Extraction rigging demonstration.



trine a reality.

When involved in joint training, learning the fundamentals of an amphibious landing and combined arms employment is vital. From Marines who lay in the sand with rifles at the ready, to those who directed movement ashore, everyone was involved in the cross training.

"We conduct the CALFEX to demonstrate the ability of U.S. and Thai forces to conduct an amphibious landing and rapidly project combat power ashore," said Capt. Christian M. Rankin, assistant oper-

ations officer, 31st MEU(SOC). "The CALFEX effectively demonstrates the flexibility and responsiveness of amphibious forces."

Conducting combined operations with other countries is "an excellent training opportunity," according to Rankin, who said it forces the MEU staff and major subordinate elements to plan and execute with extraordinary attention to detail.

The benefits of participating in Cobra Gold will surely pay off for the Marine Corps, as it provides the MEU the ability to demonstrate the versatility and flexibility of the Marine Corps' forward deployed Marine air ground task forces.

"Cobra Gold exercises the entire spectrum of our potential tasks," Lowe said. "From a hasty embarkation and deployment of the Amphibious Readiness Group, to exercising command and control across service and multi-national lines. From maritime special operations to conventional amphibious operations, we have exercised virtually every element of the 31st MEU."

"The many benefits of participating in this exercise will pay long-term dividends to the 31st MEU."

SYMPOSIUM: Corps' best NCOs give suggestions to CMC

From A-2

Marine Corps system to allow Marines (who desire) who are in receipt of orders to apply for housing (on-line or by fax) prior to reporting.

Career Degree Program

Discussion: Due to deployment and operational commitments, it is difficult for Marines to attain a degree in a timely manner. This could serve as an incentive, but not guaranteed due to the screening process.

Recommendation: Expand the staff NCO degree program to include NCOs who are career Marines.

Running Shoe Purchases

Discussion: Not all uniform shops carry running shoes. Those that do carry shoes have a limited variety.

Recommendation: Have all uniform shops carry running shoes in any style or brand.

Child Care Funding

Discussion: The Corps has insufficient child care facilities, insufficient funding and long waiting lists.



Recommendation: Increase funding to build bigger and more consistent child care facilities to adequately support military members requiring this service.

Special Duty

Discussion: Marine Corps Order P1326.6D refers to MSG and Security Forces as a side note.

Recommendation: Revise the order.

Government VISA

Discussion: Marines incur a \$10 surcharge to make a payment by phone, but some situations make it impossible for Marines to pay any other way.

Recommendation: Get rid of the surcharge "penalty" either by eliminating it

or by reimbursement.

Female Covers

Discussion: The cost to replace dress & service covers is too much, and the covers are not interchangeable.

Recommendation: Change the material and design so that the covers are easier to maintain.

Uniforms

Discussion: Current uniform allowances don't adequately cover upkeep costs.

Recommendation: Develop a system that would allow a Marine to have a uniform item evaluated for replacement. Develop a one-for-one exchange system, with tracking, for all Marines.

Name Tags

Discussion: Require name tags.

Recommendation: Reinstate the nametags on the Charlies, Bravos and Deltas, for the uniform of the day.

Montgomery GI Bill

Discussion: The benefit is only offered during the first week of recruit training. The high stress environment is not conducive to making career decisions.

Recommendation: Offer MGIB twice: during recruiting training and during initial check-in to the Marines' first permanent duty station.

The Pro/Con Worksheet

Discussion: Proficiency and conduct marks are inflated.

Recommendation: Implement a standard pro and con worksheet that takes into consideration all aspects of Marine Corps training.

TMO Weights

Discussion: A nine-year sergeant with three family members rates less TMO weight than a second lieutenant with one family member.

Recommendation: Adjust TMO weight to rely less on rank and more on time in service and number of family members.

IRR Promotions

Discussion: Activated Marines are promoted under the SMCR table, which has been an issue since Desert Storm.

Recommendation: Create a separate promotion table for IRR Marines who have been activated, Ensuring that SMCR and AD quotas are not taken away.