Hawaii Marine
SPORTS

HAWAII MARINE C SECTION MARCH 30, 2007

Courtesy photo

The Kaneohe Bay Heat, ages 9 to 11, are all smiles after winning the Hawaii Military Youth Athletic Association's double-elimination tournament March 17.

Long journey to the tourney

Cpl. Mark Fayloga
Combat Correspondent

After rolling through opposing teams and nearly maintaining a perfect record during the regular season the Kaneohe Bay Heat (ages 9-11) topped it off by claiming top honors during the Hawaii Military Youth Athletic Association's double-elimination tournament, March 17.

Thanks to an impressive defense that rarely allowed any opposing team to score over 12 points, the Heat were able to put together an impressive regular season record of 15-1-2.

"Our defense is number one," said Matt Palmer, Heat coach. "Our defense was fierce. As a whole, the team defense, I could put any five players on the court and they would play amazing."

Although Heat had the advantage of having returning players, they got to where they were through hard work and practice.

"The main thing, and the thing we worked on everyday in practice, was first the fundamentals and then we would split up into two even teams and scrimmage," said Palmer. "Through the scrimmage they learned that defense creates offense and then just worked together."

While winning is a joy for an athlete at any age, Assistant Coach Brandy Tilo believes her team enjoyed the time spent with one another most.

"I think our players most enjoyed having fun with each other and creating new friendships," said Tilo. "This team fit together from day one. They played around at practice during breaks and worked hard when it was time to work. "

Palmer had high hopes for his team from the beginning of the season. Knowing he was going to have four returning players and also seeing how much larger, physically, his team was than most other teams he was confident they could take the championship.

Although the Heat did win the end of the season tournament it didn't come easy. After losing their third game the Heat had to rally through the losers bracket to make it to the finals, playing two games a day on three separate occasions. They stepped up the challenge though and after all was said and done the Heat were the tournament champs with a 7-1 tournament record.

"I was so proud of them," said Palmer. "Some were really heartbroken when we lost that first game. I told them to keep their head up, we had a long way to go and the fact that we won seven games in a single week, playing twice a day on three separate occasions and pulled out the wins. This is probably the best experience I've had as a coach."

"I am so proud of this team," added Tilo. "Not only because they won, but because they showed true sportsmanship throughout the entire season. They played well together and had a great time doing it. It was a joy to see them get better both individually and as a team."

Sgt. Sara A. Carter

Runners decend the hill by the Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, officer's club during the start of Headquarters Battalion's 6th Annual Surf & Turf 5K run Saturday. Approximately 173 participants from different age groups ran the race.

6th Annual Surf & Turf offers fun in the sand

Sgt. Sara A. Carter
Combat Correspondent

The sun had just made its way above the horizon as runners stretched in anticipation of the start of the sixth Annual Headquarters Battalion Surf & Turf 5K Saturday.

The course, run aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, started at The Officers' Club, wound through Kaneohe Klipper Golf Course and continued on to officer's beach, ending back at the O'Club.

Approximately 173 participants from different age groups participated in the race. The oldest runner was 86-year-old Bill Beauchamp. He was the last runner to cross the finish line, but he didn't cross it alone.

As he turned the bend to the top of the hill in front of the club, Marines from the battalion and a Sailor were running behind him, motivating him to and through the finish line. Runners who had already completed the race cheered him on as he waved and smiled back at them.

"I had a big escort," he said as he laughed. "I appreciated it very much."

Sgt. Sara A. Carter

William Perez (left), commanding officer, Headquarters Battalion, Marines from the battalion and a Sailor motivate Bill Beauchamp, 86, through the last stretch of the race.

Although he said he ran 5, 8 and 10Ks throughout the year, this was Beauchamp's first time running the Surf & Turf.

Beauchamp was not the only runner who runs throughout the year. Many of the runners, including the Paetsch family, run races throughout the year.

Sandra, Paul and 9-year-old Aidan Paetsch were on vacation and decided to participate in the race.

"It's a nice thing to do together as a family," Sandra said.

Aidan placed third in his age category.

"It was tiring," he said about running on the beach.

The overall winner of the race is also an avid runner. After receiving a call from his mother about the race, he decided to run.

"Running is something I have always enjoyed," Conor Lucas-Roberts, 3rd Marine Regiment, said. "My mom is always looking online for races. She saw there was one here and called me to tell me about it."

Lucas-Roberts just checked into the Regiment March 20, but said he never figured he would actually win the race.

"I thought maybe I could win, but I didn't know," Lucas-Roberts said. "I figured if I wasn't running well, I could always go for a swim in the ocean."

Putting around

Sgt. Sara A. Carter

Natalia Jimenez, a sophomore at Brigham Young University in Utah, makes a putt during the University of Hawaii Golf Invitational March 20. Eighty players from colleges as far away as Japan and Alabama participated in the three-day tournament. Thirteen teams consisting of five players and 15 individual players were invited to the 22nd annual event.

Take cover from the sun, heat

Kelley Harper
LIFELines

Warm weather, sunny skies, and outdoor activities with friends all spell fun in the summer time. When reaching for the volleyball or surfboard, stay protected by reaching for some sunscreen as well.

The Real Skinny About Skin

When skin is overexposed to the sun, skin cancer can occur. Skin cancer is a disease in which malignant cells are found in the outer layers of your skin. Every time the skin is exposed to the sun's harmful rays, it attempts to recover by producing an uncontrolled growth of cells which can lead to different types of skin cancer, including melanoma.

Melanomas, which can suddenly appear without warning, account for tens of thousands of deaths every year. For more information about the ABC's of skin cancer, visit The Skin Cancer Foundation.

How to Get Checked by a Pro

Fortunately, when caught early, skin cancer is the most preventable and curable type of cancer. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends a screening once a year by a physician (typically at the time of yearly physicals) for any suspicious moles or growths on the skin. It is a simple and painless check that takes only a few minutes at the time but can save lives later on.

Active-duty service members can go to their Branch Medical Clinic. Family members and retirees can see their Primary Care Manager at the nearest medical treatment facility. If a further evaluation is needed, the PCM will give a TRICARE-authorized referral to a specialist in dermatology.

Navy Cmdr. David Thomas, Dermatologist at the Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, Calif., emphasizes that everyone should be proactive about skin cancer. "Between yearly appointments, self-exams should be performed on a monthly basis. Patients can closely monitor their skin by photographing or videotaping suspicious moles for comparison." If a change is noted, follow up with a doctor immediately.

Fun Without the Sun

Let's face it: everyone is getting older, but looking relatively ageless is possible just by protecting the skin from the sun's rays. Here are some simple tips to help reduce sun exposure:

-Apply sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher) every morning after a shower. Remember that even on overcast days, UV rays pass through the clouds.

-Use sunless tanning lotions instead of sunbathing or tanning booths to get a tan.

-Avoid being outside at peak times (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), if possible.

-Use the "shadow rule" and seek shade when the shadow is shorter than it is tall.

-Teach children early to use sunscreen, UV-absorbing sunglasses, and wide-brim hats.

If deployed, stay stocked with travel-size sunscreen packets.

A child practices a round-off during the Dance Movement Academy at K-Bay Gymnastics Gym 1 class March 19. Children can participate in more than 20 different types of dance and gymnastics activities.

Far right: Two-year-old Sophia Blauvelt swings from the uneven bar during Gym Mom and Me class Friday. This class is offered Tuesdays and Fridays for children ages 1 through 3.

Movement

Dance, gymnastics keeps children active, healthy

Story and Photos by
Sgt. Sara A. Carter
Combat Correspondent

Parents looking for a way to get their children active don't have to look any further. The Dance Movement Academy and K-Bay Gymnastics on Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, offers a variety of classes to get children moving while teaching them the fundamentals.

There are 28 different classes offered for different age levels. According to Di Rodin, who is the founder and director of both the academy and K-Bay Gymnastics, there are currently 250 children enrolled in the classes.

Classes include Gym Mom and Me for 1- to 3-year-olds, Keiki Cheer, Kinder Gym 1 and 2, pre-ballet and tap for 4- and 5-year-olds, and a variety of classes for children 5 and older. There are also classes for adults.

Jamie Drury has been bringing her daughter, 3-year-old Alexis, to Toddlers gym for the last year.

"She seems to really like it a lot," Drury said. "She follows directions a lot better than she used to."

Rodin believes children should take these classes because it teaches the children coordination, body control and flexibility, which she said will help them in the future – should they decide to participate in other sports.

Adults are welcome to participate in some of the classes.

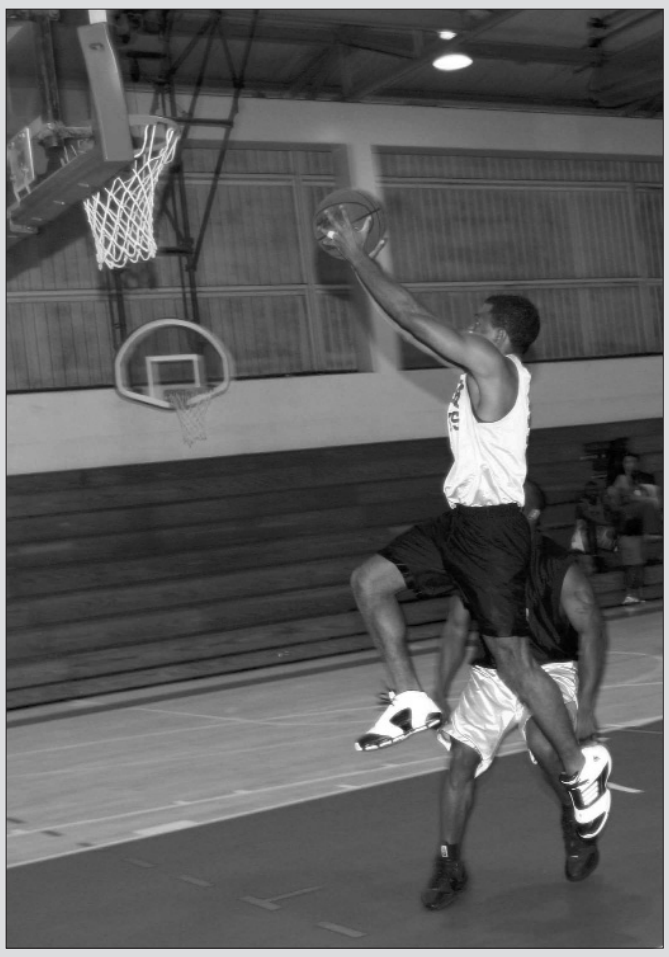
Classes are offered in the old base chapel next to the Annex every day of the week, except Sunday.

For more information call 479-3273 or visit www.dancemovementacademy.com or www.k-baygymnastics.com for a schedule and prices.

Children, 3 and younger, play under a parachute their parents lift during a Gym Mom and Me class Friday. The class offers moms and their little one quality time together while allowing the children to play on a variety of gymnastic equipment.

Children practice proper form during a ballet and tap class for 6- to 8-year-olds March 19. The class starts with 30 minutes of ballet and ends with 30 minutes of tap dancing instruction. This class is only offered Mondays; however, there are pre-ballet and tap for 4- and 5-year-olds Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays.

SPOTLIGHT ON SPORTS



Intramural basketball standings

TEAM	WINS	LOSSES
CPRW-2	14	0
OUTLAWS	12	2
3/3	10	4
VPU-2	10	4
MESS HALL	9	5
HSL-37 "MAROON"	8	6
POSTAL	8	6
MCAF	7	6
IPAC	7	6
CSSG-3	6	6
MALS-24	6	8
VP-9 #1	5	9
3RD RADIO BN	3	11
HSL-37 "GOLD"	0	14
VP-9 #2	0	14

* standings as of March 25

Bowling stats

Team Standings

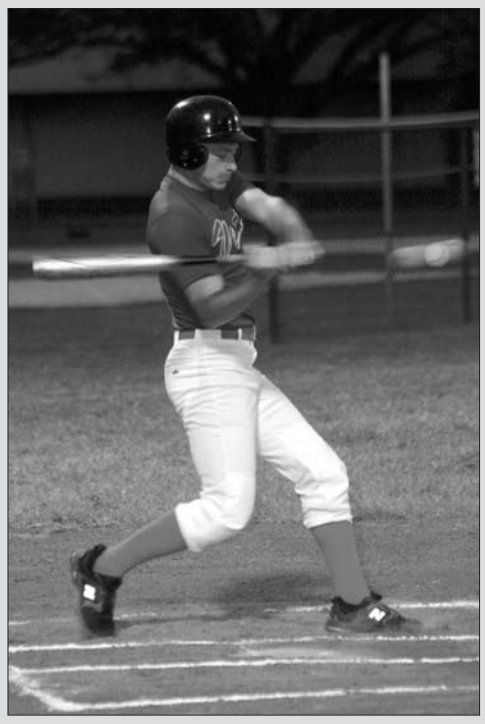
Place	Team Name	Points Won	Points Lost	Team Ave	HDCP	Pins plus Handicap
1	Team Whidbey	27½	8½	591	165	20771
2	AINOKEA	27	9	615	146	21247
3	Illegal Affairs:ReDux	22½	13½	639	127	21239
4	Flaming Hookers	22	14	622	140	20869
5	BANNED	22	14	610	150	20379
6	VP-9	22	14	524	219	20092
7	Effin' H	21	15	598	160	20674
8	4th Force Recon	21	15	546	200	20456
9	3 Putts	21	15	548	200	20425
10	Ghost Team	17½	18½	524	219	20537
11	Pinheads	16½	19½	531	214	20197
12	Golden Eagle's	16	20	620	141	20539
13	The Happy Team	16	20	522	221	20255
14	The Untouchables	15	21	455	275	19642
15	Big Ern's Kids	14	22	526	218	15700
16	Team 3	14	22	599	160	15612
17	Da Pin Droppers	13	23	444	283	20021
18	Team 17	12	24	425	299	19241
19	Team Ramrod	9	27	453	276	17383
20	The Blue Ballers	7	29	534	211	17284

Results of Last Week's Bowling.....

Lanes	Team Name	-1-	-2-	-3-	HDCP Total	Last Wk WON		Team Name	-1-	-2-	-3-	HDCP Total	Last Wk WON
1-2	Illegal Affairs:ReDux	**819**	748	**746**	**2313**	3	<--->	Flaming Hookers	732	**780**	689	2201	1
3-4	AINOKEA	**768**	**746**	**752**	**2266**	4	<--->	Pinheads	738	680	741	2159	0
5-6	Golden Eagle's	741	704	778	2223	0	<--->	Team Whidbey	**811**	**781**	**783**	**2375**	4
7-8	The Happy Team	**720**	678	**756**	**2154**	3	<--->	Da Pin Droppers	690	**750**	670	2110	1
9-10	Team 17	**728**	663	**668**	**2059**	3	<--->	3 Putts	667	**664**	645	1976	1
11-12	BANNED	**728**	**747**	**807**	**2282**	4	<--->	Team Ramrod	713	720	785	2218	0
13-14	Big Ern's Kids	0	0	0	0	0	<--->	The Blue Ballers	0	0	0	0	0
15-16	Team 3	**848**	741	735	2324	1	<--->	Ghost Team	754	**810**	**776**	**2340**	3
17-18	The Untouchables	724	**733**	**692**	2149	2	<--->	4th Force Recon	**780**	711	688	**2179**	2
19-20	VP-9	**797**	727	815	2339	1	<--->	Effin' H	722	**811**	**838**	**2371**	3

***** Last Week's High Scores for Immediate Release *****

	Scratch Game	Scratch Game	Scratch Series	Scratch Series
Men	255 Zach Augustine 216 Shawn Harrison	201 Mark Gleason	571 Mark Gleason 566 Shawn Harrison	527 Zach Augustine
Women	196 Melenie Nixon 181 Mia Ng	177 Kumi Martin	529 Melenie Nixon 513 Abby Hammond	465 Mia Ng



Intramural baseball standings

TEAM	WINS	LOSSES	TIES
3/3	8	1	0
HQBN	6	1	0
MAG-24	5	3	0
VP-9	3	4	0
CSSG-3	4	5	0
VP-47	1	5	0
3RD RADIO BN	0	7	0

* standings as of March 25

The long walk

Sgt. Sara A. Carter

Two-year-old Sophia Blauvelt gets pointers from mom, Beth, while walking on the balance beam during the Gym Mom and Me class Friday. This class is offered Tuesdays and Fridays for children ages 1 through 3. See C-2 for full story.

'Tiny dancers'

Sgt. Sara A. Carter

Children practice proper form during a ballet and tap class for 6- to 8-year-olds March 19. The class offers 30 minutes of ballet and 30 minutes of tap dancing instruction. This class is only offered Mondays. See C-2 for full story.

TRICARE, Defense Manpower Data Center offer help

Those with Medicare Part D prescription drugs to benefit

News Release
TRICARE

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — Each month since the beginning of the Medicare Part D prescription drug program in January 2006, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has automatically enrolled individuals that become eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare benefits – so-called "dual eligibles" – into Medicare prescription drug plans. These auto-enrollments generally include all dual eligibles, who are not yet enrolled in a Medicare Part D plan, potentially including TRICARE beneficiaries.

"Each of these individuals receives an enrollment notification from the CMS and the Medicare Part D plan that tells them about their enrollment and their opportunity to change plans or opt out of the Medicare Part D plan altogether," said Army Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, Deputy Director of the TRICARE Management Activity.

Affected TRICARE beneficiaries who try to use their TRICARE prescription drug benefit may not realize this occurred or may determine that enrollment in Medicare Part D is not necessary. Each individual's case is unique and all aspects of a person's drug coverage need to be considered before making such a decision. According to federal law, the TRICARE pharmacy benefit is a secondary payer to a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan. Therefore, TRICARE has established payment rules with their claims processor to ensure compliance with federal law.

The TRICARE Management Activity, the Defense Manpower Data Center, and CMS have jointly developed a customer-focused process for beneficiaries to resolve Medicare Part D and TRICARE coverage issues, and obtain their prescriptions quickly.

If a TRICARE beneficiary is denied prescription coverage due to Medicare Part D enrollment, and believes that he or she is not enrolled in Medicare Part D or disenrolled from Medicare Part D, the beneficiary should contact Express Scripts at 1-866-363-8779. The Express Scripts customer service representative will ask for the beneficiary's permission to access Medicare Part D coverage information from CMS and determine whether the beneficiary is currently in a Medicare Part D plan. If CMS records show no Medicare Part D coverage, DMDC will update the beneficiary's Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System information, in one business day. Additionally, a representative from DMDC will contact the beneficiary to confirm the record correction.

If Express Scripts discovers that CMS shows the beneficiary as having Medicare Part D coverage, they will advise the beneficiary how to obtain confirmation of disenrollment or cancellation from Medicare Part D, and how to forward information to DMDC to update the beneficiary's DEERS record. Once DMDC receives this documentation, a customer service representative will update the DEERS records and telephone the beneficiary to confirm the correction.

To view current Medicare Part D enrollment status on the Medicare Web site, beneficiaries may go to www.medicare.gov, select the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder option, "Check Current Enrollment" option, then select View Your Current Plan" and follow the instructions.

How the WIC Program can help you, children

Megan J. Sather
LIFELines

The WIC program is a special supplemental food program set up for women and young children below a certain income level who may have health issues that could affect an unborn child or infant. The WIC program provides healthful foods and teaches about good nutrition.

The program covers women who are pregnant or breast-feeding (up to the infant's first birthday), infants from birth to 11 months, and children under the age of 5.

The program provides vouchers to buy specific items at your local store such as milk, cheese, eggs, juice, peanut butter, beans, cereal, infant formula and infant juice.

The WIC program is set up to be more then just a supplemental food program. You will also receive nutrition-health screening, nutritional education, and counseling at WIC clinics as well as help in finding other agencies that can help you in raising your children.

To apply, call the WIC office nearest you and make an appointment. The WIC Web site has a list of toll-free numbers. When you go to your appointment, there are a few things that you will need to take with you:

-Take a medical referral form (infants and children form or pregnant and postpartum women form), which can be completed by your doctor.

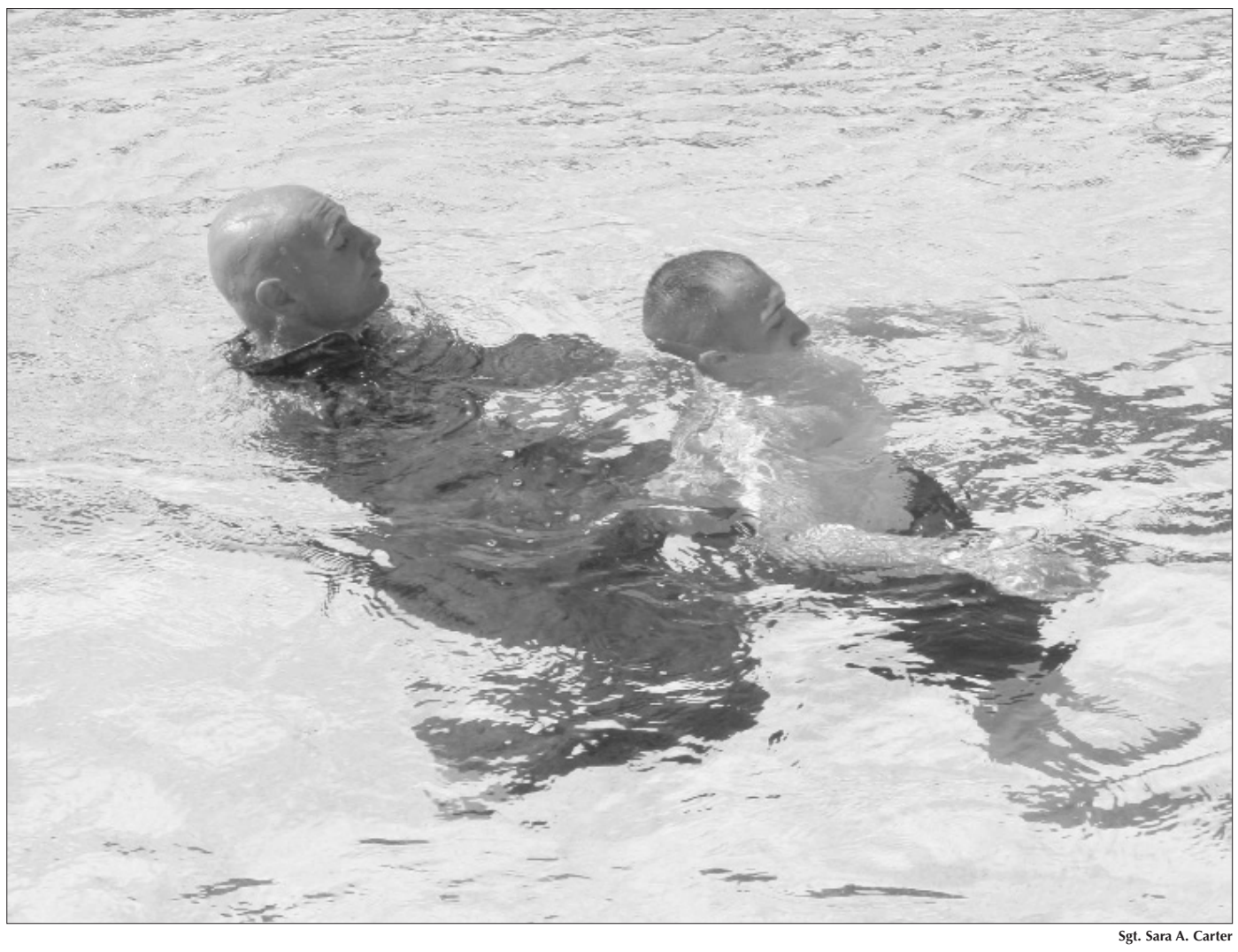
-You will need to bring proof of your income. There are many different documents that will prove income, such as a leave and earnings statement, pay stubs, W-2 form, or income tax return.

-Another item you need to bring is a proof of residency. This can be a driver's license, utility bill or rent receipts. As with the proof of income, there are many documents you can use as proof of residency. Ask when you make the appointment.

For more information about WIC stateside, log onto the U.S. Department of Agriculture's WIC Web site.

If you're enrolled in WIC in the States, don't discontinue your enrollment before going overseas. When you arrive in your destination country, you can continue with your benefits once you talk to your local WICO office. If you want to start WIC once you arrive, go to your base and sign up. Most military installations have sites on base where you can enroll in the program.

Treading for Life



Sgt. Sara A. Carter

Sergeant Matthew Blauvelt, flight equipment noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463, practices a rescue with Staff Sgt. Erik Delgadillo during training at the Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay Pool, March 20. Marines were training and being tested to become water-survival qualified as a part of Marine Combat Water Survival Training. According to Marine Corps Order 1500.52C, the MCWST program is designed to prepare Marines for deployment to diverse, austere and chaotic environments. Marines, inherently naval in character, are expected to operate in the world's littoral regions and other aquatic environments. The MCWST program equips Marines with the requisite knowledge and skills to negotiate water obstacles and survive in emergency situations involving water and uses a building-block approach, employing successive water qualification levels of increasing difficulty that improve skills and confidence in water. While qualification requirements vary respective to rank and/or Military Occupational Specialty, the program is designed to maintain water survival skills during a Marine's career. Every Marine is required to keep their swim qualification up-to-date.

Tips to keep children safe in, near swimming pools

Holly Selders
LIFELines

Swimming is a fun, relaxing sport, and backyard swimming pools, both large and small, are the epitome of summer fun. With that pleasure comes some risk. Drowning is the third leading cause of death in the United States and the first leading cause of injury-death for children under age two. According to the Centers for Disease Control, about one child drowns every day somewhere in the United States. Fortunately, there are many precautions a pool owner or parent/caregiver can take to limit the risk of accidental drowning for both children and pets.

The first rule of pool safety is learning to swim. Instruction doesn't, however, mean automatic drowning protection. Careful, constant supervision of children and "arms-length" supervision of toddlers is essential. Most Navy and Marine Corps bases offer organized swim lessons for children and adults. Check with your local MWR for program offerings.

The use of water toys also demands vigilance. Ironically, arm-flotation devices, also known as water wings or "floaties," create a false sense of security for both children and supervisors. Accordingly, BUPERS policy prohibits the use of "aquatic toys and equipment in the pool enclosure" for Navy and Marine Corps public pools. Children who can't swim are encouraged to use U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets.

Swimming supervisors need a minimum of basic water-safety training and CPR certification. Lifesaving classes are offered through the American Red Cross around the country. Keep in mind: a trained lifeguard is a great supplement but no substitute for constant parental supervision.

The most visibly obvious and effective safety tools are external yard and patio safety equipment. Basic pool guidelines call for a fence on all four sides, at least 4 feet high, with slats no more than 4" wide. There shouldn't be any toe-holds or adjacent furniture to climb the fence. The door should be self-closing and self-latching, while entrances from the house to the patio area should sound an audible alarm.

By getting down on the ground, pool owners can take a minnow's point of view of the area. Investigate from toddler- and pet-level how access could be gained to the pool (e.g., doggy doors) and then fix the problem.

Essential safety equipment around the pool includes a reach pole, a life jacket or ring buoy with a rope, a cordless or portable phone, and posted CPR instructions. Although it seems obvious, learn to use these items properly.

Navy and Marine Corps housing rules regarding pools vary, so check with your local housing office for pool restrictions and fence requirements.

Here is more advice from pool experts on safety.

Do:

-put all pool toys away when done

-fully remove pool covers when swimming

-make an emergency plan

-empty wading pools and large buckets of standing water, because a little person can drown in just a couple inches of water

Don't:

-use alcohol while swimming or supervising swimmers, because 25 to 50 percent of adolescent and adult drownings are attributed to alcohol use

-leave gates unlatched for even one second

-leap or dive into an unknown pool or body of water

Water-borne illnesses are a growing problem. The CDC recommends:

-not swimming if you have diarrhea

-never drinking or spitting pool water

Make your summer a fun, splash-filled, and safe season by following these simple, effective guidelines for pool safety.

File photo

Learning to swim

Sgt. Sara A. Carter

Cheri Roberts, lifeguard and swim instructor for Marine Corps Community Services, teaches Chloe Koehr, 5, how to float on her back during a swim class at the Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Base Pool March 20.

Sgt. Sara A. Carter

Roberts and her students prepare for their first lesson at the Base Pool.

Preventing suicide

Sara Davis
LIFELines

Nothing devastates the Navy and Marine Corps family more than an act of suicide.

Anyone associated with the military understands the close presence of death in training, daily operations, deployments, and war. Sailors and Marines understand that a military life is inherently dangerous, with sacrifice a harsh reality of service to their country. No one wants death; no one expects it; and embraces it. Yet death is ingrained in the thoughts, the actions, the core of every war fighter serving America, because it must. To survive death in a military action, one must train for it, one must respect it, and one must forge on even through the terror it brings.

When death comes at one's own hand, however, no amount of training, no amount of preparation will provide respite for the enduring emotional trauma inflicted on the survivors — the family members, the colleagues, the friends of the suicide victim. These survivors live for years with the pain, anger, and guilt that suicide brings — and sometimes they never recover.

Suicide is typically a result of a treatable medical condition, not a result of character weakness or defect. Yet survivors spend years trying to analyze what went wrong. They blame themselves for their loved one's action, and struggle to rebuild their shattered lives and emotions.

There is no doubt that a person contemplating suicide is in extreme pain and turmoil. Many times signs are apparent that someone is contemplating suicide, but not always. These signs may be difficult to spot in a Sailor or Marine, especially because of the stereotypical strength of mind, body, and spirit that Sailors and Marines are expected to possess. It's hard to admit weakness for most, but it's even more difficult in a culture of toughness.

But the Navy and Marine Corps team is made up of human beings, people who experience the range of disappointments, financial troubles, relationship failures, substance abuse, depression, illness, and everything else that life brings. And for some, suicide seems like the answer to their problems. As the second leading cause of death in the military — after accidents — suicide is a regrettable choice too many Sailors, Marines and their family members make.

Because of the short- and long-term devastation a suicide brings, the Department of the Navy has developed an extensive suicide-prevention program to provide options for those contemplating taking their own lives.

The most important aspects of any prevention program are awareness and action.

Resources exist on every base and station and every ship in the fleet to help a man or woman in distress. The chaplain, the Fleet and Family Support Center, Marine Corps Community Services, the chain of command, medical personnel, and the military police can all provide immediate assistance and support.

Off base, suicide hotlines and 911 are available 24/7/365 to assist in a crisis.

Navy and Marine Corps suicide-prevention programs are comprehensive. They teach Sailors and Marines to take care of their shipmates and fellow Marines (and civilians, too) by dealing with problems before they spiral out of control.

The programs are readily available and easy to understand.

Through awareness and timely intervention, we all can help prevent the enduring tragedy of suicide in our Navy and Marine Corps family.

File photo

Understanding suicide

Research Staff
LIFELines

Suicide is an intentional act resulting in ones own death. Suicidal behaviors encompass a broad range of acts, including suicidal attempts, gestures, threats, and suicidal thoughts. Suicide attempts are behaviors that if left unchecked could result in death. Suicide gestures are defined as behavior that would not result in death if left unattended.

The lack of lethality does not undercut the seriousness of suicidal gestures. Lethality of a behavior does not necessarily coincide with whether or not the person intends to end his or her life. A suicidal person does not always understand what is lethal and what is not. For instance, in the case of overdoses, he or she does not always know what dosage will result in death. The only solution for first responders is to take all suicidal attempts, gestures, and threats seriously.

The biggest reason people threaten suicide or communicate to others they have been thinking about suicide--and the great majority do so before attempting or completing suicide--is to let others know they are in pain or great psychological distress.

It is their way to let it be known that they need help. We cannot predict whether they might kill (or attempt to kill) themselves once they have the thought of suicide. However, we can be sure that if we ignore such communications, we increase the chances that someone in pain will feel even worse (unnoticed, uncared for, unheard) and have even more reason to want to end that pain by suicide.

Pain felt by someone who may be suicidal often is related to unmet needs. We all have needs to be loved, to be in control, to avoid shame. Suicidal thoughts can be brought on by an event or series of events best characterized as a loss or threatened loss (e.g., a relationship breakup, a failure, a humiliation).

Yet the fact remains that we all have failed relationships and failures, so it is important to keep in mind that such simple explanations are inadequate to account for the complicated nature of human behavior-especially when someone is in a personal crisis.

Quite often, the psychological pain a suicidal person feels is intensified by an underlying mental health problem, such as depression or anxiety. Sometimes, persons in such despair try to cope with their pain by turning to alcohol or drugs to deaden the emotional pain. Of course, the consequence of this is only to make their problems (and pain) worse.

But there is no typical description of someone who is suicidal. Because suicide is such a complex behavior, it requires a trained professional to understand, evaluate, and effectively treat what is likely to be a serious mental health problem.

For this reason, the basic message of this Suicide Prevention training is to observe, identify, and refer for help.

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