

# Hawaii MARINE

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# On duty in Egypt

■ As Marines return home from Bright Star, they reflect upon its humble beginnings

Staff Sgt.  
**Shay Richardson**  
MarForPac Public Affairs



Staff Sgt. Shay Richardson

Private First Class Rajinder Hoonjan, admin clerk, Headquarters and Service Co., MarForPac, stands ready during his watch of guard duty outside the Marine barracks at MMC Admin, Egypt.

MUBARACK MILITARY CITY, Egypt — It's no Five Star Hotel on the sands of Waikiki, but for the Marines of Marine Forces Pacific, Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii, (known as MarCent while in Egypt), the Marine Marriott on the sandy flats of Mubarak Military City, Egypt, is home away from home — and has been in some cases for more than a month.

The Marines, alongside their sister services and special operations components, are here participating in "Exercise Bright Star 01-02," a joint training exercise with military forces from eight other nations.

Marines have occupied this abode since Sept. 23, and when they arrived, it was definitely a "fixer-upper."

"Our Marines have done so much here," said Gunnery Sgt. Mark Spencer, company gunny, Headquarters & Service Bn., MarForPac. "Only a couple of them actually came out to work with me, but when I saw how much needed to get done, I couldn't turn the others

loose.

"I had to get our house together first," he added.



Staff Sgt. Shay Richardson

Marines of MarForPac and 1st Bn., 5th Marines unload the last truckload of water — for hydration and hygiene — before they redeploy.

Since their arrival, the Marines have managed to convert the dusty, abandoned, six-story tower into cozy apartments for their fellow Marines and Sailors.

"The only things in place were the floors and walls," said Spencer.

The tower is located in a gated com-

munity with the Marine Corps colors flying in the desert wind, signifying the presence of the elite U.S. fighting force.

A concierge is on post 24 hours a day to greet all residents and visitors. But regardless of who wishes to enter the quarters, they're greeted with, "ID, please."

"It was vitally important to have a guard in place," said Spencer.

They're also known as the interior guard, and without an exclusive member ID, no one is permitted entrance.

The Marines laid concertina wire, television cable, phone lines, and local area network lines for the office spaces — to keep the Marines motivated by making the deployment as convenient as possible.

"Internet and Autovon capabilities are very important for the morale of our Marines," said Spencer.

Although the Marines weren't there to set up house, "Marines take care of Marines," he said.

See BRIGHT STAR, A-3

# New UDP rates settled

Sgt. John Sayas  
Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. — A new policy on per diem rates to be implemented for all Marines in the Unit Deployment Program June 1, 2002, was signed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps this week in an effort to make per diem fair and equitable between enlisted Marines and officers.

The policy applies to Marines who are attached to aviation and ground units that deploy to either Okinawa or Iwakuni, Japan, as part of the UDP.

The UDP was first established in 1977 to reduce the number of unaccompanied tours overseas, increase family stability and improve unit cohesion.

Under the previous system, officers and enlisted Marines received different per diem rates for the same area, even when government dining facilities became available for officers, said Maj. Karl Hackbarth, Manpower analyst.

Many Marines questioned the fairness and difference in rates during sergeants major symposia because officers received an average of approximately \$650-\$900 per month, while enlisted Marines received \$72-\$102 per month.

"When the UDP was first stood up, the availability of messing for officers wasn't what it is today, so they were paid a higher rate of per diem so they could go out into town to purchase meals," said Hackbarth.

Under the new system, the rates reflect on the improvements made to allow messing for officers in government dining facilities. The per diem rate for all UDP Marines will depend upon a number of factors such as location and average time in the field. Because the ground units generally spend more time in the field than aviation units, the amount paid may differ slightly.

The amount received by all Marines will be about \$9.60 per day, or about \$290 per month.

Enlisted Marines will see an increase in per diem of about \$200 per month and will begin receiving the new per diem rates June 1, 2002.

Officers deployed prior to June 1 will continue to receive the previous rate until they return from their deployments. Officers who deploy on or after June 1 will be paid the new rate.

# Lt. governor honors, recognizes veterans

Veterans, warriors from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf stand with resolve

Sgt. Richard W.  
**Holtgraver Jr.**  
Combat Correspondent

KANEOHE — More than 400 people paid their respects to American veterans, past and present, during the Governor's Veterans Day Ceremony Sunday, at the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery.

The annual ceremony brought veterans from every branch of service and was supported by more than 60 veterans organizations.

"Remembering and expressing our thanks to those men and women who served this country in uniform is an important date for us to keep," said Army Maj. Gen. Edward L. Correa Jr., adjutant general for the state of Hawaii, during his speech to a crowd that consisted largely of veterans from past conflicts such as World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf.

Correa took time in his speech to recognize the horrific events of Sept. 11 and the American servicemembers around the world who, with strength and courage,



Vietnam veteran Mario Cantorna (left) proudly holds colors from the Military Order of the Purple Heart while Lance Cpl. James R. Gartman (right), an armorer for Combat Support Co, 3rd Marine Regiment, stands proudly as a rifle bearer for the color guard during the Governor's Veterans Day Ceremony, Sunday at the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery.



Sgt. Richard W. Holtgraver Jr.

are facing a new enemy.

"We have seen this kind of evil before with the Nazis, the Fascists, and more recently, the communists," said Correa. "Our veterans, many of whom are with us today, faced them with an incredible resolve."

"That same principle resolve

still burns in the hearts and minds of today's soldiers, today's men of arms, today's veterans."

Although Veterans Day is to honor military servicemembers, Correa made special note that the firemen and policemen who fell in the terrorist attack exactly

two months prior should be remembered as the first casualties of the war against terrorism.

During her speech, Mazie K. Hirono, lieutenant governor of Hawaii, explained that Veterans Day is meant to recognize veter-

See VETERANS, A-5

## MCBH NEWS BRIEFS

### MONITORS VISIT, NOV. 26-28

The HQMC Manpower Management Enlisted Assignment (MMEA) monitors and career counselors will be visiting MCB Hawaii from the Nov. 26 thru 28.

The command will provide briefings and counselings which will target every Marine at MCB Hawaii.

Briefs will include a command brief targeting officers; a sergeant major brief, open to senior enlisted Marines; a career brief, focusing on individual awareness of competitive and retention issues; and a first term brief to address current issues surrounding retention, lateral moves special duty assignments.

For more, at K-Bay call Master Sgt. Iosefa Elisara at 257-8858, or at Camp Smith, call Master Sgt. Patrick Buckley at 477-8698.

### CHILD SEAT CHECKUP

Marines, Sailors, civilians and their families are invited to have their child's passenger safety seat inspected at Windward Mall in Kaneohe, Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon.

For more information about the event, visit the MCB Hawaii Base Safety Center website at [www.mcbh.usmc.mil/safety/cpsp.html](http://www.mcbh.usmc.mil/safety/cpsp.html).

### CREDIT UNION CHANGES HOURS

To better serve its membership, the Windward Community Federal Credit Union has changed its hours of operation from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The change was made to accommodate Kaneohe Bay personnel who are finishing work beyond 4 p.m.

The credit union welcomes any feedback regarding this change. Call 254-3538 or fax 254-2243.

### TRIPLER SHUTTLE BUS

Due to added security at Tripler, appointments and programs are beginning and ending later in the day. While the bus to Tripler will leave MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, at its normal times, the last bus departing Tripler will now be 4 p.m.

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Base Emergency 257-9111  
Military Police 257-7114

## Hawaii MARINE

Commanding General Brig. Gen. Jerry C. McAbee  
Public Affairs Director Maj. Chris Hughes  
Public Affairs Chief Gunnery Sgt. Rhys Evans  
Press Chief Sgt. Robert Carlson  
Managing Editor Aiko Brum  
Lifestyles Editor Cpl. Roman Yurek

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To contact the MCB Hawaii Public Affairs Office use the following addresses:

HAWAII MARINE, BUILDING 216, MCB HAWAII  
KANEOHE BAY, HI, 96863

E-MAIL: [HAWAIIAMARINE@MCBH.USMC.MIL](mailto:HAWAIIAMARINE@MCBH.USMC.MIL)

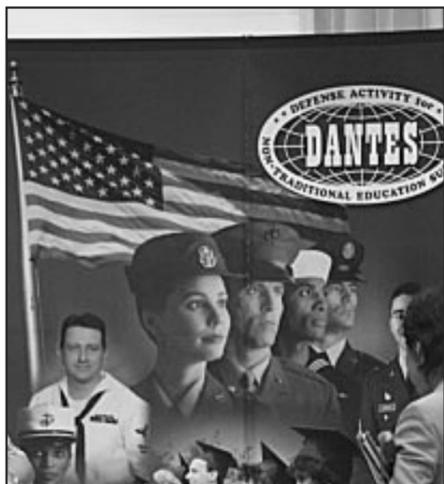
FAX: 257-2511, PHONE: 257-8840

# Troops to Teachers program touches down in Hawaii

Lance Cpl. Jason E. Miller  
Combat Correspondent

Active and retired servicemembers interested in furthering their service to the government, not by staying in the military, but by assuming the role of an educator, gathered at Windward Community College Nov. 6, to learn more about the Troops to Teachers program that could possibly allow them to achieve such a goal.

The Defense Activity for Non-traditional Education Support program



Lance Cpl. Jason E. Miller

The Troops to Teachers team spent Nov. 6 letting active duty and retired servicemembers know about opportunities available in government service after the military.

had not held an event in Hawaii for more than five years, according to Dr. John Gantz, chief of the Troops to Teachers program.

"We feel that this program serves not only as a good transition for the servicemembers back into the civilian world, but it also makes an excellent opportunity for education systems to get quality individuals into schools," Dr. Gantz said.

The Troops to Teachers program, which was established in 1994, already has a longstanding good relationship with members of the military and those of education systems.

The Troops to Teachers program at WCC took a brief look at what the program is all about. Much of the focus was directed at educational requirements that one must attain before entering the program.

The servicemembers who go on to become educators have a great opportunity to start a second career outside the military and also serves as very positive role models for impressionable students.

Most of the program's participants tend to be males, which is considered to be a good thing given the lack of male educators in the average school environment, said Dr. Gantz.



Lance Cpl. Jason E. Miller

Dr. John Gantz headed up the seminar.

Servicemembers who wish to take advantage of the Troops to Teachers program must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college, if they are interested in teaching.

Vocational applicants are not required to have a college degree, but must be able to document their expertise.

For further information regarding the Troops to Teachers program, write to: DANTES Troops to Teachers, 6490 Saufley Field Rd. Pensacola Fla., 32509-5243.

Interested servicemembers may also call 800 -452-6242 for more details.

## 226 years of Corps history



Cpl. Roman Yurek

Marines and Sailors from MCB Hawaii displayed uniforms from more than a dozen different periods in Marine Corps history, ranging from the Revolutionary War to the present, during the Marine Corps' birthday celebration at Dewey Square Thursday. Each member of the pageant explained a little history about the Marine Corps to the crowd of more than 300 Marines, Sailors, veterans, spouses and children.

## COMMENTARY

# Thanksgiving: An essential holiday

Navy Capt. Joseph W. Estabrook  
Command Chaplain, MCB Hawaii

Here is a holiday that commemorates no hero, celebrates no battlefield. There is no lobby behind it; no group or sect or party.

It doesn't even fall on the same date twice. Yet, Christmas cannot dim it, nor July 4 steal its glory.

All America loves this day with a quiet and intense affection that is reserved for no other day of the year.

What makes Thanksgiving different? What makes it beloved? What makes this holiday so very real to us?

Perhaps the answer is simple: Thanksgiving is an affirmation.

It is the testimony of the heart of a nation to a deeply-held conviction:

the conviction that these things we call "free" and "decent" and "American" did not just happen to us.

We did not get them because we were wiser, or more clever, or even luckier. We got these freedoms, these opportunities, these blessings because of God's love and benevolence toward us.

Unashamedly, our Founding Fathers believed that the God in whom they believed would truly be our God, if we would be his people.

They believed that this experiment in democracy, based on our Judeo-Christian traditions and principles would enable us to become "the new Jerusalem", a heaven on earth, where people would prosper and God

would be glorified.

Our forefathers believed that both gratitude and the dream needed to be irrevocably intertwined, and if we should ever forget to give thanks we would jeopardize the blessing.

For our forefathers, this day of Thanksgiving was not only appropriate but also essential.

If we are truly to take the torch from those great Americans who went before us and make the dream come alive, then we must also make sure that this dream and our gratitude to the God who gave it to us remain intertwined.

For us, as for our forefathers, it is not just a good thing to do or a nice day to celebrate.

Thanksgiving is in fact essential!

# Bright Star ends, MarForPac returns home to Camp Smith

**BRIGHT STAR, From A-1**

And this they did. When MarCent's main body arrived at MMC Admin, all they had to do was "pop box and work,"



Staff Sgt. Shay Richardson

The Marine Corps colors fly proudly in front of the Marine barracks at MMC Admin.

said Spencer. Thanks to the Marines of Headquarters & Service Bn., their efforts and hard work made the arrival here, for those who followed, a lot easier than it was for them.

"It was nice to get in country and see everything all locked on after traveling for so long," said Staff Sgt. DeAnne Bell. "We only needed to unpack and hit the rack. That really made our arrival pleasant."

While here, Marines stayed on top of their training.

They received professional military education classes such as Psycho-logical



Staff Sgt. Shay Richardson

Staff Sgt. Dean Weichert, protocol chief, Marine Forces Pacific, gives a period of instruction on Solar Still training. Weichert uses leaves from a bush to demonstrate the process of obtaining water from plants. After leaving the leaves and canteen cup covered overnight, he returned proving that even in the heat of the desert, water can accumulate from the moisture of the leaves.

Warfare Training, Solar Still Training, Operational Security, and Anti-terrorism Force Protection Training.

Although the Marines of Headquarters & Service Bn. worked hard throughout the exercise, some admitted that the experience itself made it all worth it.

"To see something as

magnificent as the Pyramids, totally blew me away," said Cpl. Kelly Persich, a Marine Forces Pacific embark noncommissioned officer.

"It's very common to do exercises in other countries year after year, but to get to Egypt was totally awesome."

# A-76 study gets local endorsement

The procurement-sensitive plan sets comparison standards for commercial bids

**Sgt. Richard W. Holtgraver Jr.**  
Combat Correspondent

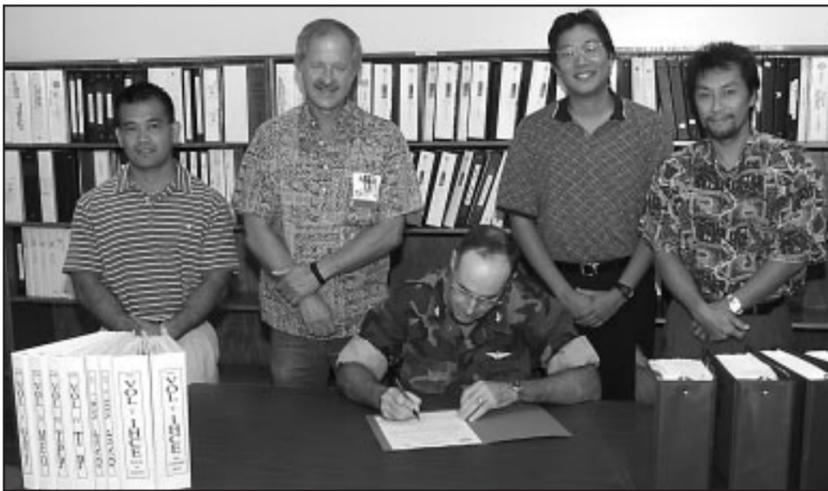
With the stroke of a pen, Col. John A. LeMoine, commander of MCB Hawaii, signed the Management Plan of the Congressional A-76 study Friday.

The signature endorses the hard work the A-76 team has done for the past year.

The Management Plan is a procurement-sensitive document that contains the Marine Corps' plan on how work will be performed at the Facilities Maintenance and Motor Transportation functions.

"It feels real good to have this done, because this was the most difficult part of the process," said Ken Stephens, commercial activities manager. "It's been a lot of hard work with productivity studies and data collection of workloads and cost."

With LeMoine's signature, the document will be forwarded to the Naval Audit Service for review. That process



Sgt. Richard W. Holtgraver Jr.

Management Plan Team members (from left) Lee Yamamoto, MCB Hawaii Facilities deputy director; Frank Ethridge, president of the American Federation of Government Employees; Lance Iwami, the A-76 Management Plan team leader; and Dennis Chuz, a Facilities engineer, stand by as Col. John A. Lemoine, base commander, signs the A-76 Management Plan Friday morning.

should only take about five weeks to review and certify, according to Stephens.

Once it gains NAS approval, it becomes an official government document and represents the government's bid against which contractors must compete.

By Jan. 29, 2002, all commercial bids will need to be turned in. It will be up to the Technical Evaluation Board to compare those bids against the

Management Plan.

On Sept. 2, 2002, the Source Selection Authority will decide whether the government or a contractor wins the bid.

After the SSA makes its decision, the appeals process begins, and there are always appeals filed, according to Stephens.

The appeals process will be completed by Nov. 15, 2002, and the result of that process will determine once and for all who wins the bid.

"You cannot buy loyalty, and our civil service workers have demonstrated continued and steadfast dedication to the missions of MCBH," assured Stephens.

"Everyone has worked really hard to put together an in-house bid that is highly competitive," he added.

# SGLI spousal 'opt-out' deadline extended

**Gerry J. Gilmore**  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Troops who don't want spousal coverage in the Servicemembers Group Life Insurance program now have until Dec. 31 to cancel at no charge.

This is a one-month extension on the initial Nov. 30 opt-out deadline widely reported in October.

New rules effective Nov. 1 provide SGLI participants with free \$10,000 coverage per child and low-cost spousal coverage of up to \$100,000.

Servicemembers with personal SGLI coverage of \$100,000 or more are automatically enrolled for the maximum \$100,000 spousal coverage, said Navy Capt. Chris

Kopang, Department of Defense director of compensation.

The accompanying premium will be deducted from military pay each month.

Spouse's coverage can be no higher than the member's. It is limited if the member carries less than \$100,000 personal coverage, he explained.

Spouse coverage must be elected in \$10,000 increments. Premiums are based on coverage and the spouse's age.

Coverage for children up to age 18, or 23 if a full-time student, is free and automatic, so long as the member par-

ticipates in SGLI, Kopang said.

Eligible Reserve component members receive the same family member coverage, with premiums being deducted from their drill pay, he said.

But what if servicemembers don't want spousal SGLI coverage? No problem — opt out of the V.A.-sponsored coverage. Kopang said troops who don't want spousal SGLI coverage need to visit their military personnel office to fill out and submit an "8286-A" form.

The forms are also available at: [www.insurance.va.gov/sglivgli/sglifam.htm](http://www.insurance.va.gov/sglivgli/sglifam.htm). Those who cancel in time will be reimbursed for any premiums inadvertently withheld from their pay. Members should carefully weigh their choice, especially if they currently have no spousal insurance.

## WORD ON THE STREET

What's your favorite military movie?



"Sands of Iwo Jima."

**Lance Cpl Tieren Ebbitt**  
Forward observer  
Charlie Battery,  
1/12



"Platoon."

**Lance Cpl. Mike McCorkle**  
Forward observer  
Charlie Battery,  
1/12



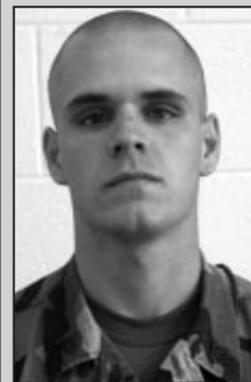
"Saving Private Ryan."

**Petty Officer 2nd Class Amanda Powell**  
Field medical technician  
Pearl Harbor  
MEPS



"Full Metal Jacket."

**Sgt. Martin Smith**  
Linguist  
1st Radio Bn.



"Sniper."

**Cpl. Marshall Thompson**  
Armorer  
CSSG-3

### Spouse SGLI Rates

Spouse's age	Rate per \$1,000	Maximum Monthly Premium
Under 35	\$.09	\$9
35-44	.13	13
45-49	.20	20
50-54	.32	32
55+	.55	55

# New standards set for outgoing POV shipments

**Sgt. Richard W. Holtgraver Jr.**  
*Combat Correspondent*

HONOLULU — All servicemembers who want their jointly-owned, private vehicles shipped out of the Oahu Vehicle Processing Center at Matson's Sand Island terminal must present identification for both registered owners.

Previously, a jointly-owned vehicle needed only one owner's proof of ID in order for the paperwork to be processed, but U. S. Customs has changed its clearance requirements for POVs leaving the United States.

Vehicles of military families are shipped through the Global POV Program. The program has been in operation since Nov. 1, 1998. From the beginning, it had numerous shortfalls that needed to be fixed, according to Jeremy R. Hay, Pacific regional program manager.

One of those shortfalls was the U.S. Customs

Clearance requirements for military members to ship their POV to a foreign location other than the continental United States.

"I worked closely with the U.S. Customs supervisors at Pier 1 in Honolulu to establish local requirements for shipment," said Hay. "These requirements were based on the premise that each military service would specifically check required documentation such as vehicle title, current registration, lien holder release for shipment and so forth."

Customs did not originally require the Vehicle Processing Center to present ID for both registered owners as shown on a title or registration.

"The change I requested was a result of customs changing its clearance criteria for POVs leaving the United States," said Hay.

Now the member or power of attorney holder must present a photo ID card with a date of birth (a military ID card for members and spouses or appropriate other ID for nonmilitary members) for each registered owner of a POV before U.S. Customs will accept the documentation for shipment and approve the documentation presented.

The new requirement is to ensure that the process of shipping a POV goes as smoothly as possible, according to Hay.

"My desire is to provide information to our military members to prevent problems at the time of vehicle processing," said Hay.

For more information on the requirements for processing a jointly-owned POV, call Jeremy Hay of the Personal Property Office at (808) 845-8531.

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# COURTS MARTIAL

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

## Special Courts Martial

- Sergeant John Hendrix of 1st Radio Bn. was found guilty of indecent exposure and sentenced Sept. 18 to hard labor, without confinement, for 60 days and reduction to pay grade E-3.

- Sergeant Stephen Leach of Combat Service Support Group 3 was convicted of wrongfully using methylenedicyamphetamine and marijuana July 20 and sentenced to a bad conduct discharge, confinement for 60 days and reduction in pay grade to E-1.

- Lance Cpl. Jason Bowden of 1st Radio Bn. was convicted of larceny July 16 and sentenced to a bad-conduct discharge, 30 days confinement, forfeiture of two-thirds pay for one month and reduction in pay grade to E-1.

- Lance Cpl. Joshua Delary of Headquarters Bn., MCB Hawaii, was convicted of writing bad checks Oct. 2 and sentenced to a bad conduct discharge, confinement for 120 days and reduction in pay grade to E-1.

- Lance Cpl. Shandy Smith of 3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Regiment was found guilty of unauthorized absence Aug. 14 and sentenced to confinement

for 29 days and reduction in pay grade to E-1.

- Lance Cpl. Richard Zaleski of CSSG-3 was convicted of wrongfully using and distributing ecstasy July 6 and sentenced to confinement for 90 days, forfeiture of \$700 pay per month for three months and reduction in pay grade to E-1.

- Private First Class James Aldridge of Headquarters Bn., MCB Hawaii, was found guilty of wrongful appropriation Aug. 30.



Aldridge was sentenced to a bad conduct discharge, confinement for 150 days, forfeiture of \$650 of pay per month for five months and reduction in pay grade to E-1.

- Private First Class Donald Caison of 3/3 was found guilty of unauthorized absence and larceny August 31 and sentenced to confinement for 120 days, forfeiture of \$650 pay per month for six months and reduction to pay grade E-1.

- Private First Class Sean Davis of CSSG - 3 was convicted of theft of gov-

ernment property Sept. 28 and sentenced to a bad conduct discharge, confinement for 60 days, reduction in pay grade to E-1 and fined \$2,750.

- Private First Class Brian Hatfield of Headquarters Bn., MCB Hawaii, was found guilty of unauthorized absence Sept. 26 and sentenced to a bad conduct discharge, confinement for 45 days and reduction in pay grade to E-1.

- Private First Class McClifford Tarape of Headquarters Bn., MCB Hawaii, was convicted of unauthorized absence Sept. 7 and sentenced to 45 days hard labor, without confinement, and reduction in pay grade to E-1.

- Private Jeremy Boyett of Headquarters Bn., MCB Hawaii, was found guilty of theft and wrongfully obtaining services Sept. 7 and sentenced to confinement for 140 days and a bad conduct discharge.

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## VETERANS, From A-1

ans' courage and nobility.

"We are here to honor Hawaii's heroes and the heroes of our nation," said Hirono.

Hirono also took time to remind those in attendance that there are more than 25 million American veterans with a wealth of knowledge for a younger generation of servicemembers.

Their stories must be retold to remind others of their courage and sacrifices for Hawaii and the United States, according to Hirono.

The ceremony seemed to have a profound effect on all those present, especially young servicemembers like Lance Cpl. John Paul Manalac, a wireman for Headquarters Co., 3rd Marine Regiment, who was there as part of a rifle detail.

"It made me feel proud to be a Marine," said Manalac. "I'm carrying on what the veterans have brought along with them — the traditions and honor," he said.

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# MILITARY BLOTTER

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- A Marine was involved in a traffic accident (off base) when attempting to negotiate a curve and losing control of his vehicle. The vehicle flipped onto its roof.

- A Marine was apprehended by the Military Police Department for drunk and disorderly conduct at the Main Gate.

- A Marine was apprehended by MPD for larceny of private property, after he stole another Marine's bicycle and used it for parts.

- A Marine reported person(s) unknown broke into his vehicle and stole various stereo equipment while it was parked at the Lemon Lot.

- A civilian employee reported that

she observed person(s) pump \$21 worth of fuel and leave without settling the debt.

- A military dependent reported that person(s) unknown stole her 10-speed bicycle from the front yard of her quarters.

- A Marine was apprehended by MPD for failure to comply with MPs.

- A Marine

was involved in a traffic accident when attempting to make a left turn and failing to maintain sufficient distance from an MP barrier.

- A civilian employee reported that he had observed two persons pump \$20 worth of fuel into a white vehicle and leave the station without settling the debt.

- To report crime, call 257-2103.

# EVERY CLIME AND PLACE

## 31st MEU helps repair militia's damage in East Timor

Lance Cpl.  
**John Hoellwarth**  
*31st MEU Public Affairs*

**AIDANTUIK, East Timor** — A group of 56 Marines of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) and Sailors of the USS Fort McHenry visited the small village here Thursday to conduct humanitarian assistance operations.

Their efforts are part of the humanitarian assistance operations the MEU (SOC) is conducting in conjunction with United States Support Group East Timor, a U.S. military com-

mand that provides relief to the East Timorese people.

Before the Marines and Sailors arrived, Joao Carceres, the village chaplain, preached to 350 Catholics from the village's small, dilapidated chapel.

In speaking of the tragic events that took place in East Timor, he stated the anti-independence militia had done damage to the village after the country gained its independence in 1999.

During the visit, the Marines and Sailors helped rebuild infrastructure and strengthened relations with locals.

According to Lance Cpl. Christopher W. Thompson, one of the Marines who repainted the chapel, helping the East Timorese here was the highlight of his deployment.

"It's good to see the effects of my work in a foreign nation," Thompson said. "When I first arrived on shore, I didn't know what to expect. But when I saw the way a large number of the people here live, I was intent on helping them the best I could."

"The full meaning of our relief efforts didn't hit me until I saw what this young democra-

cy had to deal with," he added. "Freedom isn't free, and these folks have paid pretty highly for it."

The work done to repair the village was well received by its inhabitants.

Carceres said the people here have always liked Americans and appreciate all the help they bring.

"I don't think there is anyone among us who didn't walk away unmoved," Thompson said.



Lance Cpl Kenji Szczepanski

**Chief Warrant Officer Benjamin Luster interacts with local children at one of the many sites.**