

# Hawaii Marine

## 'ISLAND WARRIORS' CONDUCT EXERCISE LAVA VIPER



Cpl. Demetrius Munnerlyn | U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, Combat Camera

Marines with Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, conduct immediate action drills after a mock attack during Lava Viper at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii, Jan. 22. Lava Viper is a battalion-level combined arms training exercise which better prepares Marines for upcoming operations.

## New base traffic point system and safety awareness

Lance Cpl. James A. Sauter  
Combat Correspondent

The Military Police Department at Marine Corps Base Hawaii will be enforcing a new traffic violation point system, scheduled to take effect immediately after it's revised and signed by the base commander.

Under the current point system, traffic violators receive a number of penalty points, determined by the Base Magistrate, based on the violation.

The number of points given is based on the base order and local laws and regulations.

"The amount of points given for the different violations has been adjusted to meet the new order," said Capt. Gerard W. Vanderwaal, military police operations officer.

In addition, the military police department here doesn't assess fines or punishment, which is a responsibility that belongs to the Base Magistrate.

Any fines would be assessed by the local courts. However, MPD will be issuing district court violations for certain offenses including reckless driving, speeding more than 15 miles per hour over the posted limit and operating a vehicle while driving under the influence of an intoxicant.

"Marine Corps Base Hawaii has a lot of traffic, which creates an increased opportunity for accidents," Vanderwaal said. "Driving on base is a privilege that can be revoked if drivers don't show safety."

In order to provide an unbiased system, the MPD, Base Inspector's Office and the Legal Services Center collaborated to ensure the new point system is a fair approach to traffic enforcement that complies with all applicable national, state and local guidelines.

For more information, contact MPD at 257-1320.

## Education programs aimed at preparing Marines for college mindset

Lance Cpl. Matthew A. Callahan  
Contributing Writer

This week, several Marines from Wounded Warrior Battalion West — Detachment Hawaii, will be completing the Military Academic Skills Program which is one of two month-long classes held at the Education Center here.

The MASP and Military Academic College Kickoff are two ongoing programs provided to Marines aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii. The programs are tailored toward service members who are preparing to re-enter an educational environment.

Funded by Headquarters Marine Corps, the MASP program teaches introductory-level reading, writing, mathematics and communication to service members. The program is fast-paced, concentrating studies in Math and English for three hours each day, during the workweek.

"MASP has provided me with a fresh re-acquaintance with education, particularly in English," said Sgt. Myron Ellis, a wounded warrior formerly with Echo Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment. "It's an essential asset for getting Marines back on track for school that the Marine Corps provides."

Ellis said that not only is the program good for transitioning Marines, but is also beneficial for those staying in the Corps and looking to broaden their academic skill sets as they advance their military careers.

"The MASP program is a fabulous way to get Marines, sailors and even spouses back into the swing of school," said Ellen Huntley, an English teacher with

Hawaii Pacific University who teaches the program. "At the end of four weeks in the MASP course, these service members will have the confidence to step into a college classroom."

Huntley believes the MASP program is a way for Marines and sailors to reconnect with the basic skills they may have lost during their time on active duty.

"I have a number of Marines who've stayed in touch with me after their service, and they tell me how valuable they thought the course was. They attribute their success in college to the MASP course."

The MASP course also serves as an excellent tool to help scores when taking the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test, according to Huntley. She said that Marines looking to lateral move into different military occupational specialties find the course extremely beneficial when testing into desired MOS fields.

The second academic program, MACK, is run exclusively on MCB Hawaii through Hawaii Pacific University and is funded through tuition assistance. With classrooms located at the education center, the MACK program is a high-intensity academic college program that shortens math and English semester classes into a four-week period. Students attend class from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. during the workweek and earn six college credits upon completion of the course.

Both programs will be offered again on Feb. 13 for Marines, sailors and spouses, where space is available. For more information on the MASP and MACK programs, visit the Education Center or call them at 257-2158.

## NATIONAL DIET OF JAPAN VISITS MCB HAWAII

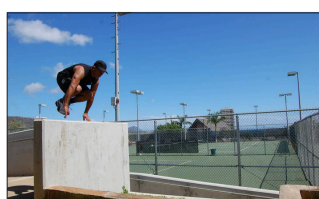


Kristen Wong | Hawaii Marine

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brian Somers, Marine gunner and officer in charge for Puuloa and Kaneohe Bay Range Training Facilities, talks about range operations to members of the National Diet of Japan, at Kaneohe Bay Range Training Facility, Jan. 26. Hitoshi Hagihara, Rintaro Ogata, and Hidenori Tachibana, all members of the House of Representatives of the National Diet of Japan, received a briefing about the base at the Kansas Tower conference room and visited Kaneohe Bay Range Training Facility. This visit was part of the State Department International Visitor Leadership Program, which ran from Jan. 7 to 28.



**2012 Pro Bowl**  
Check out the gridiron action at this year's Pro Bowl, **B-1**



**Jumpin' around**  
Hawaii Parkour offers a new way to exercise and get around town, **C-1**

Saturday  
High — 79  
Low — 64

Sunday  
High — 77  
Low — 69

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Free tax preparation service

The Base Tax Center will be open through April 17. The center's hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Tuesday and Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Please bring all W-2's (including spouse's), bank account and routing numbers, copy of last year's tax return, all other tax forms (1099s, etc.) and Social Security cards for all family members.

The tax center is located at Bldg. 455 on the first deck. Bldg. 455 is across the street from Forest City and adjacent to the Youth Activities Center. **NOTE:** To schedule an appointment call **257-1564**.

### Marines needed for Individual Augmentee Award Luncheon

On Feb. 24, the Navy League will host its annual Individual Augmentee Award Luncheon to recognize Marines who deployed as an individual augmentee in fiscal year 2011.

Marines of all ranks are eligible to be recognized. The event will be held at the Ala Moana Hotel in Honolulu and registration begins at 10:30 a.m.

Marines must wear their Service "C" uniform. The luncheon is free for all IA awardees and one guest. There is a fee for additional guests. MCB Hawaii-based sailors will be identified separately through Navy Region Hawaii.

Contact Sgt. Danny Woodall at [daniel.woodall@usmc.mil](mailto:daniel.woodall@usmc.mil) or 257-8838 for more information.

### Volunteer opportunity at Ramsar World Wetlands Day

The Hoolaulima is Kawainui will be celebrating the designation of the Kawainui-Hamakua Marsh Complex in Kailua as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance.

The event will be held on Feb. 4 from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Kailua United Methodist Church, located at 1110 Kailua Road.

This year's focus will be on children, youth and young adults as they help foster the future of Hawaii for their own children & grandchildren.

Tour pre-registration started Jan. 23. Organizers are looking for volunteers ages 15 and up to help out with a wide variety of tasks.

For more information on pre-registration, contact Kaimi Scudder at 262-8008 or [email@ahahui.net](mailto:email@ahahui.net). Be sure to include complete contact information.

There is a maximum of six people per reservation. For more information on Ramsar World Wetlands Day or to volunteer, contact Shannon Wood at 247-6366 or 224-4496 or [info@waa-hawaii.org](mailto:info@waa-hawaii.org).

### Volunteers needed to count migrating humpback whales (Saturday)

There are upcoming volunteer opportunities for Ocean Count 2012 to see the migrating whales and help count them for NOAA.

One location is Pyramid Rock Beach's lighthouse, but there are other spots all along Oahu. Great for landlubbers who get seasick, since it is all on dry land. Makes for a fun day with the kids, too! The upcoming count dates are Feb. 25, and March 31.

Visit <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov> for details and sign-up information.

### Important phone numbers

On-Base Emergencies	911
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCB Hawaii Chaplain	257-3552
DEERS	257-2077

## Hawaii Marine

[www.mcbh.usmc.mil](http://www.mcbh.usmc.mil)

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# LEADERS Of WAR

Lance Cpl. Jacob D. Barber

Combat Correspondent

### MARINE CORPS TRAINING AREA BELLOWS

— In every branch of the military, there is a respect for the noncommissioned officer rank. Whether in the Marine Corps or Army, service members must be ready mentally and physically before becoming an NCO.

Like the Corporal's or Sergeant's Course in the Marine Corps, there is also has a course that emphasizes the importance of becoming a leader in the Army.

The Warrior Leader Course, a 15-day training cycle at Marine Corps Training Area Bellows, solely focuses on creating Army NCOs.

The course is divided into two parts. During the beginning of the course, soldiers are taught lessons in a classroom that are tailored toward garrison leadership. After the classes, soldiers spend two weeks in the field learning tactical leadership while executing scenarios. Complex ambushes, route clearance, improvised explosive device patrols and combat judgment are examples of daily scenarios soldiers conduct during the final two weeks of the course.

"In this course we give them all the tools they need to become an NCO," said Staff Sgt. Clayton Sivaivai, course instructor. "The classroom is where they get the knowledge they need to be a good leader in garrison, but in the field we focus on small team leadership."

According to Sivaivai, who has been an instructor for three cycles, small team leadership is vital when promoted to NCO.

"When they deploy, they'll most likely be put in the position to lead a small team," Sivaivai said. "As an NCO that's what you start as, a small team

## Soldiers take on Warrior Leader Course at MCTAB

leader, and then you'll go through ranks becoming a squad leader, platoon sergeant and so on. It all starts here though."

The soldiers are divided into several teams and cycled from one area to another, conducting different scenarios at each. A variety of leadership and team building exercises are played out in each area.

See **WARRIOR**, A-7



Lance Cpl. Matthew A. Callahan | Hawaii Marine

Spc. Amy Leyson, motor transportation, Delta Company, Forward Support Company, 298th Brigade Support Battalion, checks a jam in her rifle while fellow soldiers clear a compound at Marine Corps Training Area Bellows. The Army National Guard soldiers are taking part in the Warrior Leader Course, a program similar to the Corporal's and Sergeant's Course in the Marine Corps.

# PENNY-PINCHING

## Get a great bargain at base thrift shop

Lance Cpl. James A. Sauter

Combat Correspondent

Unbeknownst to many base residents, a small band of workers who volunteer their time, provide a store for Marines and sailors to purchase quality items at a fraction of the cost compared to other stores.

Located next to the Marine Corps University here, Marine Thrift Shop Kaneohe Bay offers customers a wide range of donated items, such as Marine and Navy uniforms, clothing, baby accessories and occasionally furniture.

"We take donations from people on base and who have base access," said Sierra Slack, the manager of the thrift shop. "We in turn sell them at reasonable prices such as \$20 max for military uniforms."

The thrift shop itself is volunteer-based, where anyone can come and volunteer their time for community service. New volunteers can come to the shop, receive a brief training class and go to work organizing donations and sorting them on shelves.

"I like it here because it's very

easy and laid back," said Sharon Baird, whose son is a Marine with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463, known as Pegasus. "I started this year and I find it very interesting and a total surprise what people donate. It's fun because a lot of people come in daily and you get to know them."

Slack said that the major concern with customers is the quality of a used product. Slack explained that all donations are carefully sorted through and inspected for any damages. As an example, clothes are inspected for stains, tears and any missing buttons. Donated appliances, DVDs and VHS tapes are tested to ensure they function properly.

"After being sorted through, the donations then go up on the shelves and any eliminated items would then be redonated," Slack said.

Slack also said the majority of people who come to the shop are enlisted, pay grades E5 and below, looking for used uniform items. Almost every uniform item for the service and dress blue uniforms are available to buy at a decent price.

"People mostly come in for the jackets and trousers," Slack said. "After finding a jacket that fits, the customer would have to replace any chevrons sown on because we don't have the capability of removing them."

For more information about the the thrift shop, call 254-0841.



A complete set of a Marine service alpha uniform is on display at Marine Thrift Shop Kaneohe Bay here



Photos by Lance Cpl. James A. Sauter | Hawaii Marine

Customers sort through clothing at the Marine Thrift Shop Kaneohe Bay here, Jan. 28.

# AROUND THE CORPS

## 31st MEU secures beach with amphibious assault

**Cpl. Jonathan Wright**  
31st Marine Expeditionary Unit

**OKINAWA, Japan** — Sporadic bursts of rifle fire cut through the still air, drawing an immediate response from the Marines staged on the opposite end of the clearing. Calls for maneuvers were made as groups of Marines took up defensive positions, returning fire in the direction of the enemy contact. Minutes later, three hostiles were either killed or captured, and a security perimeter was established around the cleared area.

“We’ve encountered rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire,” said Lance Cpl. Derek Gregory, an assaultman with Company A, Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. “After clearing the immediate area and checking for any (improvised explosive devices), we’ll return the town to the (local) government.”

Capturing an area from control of enemy forces is

one of the objectives during a training exercise that took place Jan. 13. The unit, known as Boat Company, conducted a mock raid using combat rubber raiding craft on the Kin Blue training area as part of the MEU’s pre-deployment exercise.

“The focus of this training was to properly conduct a boat raid from the beach, locate and eliminate any offensive forces, and patrol the surrounding area,” said Sgt. Henry Pulcine, acting range safety officer for the Kin Blue training area.

A total of 15 boats hit the beach with the Marines moving quickly ashore and setting up defenses around the beach. After the boats were camouflaged with sand, the Marines made their way into the simulated enemy-held areas with cover provided by snipers and mortar teams.

“It may be fake, but it’s one of the best ways to keep our skills fresh and ensure we don’t forget any beneficial training,” said Gregory. “We’re going to keep doing it, so we’re ready when we deploy.”



Cpl. Jonathan Wright | 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit

**Marines with Company A, Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, run toward an objective at the Kin Blue training area, Okinawa, Japan, during a mock boat raid Jan. 13.**

After securing the area, the Marines continued patrolling, discovering and properly clearing mock IEDs along the way.

Another patch of resistance was met when hostiles, concealed in the foliage, attempted to repel the Marines from securing a landing zone.

Those Marines who suffered simulated injuries during the firefights were evacuated by way of helicopter from the secured landing zone.

When the rest of the area was deemed free of enemy forces, the Marines made their way back to the beach to leave in the craft they arrived in.

“This training combined different elements of the (Marine air-ground task force) and further taught them how to work as a cohesive whole,” said Pulcine. “It was a good learning exercise, and I think it helped the Marines work on any areas that might have needed attention.”



Lance Cpl. Timothy Childers | 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit

**Japanese soldiers from the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force dive into a pool, conducting casualty drills during a helocast preparation exercise aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 28.**

## Marines and Japanese soldiers conduct helo-dunking egress training

**Lance Cpl. Timothy Childers**  
15th Marine Expeditionary Unit

**CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.** — Marines and Japanese soldiers conducted helo-dunking egress training, simulated casualty drills and abandon ship techniques from a 10-meter platform during Exercise Iron Fist 2012, at the Camp Horno pool, Jan. 28.

Iron Fist is a bilateral training exercise between the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force.

Both nations were preparing for the helocasting exercises the following week, which trains service members to jump from a helicopter into a body of water.

The helicopter-dunker egress trainer simulates a helicopter crashing into a body of water.

Using the trainer, and aided

by Marines, the Japanese learned how to safely exit a submerged helicopter.

The helicopter-dunker spun underwater to disorient the soldiers before they unbuckled and swam out the helicopter’s exits.

During the simulated casualty drills, teams of two jumped from a tower into the pool.

One partner was the designated casualty, and the other was responsible to inflate their partner’s life jacket and swim him to safety.

This was followed by a drill in which the soldiers jumped from a 10-meter platform to familiarize the Japanese with abandon ship techniques.

“The whole idea is we’re building interoperability,” said Capt. Daniel J. Davis, commanding officer, Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine

Division. “We’re able to work side-by-side with the Japanese and carry out the mission.”

This exercise was among many scheduled events where U.S. forces conduct training alongside the JGSDF.

Exercise Iron Fist 2012 is the seventh iteration of this exercise that allows the 15th MEU to train with an important Pacific ally.

“I think the bilateral training is good,” said Master Sgt. Joshua J. Lind, operations chief, A Company, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division.

“We get to see the abilities of other armed forces that we hold a friendship with, and they get to see how the Marines do things,” Lind added.

The 15th MEU is currently training for a deployment later this fall.

## Combined arms training commences for 3/12



Lance Cpl. Michael Iams | III Marine Expeditionary Force

**Cpl. Devin T. Kelly pulls the lanyard to fire the M777A2 howitzer during the live-fire portion of the Fuji Combined Arms Operation at the Combined Arms Training Center, Camp Fuji, Japan, Jan. 18. Marines fired hundreds of rounds during a three-day operation. Kelly is an artilleryman with Golf Battery, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment.**

**Lance Cpl. Michael Iams**  
III Marine Expeditionary Force

**COMBINED ARMS TRAINING CENTER, CAMP FUJI, Japan** — Marines with Golf Battery began the live-fire portion of the Fuji Combined Arms Operation here, Jan. 17.

The overall purpose of the operation is to give

Marine artillery units the opportunity to conduct live-fire training with their weapon systems, according to Capt. Marc H. Ginez, battery commander.

“Our goal is to increase the proficiency and confidence of our Marines when utilizing these weapon systems,” said 1st Sgt. Shane E. Henson, the battery first sergeant.

The battery, originally from the 10th Marine

Regiment out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., is assigned to 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, through the Marine Corps’ unit deployment program.

The weapons systems used by the battery include the M777A2 howitzer, the M240B machine gun and the .50-caliber Browning machine gun.

During the training, the battery fired hundreds of 155 mm high-explosive artillery rounds and thousands of .50-caliber and 7.62 mm machine gun rounds, according to Henson.

For many of the Marines, the greatest challenge was the extremely cold weather conditions and mountainous terrain.

“This training helps us stay proficient as a unit,” said Sgt. Robert E. Sheppard III, a section chief for the battery. “It’s especially good for the Marines to learn to adapt and overcome the difficulties of the weather and terrain.”

“This training marks the final live-fire training the battery will perform as a unit,” said Henson. “The unit is scheduled to rotate back to its parent command in the United States next month.”

“Many of the Marines will receive orders to different units upon our return to Camp Lejeune,” Sheppard said. “They may either stay or leave 10th Marines.”

“It’s a sad feeling to be leaving your fellow Marines, brothers and friends,” said Lance Cpl. Justin C. Linton, an armorer with the battery.

This is a historic event in the Marines’ lives and careers, said Henson.

Marines kept their heads held high and remained optimistic about seeing each other again throughout their careers.

“For all of Golf Battery, it’s been a pleasure working and training alongside them,” said Linton. “I hope to see them again in the near future.”

# AFGHAN SOLDIERS DEVELOP Leadership DURING NCO ACADEMY



Cpl. Jason Misener, a 21-year-old rifleman with 3/3's ETT, and a native of Hackettstown, N.J., teaches Afghan National Army soldiers from 2/1/215, how to properly pack their gear during an ANA noncommissioned officer academy, Jan. 23.

**Cpl. Reece Lodder**  
Regimental Combat Team 5

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELHI, Afghanistan** — Unsheltered from the downpour of an ashen morning sky, a group of Afghan National Army sergeants slogs through a series of conditioning exercises.

The early morning rain has soaked their uniforms but not their spirits. The soldiers breathe heavily as they labor through the workout, crunching, squatting and doing push-ups alongside their Marine instructors. Wet and haggard, they complete the day's first training event.

Under the leadership of Marines and sailors with the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment Embedded Training Team, ANA soldiers with 2nd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, participated in the first ANA noncommissioned officer academy held in Garmsir district, Jan. 23 - 26.

During their deployment in Garmsir, the ETT's mission is training and mentoring the ANA. On the ground, ETT infantrymen patrol and conduct weapons ranges with their Afghan counterparts. Behind the scenes, the units' command elements work together to track personnel, move battle positions and organize logistics re-supplies.

The ETT Marines designed the academy with a view toward developing Afghan NCOs, soldiers who have earned the rank of sergeant, said Sgt. Joshua Watson, the ETT's 27-year-old platoon sergeant and a machine gunner by trade.

He said the academy gave the Afghan noncommissioned officers an opportunity to further their leadership skills based Marine guidance on "how to set the standard."

"We're teaching them how to stand in front of adversity with fury instead of fear," said Watson, a native of Johnstown, Pa. "While preparing them for the battlefield. We're also grooming them to lead their soldiers in daily tasks ... to make decisions and take responsibility for them just like Marine NCOs do."

The ANA rank structure is similar to the Marine Corps' in its distinction between officers and enlisted men. However, while Marine NCOs direct their junior men based on their experience and initiative, Afghan NCOs are less active in guiding the soldiers under them. Instead, the brunt of leadership often falls on the shoulders of their officers.

After preparing the ANA to lead physical training sessions for their soldiers, the Marine mentors taught them the importance of accounting for and properly packing their gear.

"It takes a very understanding person to transition from being a ground-and-pound grunt to a tactful, patient teacher," Watson said. "We can't just know our job; we have to be able to explain it in a way that surpasses cultural differences."

Armed with a gear list, Cpl. Jason Misener stood behind a poncho liner covered with clothes, boots, food and a sleeping bag. He demonstrated how to properly pack a rucksack while stressing the importance of accounting for their soldiers' gear.

Despite the language barrier, they listened diligently and asked Misener questions through an interpreter. Though this wasn't how he envisioned his deployment to Afghanistan, Misener said he was glad to spend it mentoring the ANA.

"When they ask questions and apply the things we've taught them, I can see we're making a difference here," said Misener, a 21-year-old rifleman and a native of Hackettstown, N.J. "They're eager to take in the knowledge we pass on to them because they see we're willing to sit down together and teach them."

The mentors transitioned to refresh training on weapons handling and employment. The Afghan NCOs progressed from the classroom to the firing range, first calibrating their weapons and then practicing combat marksmanship under the watchful eyes of their Marine mentors.

Watson placed great weight on weapons training but stressed that it was just another aspect of being a well-rounded leader.

"Being an NCO isn't just about slinging lead downrange," Watson said. "It's about being a leader, a gentleman, who can be followed in both combat and garrison."

The tangible skills bolstered the Afghan NCOs' military proficiency, but several held their mentors' professionalism as equally important.

"I've learned a lot from the Marines in the way they treat one another and carry themselves," said ANA Sgt. Ali Agha, an infantryman with 2/1/215. "When I see the camaraderie between the Marines, how they exercise, train, live and eat together, I see the kind of teamwork we hope to carry on to our soldiers."

As the course develops, it will spread to other positions across the district in the hopes of strengthening the Afghan NCO corps. Eventually, Watson said, it will be led by Afghan NCOs.

"The Marines helped us with every aspect of being a soldier," said ANA Sgt. Rustum Ali, a supply clerk with 2/1/215. "I'm hopeful that I can share the knowledge I've gained from this course to influence the men under my charge."

The ANA is still developing, but they've progressed steadily over their time spent training and fighting alongside Marines, said Gunnery Sgt. James Carter, the ETT's senior enlisted advisor.

Carter, a native of Winfield, Ala., first served on an ETT with ANA soldiers in Kandahar province in 2001. Now serving on his fourth training team, Carter said he's witnessed a "remarkable" progression in their proficiency, logistics and pay and personnel issues. Watson readily agreed with his evaluation.

"This is where progress is being made in turning Afghanistan over to its people," Watson said. "It's one thing to go to a foreign nation, pull a trigger and watch the enemy fall ... it's another to train the people's military and leave for the better. The work we're doing here is a footprint that'll stay in the sands of Afghanistan for years to come."



An interpreter and Cpl. Jason Misener, a 21-year-old rifleman with the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment Embedded Training Team, and a native of Hackettstown, N.J., walk with Afghan National Army soldiers from 2nd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, after examining the soldiers' targets following a weapons calibration exercise during an ANA noncommissioned officer academy, Jan. 25. Watson said the academy — the first-ever in Garmsir district — gave the Afghan NCOs an opportunity to develop their leadership skills based on the Marines' guidance on "how to set the standard as an NCO." During the academy, the Marines prepared their Afghan counterparts to lead physical training sessions, to account for and properly pack their gear, and conducted weapons handling and calibration exercises.

Photos by Cpl. Reece Lodder | Regimental Combat Team 5



Afghan National Army Sgt. Kabir, an infantryman with 2/1/215, receives marksmanship instruction from Sgt. Joshua Watson, 27, the 3/3 ETT platoon sergeant, and a native of Johnstown, Pa., while calibrating his weapon during an ANA noncommissioned officer academy, Jan. 25.



Afghan National Army Sgt. Ali Agha, an infantryman with 2/1/215, listens for the command to begin firing while calibrating his weapon under the watch of 2/1 Marines with 3/3 ETT, during an ANA noncommissioned officer academy, Jan. 25.



Sgt. Brian Rudolph, 25, a native of Greenville, N.C., and Petty Officer 3rd Class Tedric Grayson, 24, a native of Waianae, Hawaii, a squad leader and a corpsman with the 3/3 ETT, perform push-ups with Afghan National Army Sgt. Sayed Rahman, an infantryman with 2/1/215, during the physical training portion of an ANA noncommissioned officer academy, Jan. 23.

“I’ve learned a lot from the Marines, in the way they treat one another and carry themselves. When I see the camaraderie between the Marines, how they exercise, train, live and eat together, I see the kind of teamwork we hope to carry on to our soldiers.”

— ANA Sgt. Ali Agha, 2/1/215 infantryman



Afghan National Army Sgt. Kabir, an infantryman with 2/1/215, examines his target while calibrating his weapon under the watch of Marines with 3/3 ETT, during an ANA noncommissioned officer academy, Jan. 25.

Watson said the ANA are ready to accept responsibility in Garmsir, but their NCOs need to allow their true abilities to shine through by learning to think "outside the box."

"They have strong warrior traits but have been unable to make decisions without their officers," Watson said. "We're helping the NCOs learn they have the ability to make a strong, split-second leadership decision, whether it applies to a daily task or to a combat situation where nobody is comfortable with making the call."

# Commentary: Hands-free cell phone use enforced on, off base

**Kristen Wong**

Photojournalist

One of the most irritating things that can happen while driving is a sudden “bling,” signifying you’ve received a text or constant ringing of the mobile phone.

Since the establishment of the law banning the use of mobile phones while driving in Hawaii in 2009, it quite literally drives me crazy to hear the phone constantly ringing while I’m driving.

Sometimes, in an effort to semi-answer the call I scream at the top of my lungs “I CAN’T ANSWER THE PHONE, ~~expletive deleted~~ LEAVE ME ALONE!” Yes I’m well aware the caller cannot hear me, and my screams are unnecessary.

But imagine my fury while sitting in traffic, listening to that annoying sound and seeing the driver beside me chatting away, not even trying to hide the phone that’s up to their ear with one hand on the wheel. I see them all the time.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, of more than 6,000 people surveyed in December of last year, 66 percent said they answer the phone while driving and 45 percent of those people hold the phone in their hand. Obviously they said, “screw it, I want to talk on the phone no matter what the law says.”

There is also a different breed of mobile-phone violators. These people activate speakerphone and hold the phone in front of them. I suppose they have come to believe “It’s not touching my ear, so it’s OK.” But it’s not.

The Honolulu Police Department states on their website the specifics you need to know about using mobile devices while driving. Take some time to visit their website at <http://www.honoluluupd.org>. You might be surprised, I sure was.

Apparently pulling over to the side of the road, turning off your car and then answering the phone is not permissible either. You’re in bumper-to-bumper traffic? You’re not moving at all? Don’t whip out the phone! That is not allowed either.



Kristen Wong | Hawaii Marine

**In accordance with Hawaii state law, drivers aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii can only use a cell phone with a hands-free device while operating their vehicle. There will be new penalties in effect soon. See story on A-1.**

The survey also stated that more than half of the drivers under the age of 24 said that mobile phone use does not affect their driving. Half of the survey participants, age 35 and older, say the same.

Tell that to the truck driver who caused an accident with a tractor trailer and two school buses killing two [including the truck driver] and injuring 38 shortly after reading five texts and sending six, while driving, according to an article by CNN in December of last year. Tell that to the Olympia, Wash., resident who destroyed her car and died while texting, as reported by King 5 News in Seattle last year.

However, there is hope. If you go on YouTube you can find many different videos which will tell you about different options for hands-free devices.

Companies sell special docks that hold your phone in place in the car. There are Bluetooth devices you can wear on your ear or your head through which you can make voice-activated calls. As long as you do not hold your device in your hand, you should be good.

If you’re looking for what’s on the market, my co-worker has a fondness for Siri, the voice activated program on the iPhone 4S. Siri can apparently send texts, call people and do numerous other tasks if you ask. She can’t do your laundry yet, but give it time.

Also, keep in mind that Marine Corps Base Hawaii will soon be making changes in its penalties for driving violations on base. (See the article in today’s issue by Lance Cpl. James Sauter).

Last year there were 177 cell phone

violations, according to Rodolfo Gutierrez, the Traffic Court Bailiff at the Military Police Department. You may not get into an accident while texting, but you could get a hefty fine.

If you’re that desperate to answer phone calls, texts and emails while making the long trek home, have someone else drive you home, take the bus and text and call all you want, just before stepping into the car. Hiding your phone in the trunk is another option. Not being able to reach the phone, let alone touch it might help take away some of the temptation.

Remember, only hands-free devices are permissible during a drive — not holding the phone while talking into the speaker, not at the stoplight, not in static traffic, not in a box, not with a fox, not here or there, not anywhere.



Lance Cpl. Jacob D. Barber | Hawaii Marine

Soldiers patrol a mock improvised explosive device trail during the Warrior Leader Course, a 15-day training cycle which solely focuses on creating Army NCOs, at Marine Corps Training Area Bellows, Monday. The soldiers were divided into several teams and cycled through different areas, conducting different scenarios at each. By instilling leadership traits, knowledge and an understanding of combat scenarios, the Warrior Leadership Course prepares soldiers for the next level.

### WARRIOR, from A-2

“You really learn a lot about everything from patrolling to clearance tactics,” said Spc. Jessy Lansdace, rifleman, Forward Support Company, 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. “There’s a lot you learn from this course, especially the leadership. This course is to instill

leadership and I feel it’s made me a better leader.”

Though the theory taught in the course is proven to be effective, Sivaivai said he believes MCTAB in itself is vital to the course.

“I trained at this place before it was renovated, and you can see a lot has changed now,” said Sivaivai. “From my experience being deployed

overseas, the new MOUT sites replicate the actual places I’ve been too. These sites give cultural awareness and a lot of units can conduct training at the same time. It’s an all-around great facility.”

Whether for Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard or Army, to become an NCO you must be ready for the challenge, know your leadership

capabilities, and most importantly, be willing to earn it. The Warriors Leaders Course is one way to learn all the necessary tools to be a sound NCO.

By instilling leadership traits, knowledge and an understanding of combat scenarios, the Warrior Leadership Course prepares soldiers for the next level.

(Right) A Marine with Combat Assault Company prepares to enter a compound at the MOUT facility here, Jan. 25. (Below) A Marine with CAC fits his helmet before conducting exercises, Jan. 25.



Lance Cpl. Jacob D. Barber | Hawaii Marine



Lance Cpl. Matthew A. Callahan | Hawaii Marine

## TESTING NEW WAYS TO KEEP YOUR HELMET ON

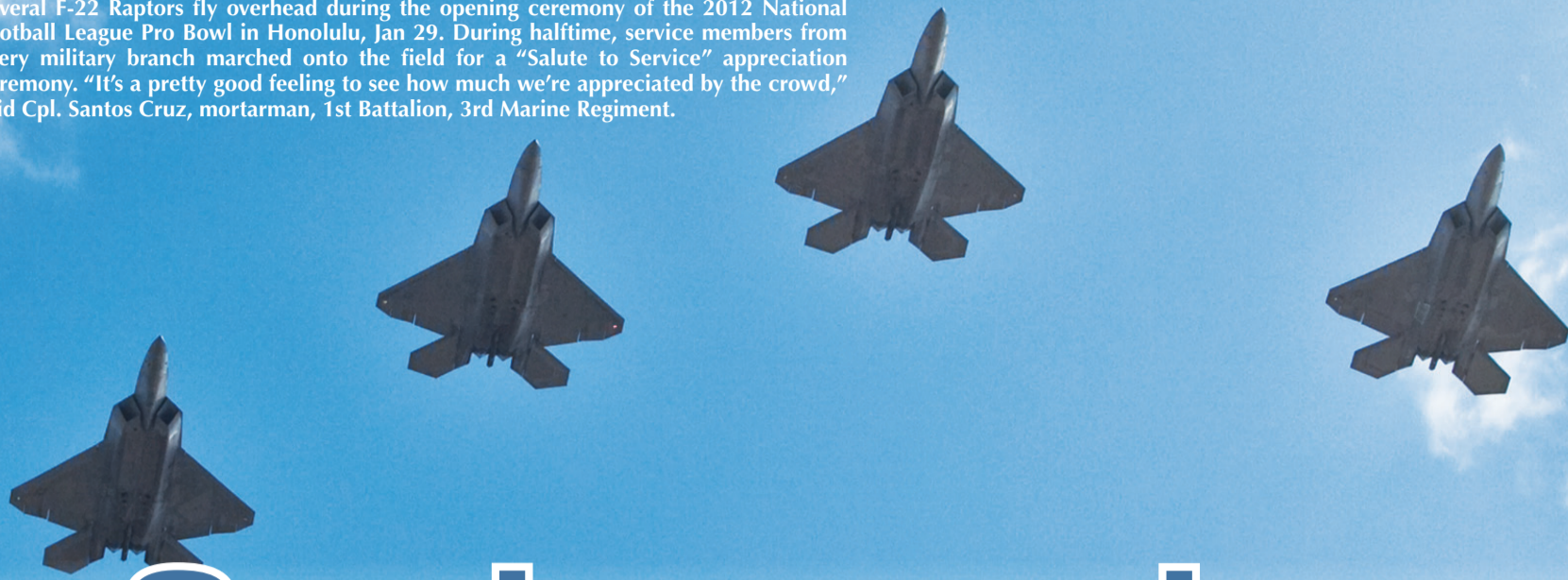
Marines with Combat Assault Company and Combat Logistics Battalion 3 have been putting a new retention system (chin strap) to the test since Jan. 25, here. Devil Dogs from the two units have been evaluating the versatility of the proposed retention system through fast paced training exercises at the obstacle course, Military Operations in Urban Terrain facility and the Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer.

The conclusions drawn from these Marines will help determine what retention system is adopted throughout the Marine Corps. In an effort to reduce logistical costs, the Marine Corps proposed adopting a retention system that the Army utilizes. Through the training exercises that the CAC and CLB-3 units are running, Marines will get a better feel for both designs and determine which they prefer to wear with their helmets.

A medley of different Marines from varying military occupational specialties participated in the evaluation, running through the obstacle course, conducting room-clearing exercises at MOUT with Night vision goggles attached and firing M16/M4s, M240s and MK19 automatic grenade launchers at the Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer. The retention systems were evaluated based off several variables like comfort, durability and visibility during dynamic movements like running and shooting in the prone.

# Sports & Health

Several F-22 Raptors fly overhead during the opening ceremony of the 2012 National Football League Pro Bowl in Honolulu, Jan. 29. During halftime, service members from every military branch marched onto the field for a "Salute to Service" appreciation ceremony. "It's a pretty good feeling to see how much we're appreciated by the crowd," said Cpl. Santos Cruz, mortarman, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment.



## Service members

## honored at 2012 Pro Bowl



A.J. Green, Cincinnati Bengals and American Football Conference wide receiver, scores a touchdown during the 2012 National Football League Pro Bowl, Jan. 29.



Marines stationed in Hawaii, march in the "Salute to Service" appreciation ceremony during the halftime show of the 2012 National Football League Pro Bowl, Jan. 29.

Photos by Lance Cpl. James A. Sauter | Hawaii Marine

## Semper Fit to offer taekwondo classes

Kristen Wong  
Photojournalist

The Semper Fit Center is scheduled to offer Taekwondo Classes for Adults, starting Feb. 27.

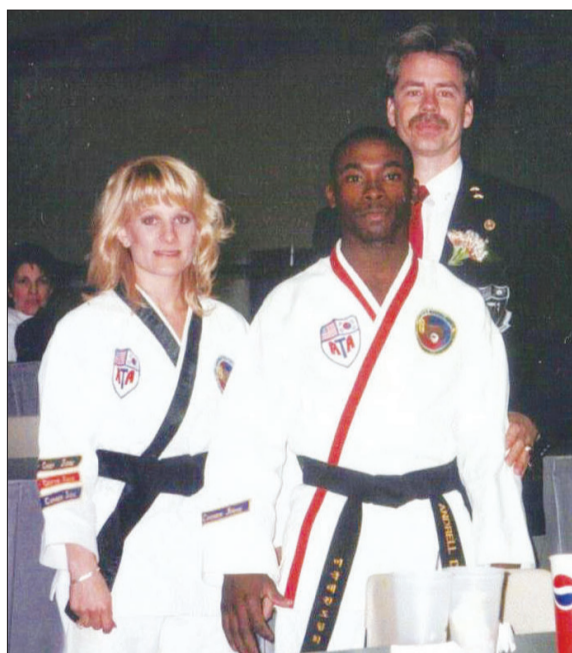
The class is taught by Gunnery Sgt. Andrell Durden, the reserve liaison chief for U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, and will be held on Monday and Wednesday from 8 to 9 p.m., and Saturday from 11:30 to 12:30 p.m. Adults who have access to the gym are eligible to register for the class.

"I'm excited ... I hope people take advantage of it," said Beckie Page, assistant manager of the Semper Fit Center.

Page said patrons have been requesting a martial arts class recently. By holding a class on base, she said the center can accommodate customers who may not be able to take classes off base due to high prices or transportation issues. The class has even received the attention of Semper Fit staff.

Rita Moss, who is part of the front desk staff at Semper Fit, said she and her husband were both considering taking the class. Moss said neither one had taken martial arts before and this one would be conveniently close to home.

Durden, of Adel, Ga., is a second-degree black belt, and a member of the American Taekwondo Association. In June of 1985, Durden's friends invited him to join a taekwondo class and he has practiced ever since. He has previously taught taekwondo in Oceanside, Calif. His teacher is Shannon Coffee, who incidentally, is the daughter of a former sergeant major of Marine Corps Base Hawaii.



Gunnery Sgt. Andrell Durden, the reserve liaison chief for U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, poses with his taekwondo instructor, Shannon Coffee, and his previous instructor, Chief Master Scott Stauffer, during a tournament in Las Vegas in 1998.

Students can enroll in Taekwondo for Adults for various reasons, like self-defense or exercise. Durden said he hopes that his class might go on to compete in tournaments as well.

Through the class, students will learn sparring, form, the use of weapons and demonstrations. But, he added, taekwondo is also about learning to show others proper respect.

"ATA to me, is like the Marine Corps," Durden said. "[If] you outrank me, I'm going to give you the respect that is required."

Whereas the majority of the base community is made up of Marines and sailors who are already required to train in their respective service's martial arts program, one may wonder if a taekwondo class is necessary aboard a military base. But Durden simply describes the class as "another tool for your toolbox."

"I've got respect for every style [of martial arts]," Durden said. "I've tried other styles ... I loved those as well, but my heart was with taekwondo."

A regular patron at Semper Fit, Lt. Col. Ray Rich, commanding officer, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24, said offering taekwondo will provide

See TAEKWONDO, B-6



A soldier of the 3rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, famously known as 'The Old Guard,' performs during the "Salute to Service" appreciation service during the halftime show of the 2012 National Football League Pro Bowl, Jan. 29.

## Go the distance in Semper Fit's Try-Athlon

Christine Cabalo  
Photojournalist

Unleash the inner Ironman triathlete by taking the Semper Fit Center Try-Athlon Challenge.

The center is encouraging gym users and others at Marine Corps Base Hawaii to spend the next month running, biking and swimming the distance of the annual Ironman Triathlon. Everyone who takes the challenge will have all of February to swim 2.4 miles, bike 112 miles and run 26.2 miles.

"It's a nice personal challenge," said Jon Shiota, manager, Semper Fit Center. "It's a fun event. This is personally paced, so there's no pressure as you go. It's a good way to challenge yourself, especially if you're already working out."

The center is offering prizes to top finishers. All who complete the feat will receive a challenge certificate and can sign up to receive this year's T-shirt.

Shiota said several people have already started on the challenge, including a few from Marine Corps Community Services Hawaii.

"We're trying to keep each other motivated," said Todd Yorimoto, sponsorship and advertising coordinator, MCCS. "We're making sure everyone's

See TRY, B-6



Photos courtesy of Andrell Durden

Gunnery Sgt. Andrell Durden, the reserve liaison chief for U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, spars with an opponent during a tournament in Las Vegas in 1998. Durden will be teaching a new Taekwondo Class for Adults at the Semper Fit Center, Feb. 27.

# A worthless game

**Lance Cpl. Jacob D. Barber**  
*Combat Correspondent*



# Only professionals understand

**Cpl. Colby Brown**  
*Combat Correspondent*

## How important is the Pro Bowl?

VS is a recurring column tackling debatable issues in the sports and entertainment world. Hawaii Marine readers can submit a subject for future columns by e-mailing their ideas to [HawaiiMarineEditor@gmail.com](mailto:HawaiiMarineEditor@gmail.com).

If there's a topic you would like to discuss/defend or if you think we missed the mark, let us know and you could see your "opinion," regardless of how wrong it is, featured below.

Suit up, ladies ... it's game time.

Who watched the Pro Bowl? I didn't, but then again I don't have a TV. I did hear about it. I was offered tickets, but there was a vacancy at Kailua Beach I had already planned on filling. But the Pro Bowl is important. During the regular season, announcers regularly refer to players as Pro Bowl contenders after a good play. And when Pro Bowl time comes around, there is always hype about the game.

I'll be realistic; the Pro Bowl isn't a thrilling game. Scared players who don't want to get injured mixed with lazy veterans who couldn't lead their team past the first round of playoffs isn't a very good combo. But that isn't what the Pro Bowl is about. It's about being selected as a top player from a respective conference in the NFL. It's about show boating how good an individual player may be while his team may have had a losing record. This is important because telling everyone how good you are is always important.

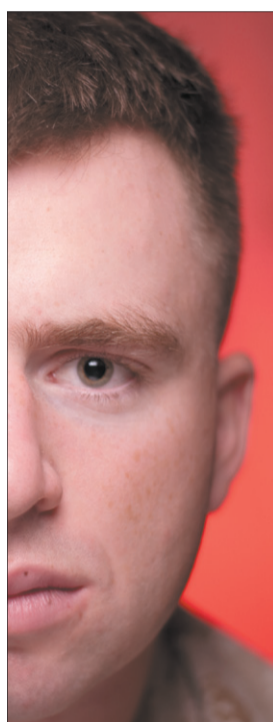
Every day when I walk into work, I greet fellow Marines with a "howdy do," and then follow it up with 'I'm better than you are,' highlighting every medal, letter of appreciation and pat on the back I have received. Although the Pro Bowl doesn't go this in depth, the premise is the same. It's human nature to be proud of your accomplishments. The Pro Bowl gives players that opportunity.

Albeit, the intensity level of the Pro Bowl rivals that of a baby shower, but these players don't need to prove themselves on the Grid Iron at the Pro Bowl. They proved how good they actually are during the regular season. Expecting phenomenal hits at the Pro Bowl is the same as asking a Pulitzer Prize winning

**Expecting phenomenal hits at the Pro Bowl is the same as asking a Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer to take a Pulitzer-winning photograph at his own award ceremony."**



**BARBER**



**BROWN**

photographer to take a Pulitzer-winning photograph at his own award ceremony. It defeats the whole purpose of recognition to expect players to perform during their recognition game.

There are a larger number of people who don't really understand the Pro Bowl. They want mind-numbing hits, spectacular catches and last-minute drives down the field for the win. Also, these people aren't professional athletes who recently finished a whole season of games in which they left everything on the field. They are couch potatoes, 3,000-pound tailgaters and sports critics with no prior athletic experience. And more than likely, the most ruthless are want-to-be athletes who never made it past high school-level football.

Let me be realistic again, the Pro Bowl is exactly as it is titled. It's a bowl game for professional athletes who perform at a high-caliber, continuously during the regular season. They are selected based off their performance and in-turn are invited to the Pro Bowl. At the Pro Bowl itself, game play isn't required to be amazing. It's a time for players to bask in just how good they are and how much better they are than their competition.

When you browse through sports channels you don't see grown men playing two-hand touch football, professional athletes running slower than a pre-school track team or a millionaire quarterback throwing like he sees 12 receivers on the field instead of three. You'll see big hits, quick cuts, precision passes and most importantly passion — a passion to advance in the brackets, to win the division and make it to playoffs.

However, there is one game played in the NFL where jerseys are replaced with skirts, cleats are replaced with sandals and the ambition and passion to win is replaced with laziness and an "I don't care about this game" mentality. Yes, I'm describing the Pro Bowl.

The Pro Bowl is a worthless game played every year where all fans are promised to see few things.

Extremely high scores, due to no defensive play whatsoever many failed touchdown opportunities, due to receivers and quarterbacks being lazy and the softest tackles of the season, due to every athlete's concern for injury.

I feel not only is this game extremely hard for true football fans to watch, but it seems clear that if the players had a choice they wouldn't even participate in the game.

The NFL has a long, strenuous season as it is, why should players risk million-dollar contracts on a game in which nobody cares or even remembers the following year?

Why not promote an annual skills competition instead or an awards ceremony after the season? There are many options to consider but the NFL has to do something because quite

frankly I'd rather watch "Teen Moms" 27th reunion than sit down and watch Cam Newton play another series as a Pro Bowl quarterback.

I don't see any resemblance between the games I watch on Sundays where players are blocking until the whistle blows, and the Pro Bowl, where players aren't blocking at all. It's simple, why should players play in a game in which they get nothing out of it but "booing fans" and annoyed sportswriters? Come on!

The Pro Bowl is worthless. When you see a quarterback who completely misses his receiver and then smiles, your probably watching the Pro Bowl. When you see a running back fall down after getting pushed once, you're probably watching the Pro Bowl. When you hear fans shake the stadium with "boos" after waking up from a third quarter nap — you know you're watching the Pro Bowl.

# SPOTLIGHT ON SPORTS

## Swamp Romp

The 5th Annual Combat Logistics Battalion 3 Swamp Romp is on Feb. 25 at 7 a.m. starting from the Boondocker Field. This 5K mud run, obstacle course is infamous for a dirty good time. Get your six-person team together and register today.

Stop by the Semper Fit Health and Fitness Expo and pick up a Swamp Romp packet on Feb. 24 at the Kahuna's Community Ballroom from 3 to 8 p.m. Register for all races online at <http://www.mccshawaii.com/cgfit.shtml> or in person at the Semper Fit Center. Online registration ends Feb. 17, but people may still sign up by Feb. 22.

## Spring Board Diving Class

Diving classes are available for children as old as 13. Sessions are held Wednesdays and Fridays in the afternoon. Learn how to dive off of the 1-meter and 3-meter spring boards at Marine Corps Base Hawaii's main pool. Class fees include four sessions. For more information about the class, call 754-4602 or see <http://www.mccshawaii.com/aquatics.shtml>.

## Semper Fit Juniors Program

The Semper Fit Juniors Program will be held every second Thursday of each month. The

program is open to 14 and 15-year-olds who, upon the completion of a Fitness Basics Class, will be issued an individualized pass to use the center without an adult present.

There is a registration fee to cover materials and a replacement fee for lost badges.

The Fitness Basics Class covers several topics including a review of facility policies, fitness center etiquette and attire, and cardiovascular and strength training equipment instruction.

Upon completion of the class the participants will receive a badge and will be granted independent access to the Fitness Center from 2 to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and during regular operational hours on the weekends and holidays.

## High Intensity Tactical Training Center Hours

Work out with TRX trainers, kettle bell weights, tethered medicine balls and more at the High Intensity Tactical Training Center at Building 1034.

Marine units or groups may use the center weekdays from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Anyone who wishes to use the facility must request the key from the Satellite Fitness Center at Bldg. 1033 next door. A noncommissioned officer must be responsible for returning the key and cleanup of

the center after use. For more information, call 254-7594.

## Fundraising tennis tournament

The Kaneohe Officers' Spouses' Club is hosting a fundraising tennis tournament today from 8:30 a.m. to noon, at the MCB Hawaii tennis courts.

The tournament is open to the public with a limit of 28 players. Please visit <http://www.KOSCHawaii.com> to register and learn more about where all of the proceeds will go.

## CH-53D Sundown Ceremony: 5K Fun Run

Join MCCS and Marine Aircraft Group 24 in saying farewell to the CH-53D helicopter group on Marine Corps Base Hawaii. The run will be held Feb. 10 at 8 a.m.

Participants will run a 5K course, starting between Hangar 101 and 102. The finish line is at the same location. The run will take place mostly on the flight line. Take advantage of the rare opportunity to run on a flight line and take in a different view of the bay. The race is open to the public. There is a fee to enter.

Packet pickup will take place Feb. 9 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Semper Fit Center. For more information visit <http://www.mccshawaii.com/cgfit.shtml>.

Sports and Health

2012 INTRAMURAL SPORTS CALENDAR

- Feb. 10 Co-ed softball starts at Annex field
- Feb. 22 Bowling Tournament
- April 20 Men's softball starts at Annex field
- May 21 Soccer league starts at Pop Warner field
- May 19 Men's/Women's volleyball starts at SFC
- June 11 Men's/Women's 2nd bowling session starts

- July 18 Men's basketball starts at SFC 2nd session
- Aug. 1 Tackle football practice starts
- Sept. 4 Tackle football season starts (Pop Warner Field)
- Sept. 17 Intramural softball tournament (Annex Field)
- Oct. 22 Intramural softball tournament (Annex Field)
- Nov. 19 Intramural softball tournament (Annex Field)





Courtesy photos

Don Miller, outside linebacker for the Denver Broncos works with fifth- and sixth-grade students from Mokapu Elementary School participating in Play 60, coordinated by Marine Corps Community Services and the National Football League. In the 60-minute sports clinic, 18 active NFL players taught students football drills while leading guided discussions about the meaning of tolerance, responsibility, respect, fairness, and trustworthiness — all traits the NFL and Marine Corps think are important to teach children.

## Children learn from NFL superstars in Play 60

**Lance Cpl. Jacob D. Barber**  
Combat Correspondent

The sun was high in the sky as more than 100 fifth- and sixth-grade students from Mokapu Elementary School took part in the NFL's Play 60, Jan. 26, behind Mokapu Elementary.

The event, coordinated by Marine Corps Community Services and the National Football League, was a 60-minute sports clinic where 18 active NFL players taught students football drills.

As a nationwide program, Play 60 encourages all children to be active for at least an hour a day, while also promoting good health.

Debbie Bookatz, MCCA marketing director and event coordinator, said she was very pleased with how the event turned out.

"Overall, I think the Play 60 event was very successful," Bookatz said. "Holding the event at the school was a perfect solution since the football players were only available in the late morning hours. Mokapu Elementary principal, Traci Kane, was amenable to integrating the event into the school day and the playground provided a

well-contained area for participants."

While participants caught footballs, cut through cones and received one-on-one lessons from the professionals, parents watched at the perimeter with cameras out and smiles.

"My son loves football," said Kourtney Chalmers, military spouse and mother of two participants. "They're real happy they get to be a part of this and the NFL and the Marine Corps are awesome for making this happen. It really means a lot to the students. I'm sitting here, taking a few photos and it's a good feeling to just see all the smiles. You can even pick out the shy ones [who] are nervous to meet the football stars. It's cute."

Though the football stars caused a little commotion amongst the students, they weren't the only ones who came out for a fun day. Three NFL mascots and six cheerleaders also attended the event to shake hands, give high "fives" and take photos with the participants.

In addition to encouraging children to be active for 60 minutes, this year's event included guided discussions about the meaning of tolerance, responsibility, respect, fairness, and trustworthiness — all traits the NFL and



Ryan Matthews, running back of the Houston Texans works with fifth- and sixth-grade students from Mokapu Elementary School participate in Play 60.

Marine Corps think are important to teach children.

"The NFL staff was great to work with and I hope they will bring the event back to K-Bay in the future," Bookatz said. "The children were

very happy with the Play 60 event. Mahalo to the school officials, the NFL participants, MCCA staff and our military volunteers for assisting with another winning program for our MCB Hawaii community."

## Mercy rules do apply

### 3rd Radio Battalion smashes 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment in baseball game

**Lance Cpl. Jacob D. Barber**  
Combat Correspondent

The 2011 intramural baseball season started with a blowout as 3rd Radio Battalion and 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment took the field Tuesday, at Riseley Field.

With a record of 0-1, 3rd Radio Battalion came onto the field seeking redemption from a previous loss against Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24 and found it, beating 1/3, 15-0. This game was 1/3's first of the season.

The first inning was one to remember as 3rd Radio Battalion had a hot bat, drilling balls past 1/3 infielders for base hits. As the inning stretched on, 1/3 struggled on defense as 3rd Radio Battalion hit run after run.

"We have a pretty new team," said Aaron Daniels, 1/3 infielder. "We're not used to playing with each other because some of us just got back from deployment. We have been able to practice and had a couple of scrimmage games but we still have a lot to work on as a team."

After a six-run score streak, 1/3 finally had their chance to bat. Though the batters were confident, the first pitch from



Lance Cpl. Jacob D. Barber | Hawaii Marine

Brent Spray, 3rd Radio Battalion third baseman, swings hard at a pitch during an intramural baseball game against 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment Tuesday at Riseley Field. With a record of 0-1, 3rd Radio Battalion came onto the field seeking redemption from a previous loss against Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24 and found it, beating 1/3, 15-0. This game was 1/3's first of the season.

3rd Radio Battalion pitcher, Adam Kunkel, opened eyes wide. Kunkel began retiring batters, making a quick three outs.

By the second inning 1/3 trailed 0-6. They were still

unable to connect on offense against the arm of Kunkel and found themselves in a worse position on defense. The bats continued to swing for 3rd Radio and the runs continued to stack leaving a huge gap on

the score board and not much room to catch up.

"Our hitting is definitely a lot better than it has been in the last couple of years," said Kunkel, who is also 3rd Radio Battalion's head coach.

"There's always room for improvement though, but overall I think we played really well."

When asked what 1/3 needed to do to keep the game close, Daniels said batting was the key.

"We need to get our timing down in the batters box," Daniels said, as he was warming up to hit. "It all boils down to offense and the points we need to get on the board."

In the third inning no points were scored for 1/3, leaving them only one more inning to score before the "mercy" rule came into affect. Down 15-0, 1/3 was given one final opportunity to keep themselves in the game.

However, Kunkel had different intentions as he kept bringing the heat and the strikes. Strikeouts and big swings dictated the outcome of the game and 3rd Radio Battalion was fire hot throughout each inning.

When asked about what his team's plan was going into the game, Kunkel simply replied, "We have a lot of guys that can play and they were ready to play. We were just going to play our game regardless of how 1/3 looked. That's what we did."

## MOKAPU BRIEFS

### Box Tops Collection

The monthly Box Tops Collection for January is today. Please remember to clip box tops off of participating products and send them in with your student or turn in to the front office. Our school year goal is to raise \$5,000, and we are almost halfway there.

Please don't forget that you can log on to <http://www.box-tops4education.com> and print coupons, shop online, watch videos or complete short surveys to earn extra box tops for Mokapu!

### PTA Bag Sale

The PTA bag sale at the Marine Thrift Shop Kaneohe Bay, which was originally sched-

uled for Saturday, has been postponed. Please watch the PTA Facebook page for details.

### PCNC Coffee Hour

The Parent Community Networking Center is holding a coffee hour in classroom P-6 from 8 - 9 a.m on Feb. 8. Please bring a breakfast treat to share as you meet with other Mokapu Elementary School supporters.

# Go Moto: Seminar series stops in Hawaii

Christine Cabalo

Photojournalist

**HONOLULU** — Marine Corps Base Hawaii personnel were amongst the thousands who attended the Hawaii gathering of the "Get Motivated" business seminar series held Tuesday.



Christine Cabalo | Hawaii Marine

**Former Secretary of State Colin Powell speaks at the "Get Motivated" business seminar in Honolulu held Tuesday. The seminar featured vendors of self-help products and other motivational speakers.**

The touring series features vendors of self-help products and a revolving list of speakers, including Colin Powell and Laura Bush.

"[Powell] was very animated," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Iln Taylor, Headquarters Company distribution management officer, Headquarters Battalion. "I really enjoyed that he didn't give a political speech, and it was based on his own life. He focused on hard work."

During the daylong seminar, there were product offers for sales training and financial software. Anyone who attends the

seminar should be aware there are speakers each promoting a service or product, said Capt. Bradley Creedon, Headquarters and Service Company commanding officer, Headquarters Bn.

"Unless [the audience] knows the speaker has a reputation as a public personality, it's fine to listen to what they have to say," Creedon said. "But take it with a grain of salt."

Jeff Chun, Transition Assistance Program counselor, MCB Hawaii, said he found the seminar re-enforced several general life skills.

Chun said he enjoyed hearing Powell's funny stories about making adjustments transitioning from military life to a civilian job. He also appreciated the former first lady describing living in the White House, yet still needing to tackle daily challenges.

"Being more well-prepared was a message," he said. "A lot of the speakers talked about the importance of planning ahead."

Although the seminar may not appeal to everyone, both Taylor and Creedon suggest to those attending a seminar to carefully consider the offered advice.

Those who get the most benefit out of the seminar avoid making rushed decisions and recognize there may be alternatives, Creedon said.

"There were good motivational speakers and some principles you can incorporate into everyday life," he said. "However, one person's approach may not be universally applied."

## BASE AND COMMUNITY EVENTS, VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Volunteer with Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society

Help the society that helps Marines and sailors. Workers needed to be:

*Publicity Coordinator* — Use your journalism skills to help Marines and sailors discover unknown resources. Editing a newsletter, conducting a publicity campaign and designing other public affairs materials are just a

few of the accomplishments we can add to your resume if you're the right person.

*Layette workers* — Do you love knitting and crocheting? Use your skills to make baby blankets for our Budget for Baby program. These blankets are added to the Gerber gift set given to newborns.

*Caseworkers* — Are you good with finances and want to help Marines and sailors with financial education and assistance? We provide training and reimbursement for childcare and mileage.

If you're interested please contact the local office at 257-1972/1973 or email [kaneohenmcrs@gmail.com](mailto:kaneohenmcrs@gmail.com).

# War Dogs battle through first game

**Lance Cpl. Jacob D. Barber**

*Combat Correspondent*

The second season of the women's intramural football league kicked off with a bang. The Marine and Army teams faced off in a gruesome, double over-time showdown, Jan. 28 at Pop Warner Field.

The Women's Flag Football League has grown rapidly since its creation in 2011. The number of female players continues to increase and the Hickam Air Force Base Falcons were added to the league.

With four teams representing four military branches, the competition between these teams was intense as the first games of the season kicked off.

The Army Her-icanes came out with intensity in the first half. Short throws turned into big yards as the battle for field position began. The Marines, who placed second last year, relied on their solid defense to stop the Army's high-powered offense. But it seemed to be too much for the Marines to handle.

The Her-icanes quickly moved the ball downfield, relying on speed and athleticism of their receivers. A series of short passes put the Army in the red zone. After a quick handoff down the middle, the Army found themselves on the scoreboard first.

"Our team just seemed a little off this first game," said Sissy Gouin, Marine receiver. "The plays weren't connecting and I feel like some of us were having trouble remembering the plays. This was our first game, we had two practices, and a lot of our players didn't show."

Though the Marines clearly seemed to be struggling in the first half, a few play executions put them within ten yards of the end zone. In answer, the Army's defense quickly spread apart, leaving no room for pass plays. However, Marine quarterback Kayla



Lance Cpl. Jacob D. Barber | Hawaii Marine

**Army receivers and Marine defenders jump for possession during their gruesome, double over-time showdown, Jan. 28 at Pop Warner Field.**

Aponte was able to create an open gap in the field by scrambling. This allowed her to connect with an open receiver for a short touchdown pass.

"Alicia's always amazing but it takes more than one player to win," Gouin said. "It all boils down to practice, practice, practice. If players

don't show up then how do we expect to play and win together?"

The game was tied going into halftime. After the break, both teams put up a defensive battle for possession of the ball. Each team took shots downfield but both defenses proved they wouldn't budge.

The Army came up with a method to gain big yards by completing low-risk passes to start the second half. Slowly advancing one first down to another, the Her-icanes were able to push the War Dogs back to their red zone before driving the ball in, putting another Army touchdown on the board.

The War Dogs were quick to respond during their next series. The Marines relied on the athleticism of their quarterback and the great hands of the receivers as their gameplan. The Marines followed the Army's touchdown with one of their own, sending the game to overtime with a score of 13-13.

"There's always excitement in these game," said Eustacia Joseph, league founder and president. "You never know what to expect when you come. That's what makes this league fun to be apart of."

The first overtime was scoreless. Defenses cracked down and didn't allow any big gains or runs for the conclusion of the first overtime. The second overtime, players could barely see the football due darkness. The War Dogs and Her-icanes continued to play physical, but no points were scored, leaving the final score 13-13.

Though neither team was able to start the season out with a win, many of the players said they love the league and look forward to each game.

Joseph agreed that no matter the outcome of the games, the league is definitely something to be a part of.

The War Dogs will be playing their next game Saturday at 4 p.m. at Pop Warner Field.

**TRY, from B-1**

staying on track to complete the bike and swim portions. The main thing is not to fall behind.”

Angie Blaisdell, web designer, MCCA, said she has support from Yorimoto and other loved ones to help keep up motivation for the challenge.

“I’ve gotten my son involved,” she said. “He’ll see me get on the bike, and we inspire each other. If I see him doing it, I’ll tell myself I’m able to do it.”

Both Yorimoto and Blaisdell said they’re looking forward to feeling healthier and having more energy after the challenge. As she makes the effort to regularly exercise, Blaisdell said she also makes sure to schedule time to recuperate.

Shiota advises challenge takers to make a schedule and stick to their workout plans so the miles are completed in manageable sections each session. The Semper Fit manager also recommends participants should evaluate their fitness level to ensure they aren’t overextending themselves. The center’s personal trainers are available to assist participants with creating a schedule for exercise, as well as work on long-term goals. Challenge takers can also

count any miles they’ve completed from upcoming Commander’s Fitness Series races through the month.

On his own, Yorimoto said has been monitoring the rate of his biking and swimming to ensure he goes the distance. The Try-Athlon has inspired him to vary his daily routine for fitness.

“It’s great in a way that it challenges you to do something outside of your comfort zone,” he said. “If you’re a biker, they’re asking you to swim and run.”

Encouraging gym users to vary their workouts was one of the reasons why the center decided to run the challenge, Shiota said.

“For a lot of people they can get stagnate or complacent in their workouts and are no longer motivated to do it,” Shiota said. “[The Try-Athlon] is an awesome way to do something different and new, as well as keep it fun.”

Visit the Semper Fit Center or main base pool to sign up. For more information, call 254-7597.

**TAEKWONDO, from B-1**

Marines and sailors with more options. He is excited to see what Semper Fit has in store for future classes. Through taking martial arts like taekwondo, Marines and sailors can improve their mind, body and spirit.

“I’m glad to see Semper Fit is starting to broaden their options,” Rich said.

Taekwondo is a martial art that originated in Korea and named Taekwondo in the early 1950s, according to the ATA website. Today, there are many ATA schools across the world.

There is a monthly fee for each student, plus the price of a taekwondo uniform. Durden said he would provide a free uniform to the first 10 students who register. The fee is less for additional family members. To register for taekwondo classes, call Semper Fit at 254-7597. For more information about taekwondo and the ATA, call Durden at 229-507-0156.



Christine Cabalo | Hawaii Marine

Semper Fit Center begins the Try-Athlon Challenge this month. Those who want to take the challenge must swim 2.4 miles, bike 112 miles and run 26.2 miles over the course of February. The center is awarding prizes to the top finishers and a challenge certificate to everyone who finishes all the miles.

# Hawaii Marine Lifestyles



Courtesy of Petty Officer 2nd Class Mark Logico

Hawaii Parkour founder Ozzi Quintero leaps from one ledge to another.

## HAWAII PARKOUR



Courtesy photo from Hawaii Parkour

Sgt. Joseph Perez, squad leader, Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, practices Parkour on deployment at Combat Outpost Springhar, Nawa, Afghanistan.

## Parkour and the Marine Corps

**Garrett Cole**  
Contributing Writer

Art du Displacement, free running or Parkour (as it's more commonly known), has been popularized in movies, TV and comic books. It became well-known in the United States after the famous "Casino Royale" chase scene. Unlike most sports such as skateboarding and bicycle motocross, the essence of Parkour relies on adaptation and manipulation of surroundings, mind and body.

"Parkour is basically a method in which you train your body to adapt to the environment you live around by using only natural skills, such as vaulting, running, climbing and crawling. It's basically going back to our roots of movement, which we have lost due to our urban environment," said Ozzi Quintero, founder of Hawaii Parkour.

Though Parkour has become popular mostly with the public, its beginnings are rooted in military training. A highly-decorated French soldier named Raymond Belle trained his men to be faster and more agile for war. Following in his father's footsteps, David Belle and his childhood friends adapted the techniques for an urban environment, which led to the birth of Parkour.

"That was the only way he saw that he could get in touch with his father," Quintero said. "[Belle] took all kinds of training such as martial arts, gymnastics, and eventually [took] this method of training to the streets.

"He and his friends trained in a type of environment that Parkour was designed for. They utilized the neighborhood that they lived in and the things they could use to play, climb and run ... the things all kids do."

Aside from the fancy movements and tricks, there are serious applications of Parkour that Quintero believes can help benefit Marines.

Sgt. Joseph Perez, a squad leader with Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, has trained extensively with Quintero's group and constantly reaps the benefits of his Parkour training.

"With my job, being an infantryman, it's a real good asset," Perez said. "I've been all over, from Iraq to Afghanistan. Going [from] house to house, building to building, and being able to manipulate your body to go around everything swiftly, silently and deadly is probably the best asset [of] doing Parkour."

Perez also hopes that more Marines will understand the advantages of Parkour training, both mentally and physically.

"Marines doing infantry, and even Marines that aren't in the infantry can better their physical fitness scores, combat fitness scores, as well as run the obstacle course in less than two minutes," Perez added. "Using Parkour, you can manipulate your body and use techniques that won't put yourself in any danger that [will limit] you when you want to do it again."

Whether trying to stay in shape, conquering fears or just wanting to get outside to try something new, Parkour is a great way to condition both the body and mind.

Hawaii Parkour holds weekly sessions on Monday and Wednesday, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Ala Moana Beach Park. For more information on Hawaii Parkour, check out <http://www.hawaiipk.com> or email Quintero at [Hawaiiparkour@gmail.com](mailto:Hawaiiparkour@gmail.com).



Courtesy photos from Hawaii Parkour

(Above), Hawaii Parkour founder Ozzi Quintero and Sgt. Joseph Perez, squad leader, Echo Company, 2/3, participate in Parkour training. (Left), Sgt. Joseph Perez, squad leader, Echo Company, 2/3, monkey vaults over a wall during one of his many Parkour sessions.



# PASS IN REVIEW

## Your weekly guide to the best aspects of entertainment

Welcome to the Pass In Review, your number one source for cinema, music, videogame, book and product reviews. The Pass In Review crew consists of more than 10 critics, each with their own idea of what makes a movie, album, game, product or book great. So be sure to take advantage of the Better Know A Critic section, which spotlights this week's critics to better help you choose the critic with opinions most like your own. Using our breakthrough four-point scale system you can quickly decipher what is worth your time and what isn't, or read the full review for an in-depth analysis and explanation of the rating. The rating system uses ammunition and range terminology, so if you're not familiar, here's a quick breakdown of the ratings ...

### 1/4 — No Impact, No Idea

Horrendous. Among the worst of the worst in its genre. Dedicating time to this is not only wasteful, but unforgivable. Avoid at all costs.



### 2/4 — High And To The Right

Mediocrity at its best. Lacks a few things that might have made it really good. A decent time waster, partake only if you have nothing better to do.



### 3/4 — On Target

Praiseworthy. A great endeavor, not quite an instant classic but still very entertaining. This is a sound investment of your time.



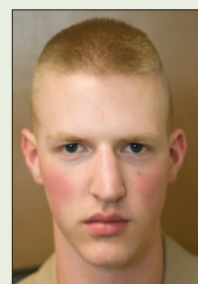
### 4/4 — Confirmed Kill

Genius. In the top 10 percent of its genre. This is the stuff legends are made of. Missing out on it would be a disservice to yourself.



So, there you have it and we hope you enjoy our weekly reviews. Don't forget, The Hawaii Marine accepts submissions from its readers so if you consider yourself a film buff, music aficionado, gaming geek or bookworm feel free to submit your own reviews.

## Better Know A Critic



SAUTER

**Lance Cpl. James A. Sauter** believes that a good movie begins with a good story. The story needs to be well balanced between the chemistry and variety of characters with an original plot or setting that keeps the reader or audience up on its toes.



COLE

**Garrett Cole** believes that film-making is less about big-budget blockbusters and special effects and more about effectively telling a story through pictures and good screenwriting. His favorite movies include "Ichi the Killer" and "Kill Bill." A great movie is one that is both thought provoking as well as visually stimulating for the audience to appreciate it.

## Liam Neeson facing 'The Grey' death

**Lance Cpl. James A. Sauter**

*Combat Correspondent*

Movie studios release a variety of films that cater to a wide range of moviegoers who only want to sit down in a cold theater, consume salt- and sugar-loaded snacks and achieve maximum brain retardation. They expect to be blown away by over-the-top video and sound to kill at least two and a half hours, so they can go do something else and say the movie they saw was the greatest thing since "The Hangover."

It's not surprising when a particular movie comes out, in which the audience has to think about or see a few times to understand, it's immediately bashed by the mainstream audience as horrible. They consider it horrible because it doesn't deliver an escapism-high; while movies like "Transformers," are praised as a visual representation of today's pop culture.

"The Grey" is that particular film. It has several underlying tones: moral lessons the audience has to pay attention to, in order to understand the story. But these lessons are not for a children's reading circle. They dive deep into man's fear, guilt and overcoming extreme peril.

Mega-movie star Liam Neeson stars amongst a talented cast who portray a group of oil riggers working an assignment in the Alaskan wilderness. John Ottway

(Neeson), who is responsible for providing security from man-eating wolves in the area, is suffering from depression due to his wife's death.

After a catastrophic plane crash that left only Ottway and a handful of survivors, Ottway tries to lead the group to safety while battling the Alaskan tundra and wolves that wait to kill each of them, one at a time.

It's important to note that this film has a lot of classic themes drawn from ancient mythologies such as good and evil, human interior and exterior conflict and confronting fear. These themes show themselves in the hostile situations the survivors face, either literally or metaphorically.

Ottway is a character that is an archetype of the classic hero. As the hero, he's forced to become a leader of others due to extreme circumstances. He must also confront his own fears at the climax of the story, against his own will.

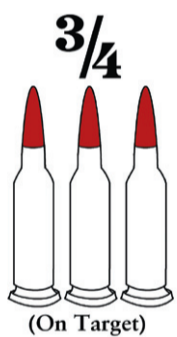


Key moments in the film represent this theme. The first moment is when Ottway tries to commit suicide because of his grief. By Ottway's own doing, death could have come for him then, but he relents.

Death finds Ottway again after the plane crash, but this time personified as a physical entity in the form of the alpha-male wolf. During their first encounter, Ottway tells the group to stand their ground as he holds a torch, illuminating the alpha-male's eyes. Ottway tells his group to stare back at it — essentially to stare back at death. The climax features Ottway ultimately confronting death in the act of fighting the alpha-male.

Besides wolf violence, "The Grey" has a nice amount of dialogue between the characters, giving the audience a chance to know each character and their independent struggles.

"The Grey" is sheer proof that not all post-Christmas season movies are box office flops. This thriller is well worth checking out, but be sure to pay attention.



## 'Red Tails' only manages to fly level

**Garrett Cole**

*Contributing Writer*

George Lucas has gone from being merely a film director to a household name. Lucas is known around the world for his success in the "Indiana Jones" and "Star Wars" trilogies. Unfortunately, he's also contributed bombs like "Howard the Duck," "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," and the new "Star Wars" trilogy. "Red Tails" is another bomb in the payload that Lucas has dropped hard on the film industry.

The movie takes place during World War II and centers around the struggles and conflict of the 332 Fighter Group of the U.S. Army Air Corps, which is a unit made up of only African-American soldiers. Due to racial tensions, these airmen have yet to experience any real combat and are typically assigned less glamorous missions, such as attacking supply trains and trucks. Due to the continued efforts of their commander (played by Terrence Howard), they are



given their time to shine by protecting bombers during bomb raids in Germany. Tensions arise inside and outside the cockpit as the pilots' deal with the conflicts of war, personal issues and their relationships with each other.

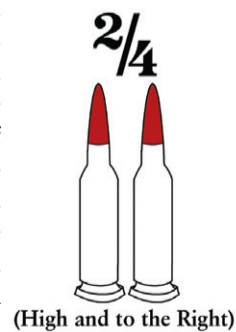
Initially, after watching the trailer, I thought this film was going to be groundbreaking and award winning. It had all the makings of a great film, an academy award-winning cast and producer, as well as a decent plot. But it goes to show that you can have all the big names and still crash and burn.

The film began in the middle of the story like Star Wars Episode IV, except with less character development and not enough backstory. The dialogue was cliché at best and most of the supporting characters had thick, over-the-top accents and appeared unintelligent. One of the main characters, Joe "Lighting" Little (David Oyelowo),

not only detracted from the story, he also came across as an overzealous "Maverick," minus Tom Cruise's "award-winning" personality. The writing, as a whole, was a formulaic, patchwork of different aviation films and was more about making a statement and less about telling a story.

One redeeming factor of the movie were the dog fights and special effects. Unfortunately, for aviation and history enthusiasts, the portrayal of aircraft was both inaccurate and unrealistic. All realism aside, it was still entertaining to watch things blow up and planes zooming through the sky.

Overall "Red Tails" had potential to be great, but it failed in the most critical part, takeoff and landing. This film was just another link in the chain of movies that are "all flash and no substance." If you're into watching over-the-top explosions and overused computer animation, this is the film for you. If not, you should probably try reading a book instead.



**Prices:** All shows are \$3.25 for adults and \$2.25 for children. For ticket pricing, the Base Theater Box Office defines an adult as a patron 12 and older and defines a child as a patron from 6 to 11. Children 5 and younger are admitted free of charge. Parents must purchase tickets for R-rated movies in person at the box office for children 16 and younger. Patrons must present their military identification card when purchasing tickets. Call 254-7642 for recorded information.



"Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked" G Today | 7:15 p.m.

"Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol" PG13 Today | 9:45 p.m.

"Hugo" PG Saturday | 7:15 p.m.

"Sherlock Holmes: Game of Shadows" PG13 Saturday | 9:45 p.m.

"The Adventures of Tintin" PG Sunday | 2 p.m.

"Hugo" PG Sunday | 6:30 p.m.

"Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked" G Wednesday | 6:30 p.m.

# FACES of TRANSITION

**Cpl. Reece Lodder**

*Regimental Combat Team 5*

*This is the second installment in an ongoing series featuring members of the Afghan National Security Forces, and the Marines and sailors serving with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, during their deployment to Afghanistan's Helmand province. Many are infantrymen, others are combat support, but each is the face of a historic transition in the making. They are the unique ingredients in a melting pot of servicemembers devoted to preparing the ANSF to assume lead security responsibility in Garmsir district.*

## **FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELHI, Helmand province, Afghanistan**

— The soldier's youthful eyes and perpetual smile contradict what he's endured. In 22 years, Afghan National Army Sgt. Khal Mohammad, an infantryman with 2nd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, has experienced a lifetime of challenges.

Yet he bears an infectious smile while plodding through a muddy field on a long patrol or toiling through physical training in the pouring rain. The scenes change but his smile remains.

During his youth in Afghanistan's Badakhshan province, Mohammad's mother died before he was old enough to remember her. Though his father had another wife, she didn't want to take care of Mohammad and sent him to live with his older sister.

"I'm blessed to have been raised by my sister," Mohammad said. "I don't know what I would've done without her."

Eight years later, he moved back to his father's home, hopeful their relationship would grow. Instead, he was mistreated by his stepmother and quickly felt out of place. At 10 years old, he set out on his own to find work as a mason.

"I was old enough to differentiate between friends, family and my enemies, so I decided to do what was best for me and to gain experience working in a trade," Mohammad said. "I wanted to provide for myself and not be a burden on anyone."

## The battered but unbroken soldier

He left home, traveled to the neighboring Kunduz province and found work with a construction contractor. For six years, Mohammad lived in his employer's guest house and worked to improve his masonry skills. When he felt he'd gained enough experience, he left to work on his own.

Three years later, a family event suddenly demanded Mohammad's attention. One of his cousins was murdered and the blame placed on another cousin. The family didn't have money for an attorney, so Mohammad mediated on his accused cousin's behalf.

The choice created tension and divided his family. Even after Mohammad helped acquit his accused cousin and the murderer was caught, it persisted. An uncle acknowledged Mohammad's noble effort, but encouraged him to move away from the family for a while.

Once again pushed from his home, Mohammad began weighing his options. He had seen ANA recruiting advertisements in newspapers and longed to make a difference alongside his older brother, an ANA soldier serving in Herat province.

"I knew I'd make more money as a mason than I would as a soldier, but I wanted to serve my country," he said.

In 2009, Mohammad pledged to pay his dues and joined the ANA. After completing basic training, the self-described "adventurer" requested to be an infantryman. He was granted his wish and assigned to the mobile section of 4th Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps.

Traveling throughout southern Afghanistan, he participated in heavy fighting alongside infantry and reconnaissance Marines in Nimroz province and Helmand's Gereshk, Lashkar Gah, Marjah, Musa Qala, Now Zad, Khan-Neshin and Sangin districts.

"I learned how to be a good soldier from training, fighting and patrolling with Marines," Mohammad said. "I was

proud to serve with them because I had the chance to fight for my country ... to help release my people from Taliban rule."

In 2010, Mohammad's unit and their Marine counterparts took numerous casualties during battles in Nimroz and Helmand, encountering frequent improvised explosive device attacks and firefights. He said he owes his life to the Marine Corps air support they received in those battles.

After receiving his wish to "fight on the frontline," he was sent to join 2/1/215 in Garmsir district. There he was promoted to the rank of sergeant, a noncommissioned officer in the ANA, and focused on training to improve himself as a leader.

"Earning the rank of sergeant was a personal achievement, but I don't use my rank to push other people around," Mohammad said. "I have to know my duties, continue learning how to carry them out professionally and pass on what I've learned to my soldiers."

Over the three years he's served in the ANA, Mohammad has spent a year in training, forever smiling because he's "always learning something." He's completed advanced weapons and IED detection training, and graduated from the first NCO leadership academy in Garmsir, Jan. 26.

"I wish every soldier who's become an NCO was like Mohammad," said ANA Sgt. Maj. Mohammad Khalid, the senior enlisted leader of 2/1/215. "He's a disciplined and determined soldier

and a hard worker with a profession on the side. His experience has molded him into a strong leader and he's eager to pass on his knowledge."

As a soldier, Mohammad's mettle was tested in battle. Now, as a sergeant, his rank and experience demand that he lead his men. He's the crucial link between his soldiers and the officers above him.

"The first thing I tell my soldiers is that this command has been handed down to me, and I have to make sure it's carried out well," Mohammad said. "I can't pass them knowledge by throwing books at them and telling them to read. I have to lead with a strong example."

As the insurgency wanes and the Afghan government develops in Garmsir, Mohammad is a vital piece of the force that will soon provide security in the district on their own. And he's confident in his preparedness for their mission.

"In the past, the Marines were always out front," Mohammad said. "Now, with peace and the knowledge and education we've gained as soldiers, we're starting to take the lead. We're partly responsible for the steps we've taken forward and that makes me proud."

In his young life, Mohammad has battled hardship and felt the toll of war. Battered but unbroken, he still smiles.

"Afghanistan's future is brighter because of soldiers like Khal Mohammad," Khalid said. "Soldiers who are devoted to protecting our country's soil ... men who put in all of their effort and aren't willing to quit."



Cpl. Reece Lodder | Regimental Combat Team 5

Afghan National Army Sgt. Khal Mohammad, a 22-year-old infantryman with 2nd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, and a native of Badakhshan province, walks through a compound while clearing it with his soldiers during Operation Winter Offensive, Jan. 5.