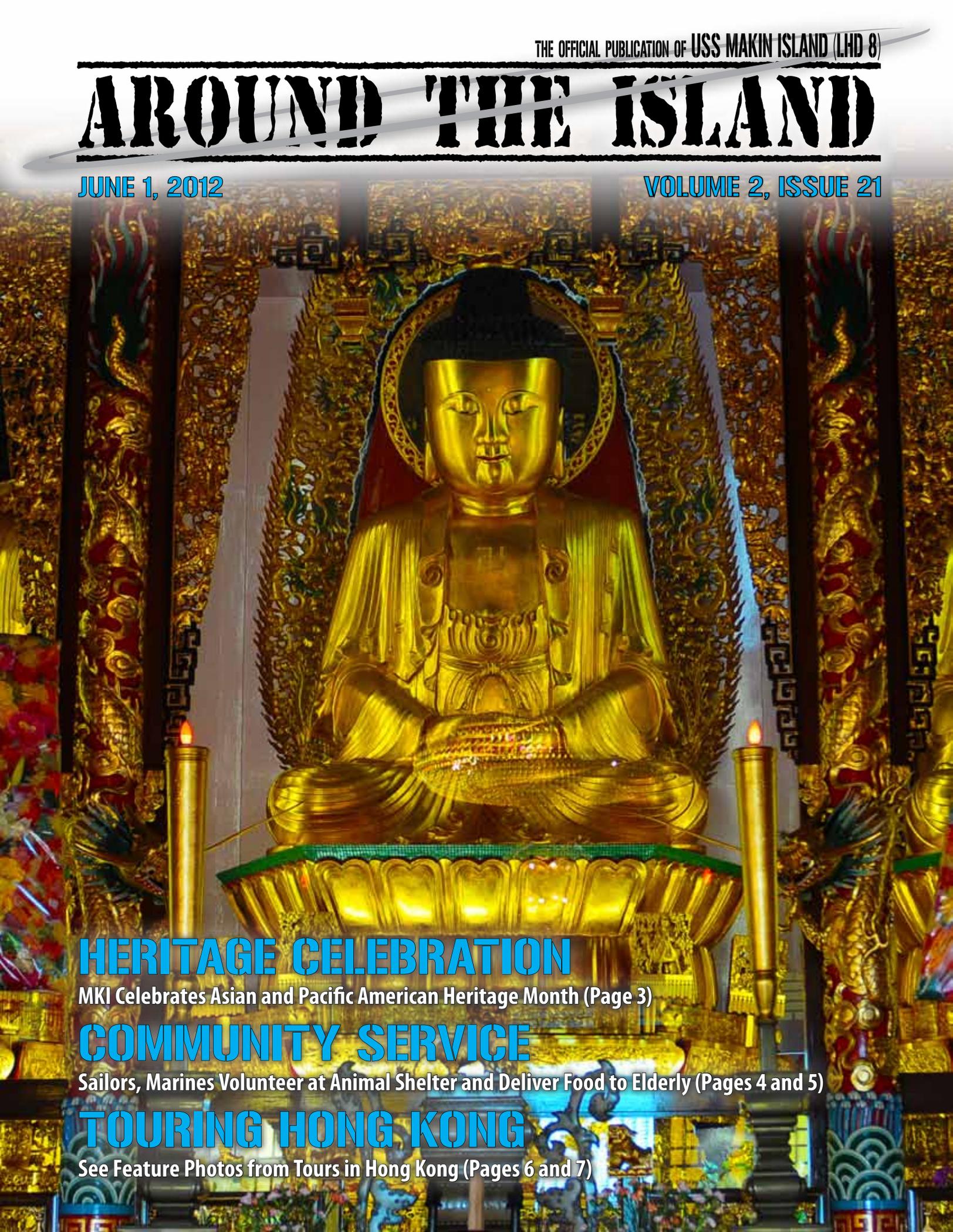


AROUND THE ISLAND

JUNE 1, 2012

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HERITAGE CELEBRATION

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TOURING HONG KONG

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San Diego Based Service Members Become Citizens

By MC3(AW/SW) Christine Walker-Singh, Naval Surface Force Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

SAN DIEGO -- More than 50 service members recited the Oath of Allegiance during a naturalization ceremony aboard the USS Midway Museum in San Diego, May 24.

Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Vice Adm. Richard Hunt was in attendance where several Sailors, Marines, Airmen and one Soldier officially became U.S. citizens.

The ceremony is a result of the Department of Defense working with members of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to implement opportunities for service members to expedite their process toward becoming citizens.

"One of the great things about the Armed Services' naturalization process is that you can almost get your citizenship immediately," said Army Pvt. Joel Yap, with the 1498th Transportation Company, California Army National Guard.

According to Yap's aunt, Construction Electrician's Mate 3rd Class Ana Yap, with Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 303, the benefits of the program do not just apply to individuals seeking citizenship.

"The naturalization process offers the military more diversity, and some individuals that actually have more of a willingness to serve the country they've pledged their allegiance to," said Yap, who was in attendance to support her nephew, three years after obtaining her own citizenship the same way as a Seabee.

It is a sentiment that other service members also noted during the ceremony.

"Diversity is a key strength of America and our military," said Hunt. "Standing before us

are service members from more than 23 different countries and the capabilities they bring to our military are staggering. Becoming U.S. citizens after years of hard work and dedication, far surpasses what most native-born Americans have undertaken."

Besides offering the opportunity of more diversity, the program also increases the capabilities of the Department of Defense's workforce by equipping its personnel with the tools they need to perform their jobs in the Armed Forces.

"Citizenship wasn't something I was really considering applying for at first," said Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Jialong Wang, with Marine Light Attack Training Squadron 303. "Then I began thinking about joining security forces and realized that naturalization would help if I needed a clearance."

According to Hunt, obtaining citizenship after serving the country is not a novel idea and is in fact an integral part of the nation's history.

"You were patriots long before you became citizens," said Hunt, to the new citizens. "Because of your military service, your story is very much aligned with our founding fathers-another group of Americans who were also patriots long before they were citizens. What matters is your belief in American ideals, laws and the desire to contribute to the common good. You have shown your dedication to this country, in the most honorable way possible."

Since Sept. 11, 2001, nearly 43,000 members of the Armed Forces have obtained citizenship while serving.

AROUND THE ISLAND

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF USS MAKIN ISLAND (LHD 8)

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ON THE COVER:

A Buddha statue was one of the many sights that Sailors and Marines saw during the Hong Kong culture tour. [Photo by MC1(SW/AW) Doug Bedford]

MKI Sailors, Marines Observe Asian and Pacific American Heritage Month

By SN Matthew J. Hill, Around the Island Contributor

Sailors serving aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island (LHD 8), along with Marines from the embarked 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), paused from their daily operations to observe Asian and Pacific American Heritage Month with a ceremony on the ship's mess decks, May 31.

Makin Island's Diversity Committee organized the event that included music, guest speakers, a Haka dance performance and a cake-cutting ceremony.

"Sailors of Asian and Pacific American heritage have been serving in the Navy since the early 1800s," said Capt. Cedric E. Pringle, Makin Island's commanding officer. "Those who served include many flag officers, master chiefs and other leaders who have embodied the Navy core values of honor, courage and commitment."

Pringle said that the month of May was formally designated as Asian and Pacific American Heritage Month in 1992.

"As your commanding officer, I am committed to embracing diversity and inclusion on all levels," said Pringle. "Please join me in celebrating the theme of 'Striving for Excellence in Leadership, Diversity and Inclusion,' but always remember that excellence is a journey and not a destination."

Lt. Cmdr. Rommel Salgado, Makin Island's combat systems officer and guest speaker for the



Lt. Cmdr. Rommel Salgado, guest speaker for Makin Island's Asian and Pacific American Heritage Month celebration, speaks to Sailors and Marines, May 31. [Photo by MCSA Daniel J. Walls]

event, spoke about his life as a Filipino-American and how the Navy recognizes cultural diversity.

"The Navy is like a second family that accepts who you are and works with you no matter your strengths and weaknesses," said Salgado. "Keep connecting the lines between you and your heritage."

Salgado said his father and father-in-law, both Philippine Americans and Navy Sailors, influenced his decision to join the Navy. He said that he joined the Philippine American Club as a young man and learned to embrace his roots.

"I learned courage from my father, a mess cook, and humility from my father-in-law, an engineman," Salgado told the audience during his speech.

Sailors and Marines who attend the ceremony said they walked

away with a greater understanding of the contributions and heritage of Asian and Pacific Americans.

"The ceremony opened my eyes to our Navy's culture of inclusion and diversity," said Culinary Specialist 1st Class Cory Stennhard, a Makin Island Sailor who attended the ceremony. "As an Asian American, there are a lot of us who have helped make the nation what it is, especially in the Navy. There are a lot of us out there doing good things."

The ceremony concluded with a performance by the ship's choir, a traditional war dance known as the Haka performed by Sailors and Marines of Asian and Pacific American heritage, and an official cake-cutting. A special "Mongolian Barbecue" dinner meal was also served to the crew as part of the observance.

Volunteers Bathe Dogs at Hong Kong Animal Shelter

By MC1 (SW) David McKee,
Around the Island Staff

A group of 24 Sailors and Marines from the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island (LHD 8) and embarked 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) spent a full day at a local dog shelter as part of a community service project in Hong Kong, May 27.

Sailors and Marines volunteered to bathe dogs and perform yard work at the Hong Kong Dog Rescue Center during the ship's May 25-28 port visit.

Hong Kong resident Yaeng Jae, or "Auntie Jae" as she is known by volunteers, said she opened the shelter 10 years ago and it is now home to more than 400 dogs and 300 cats.

Jae said she appreciates the help from the Navy and Marine Corps when they make a port visit to Hong Kong, and she doesn't know what she would do without their assistance.

"I'm definitely a dog person," said Cmdr. Julie Hendrickson, a nurse assigned to the 11th MEU who volunteered for the community service project. "I always enjoy meeting and connecting with dogs so



Seaman Jessica Skaggs bathes a dog at the Hong Kong Dog Rescue Center during a community service project. A group of 24 Sailors and Marines volunteered their time May 27. [Photo by MC1(SW) David McKee]

I was glad to have this opportunity to work with animals and help the people who are trying to help the dogs."

Hendrickson said she is also a dog owner who does animal rescue work in the San Diego area. Volunteering for a community service project that involved dogs was one of the highlights of her visit to Hong Kong.

Other Sailors and Marines who volunteered for the project said they enjoyed the opportunity to work with the animals.

"There's a lot of work to do here," said Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Electrical) 3rd Class Brandon Smith. "I tried to get them to calm down enough to give them a bath."

Smith said that at the beginning of the day many of the dogs were in need of a lot of care, but by the end of the day they were clean and volunteers had also cut the grass at the shelter.

According to Lt. Jeff Perry, a chaplain assigned to Makin Island, community service projects are a good way for Sailors and Marines to do something to serve their fellow man and on occasion the animals who share our lives.

"Projects like this are a good way to reach out to communities and show people another side of the military they wouldn't ordinarily see," said Perry.

More than 2,000 Sailors and Marines were able to experience the Hong Kong culture during the four-day port visit. In addition to the community service project at the animal shelter, a group of 35 Sailors and Marines also helped to distribute food to the elderly.



In addition to bathing dogs, a group of Sailors and Marines performed yard work at the Hong Kong Dog Rescue Center during a community service project May 27. [Photo by MC1(SW) David McKee]



Makin Island Sailors and Marines deliver bags of food to residents of the Kwai-Chung Elderly Center in Hong Kong during a community service project May 26. A group of 42 Sailors and Marines took part in the project as part of the ship's four-day port visit to Hong Kong. [Photo by MC1(SW) David McKee]

Sailors, Marines Deliver Food To The Elderly

By MC1 (SW) David McKee, Around the Island Staff

Sailors and Marines from USS Makin Island (LHD 8) and the embarked 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) joined local volunteers to help deliver bags of food to residents of the Kwai-Chung Elderly Center in Hong Kong during a community service project, May 26.

The group of 42 participated in the event as part of the ship's May 25-28 port visit to Hong Kong. The project also coincided with local observances of Mother's Day, Father's Day and the upcoming Dragon Boat festival in June.

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 1st Class Mark Higgenbottom, one of the Sailors volunteered for the project, said that in addition to bringing food

and sundry items to the residents he shared his time with men like Cheung Kin Yip.

Through a translator, Higgenbottom said he got to know the 70 year-old man and found out that he enjoys table tennis and the Internet.

"Mr. Yip was hip for an old guy," said Higgenbottom. "The guy had a lot of energy and went out of his way to show us he stayed active playing table tennis and using the Internet to stay in touch with his family and friends."

Yip lives alone in his apartment, which is about the size of a large bedroom in a typical American home and contains a living area, bathroom and kitchen.

Through the translator, he

told Higgenbottom that he enjoys a simple life of getting up in the morning and checking the stock market on the Internet and checking his email and Facebook page.

"It's easier to live on my own," said Yip through the translator. "I like my independence."

Lt. Jeff Perry, a chaplain aboard Makin Island who organized the community service project, said he thinks community relations projects like helping the elderly foster good relations in the communities that the Navy and Marine Corps visits.

"Projects like this put a face on the Navy and Marine Corps and helps build a truer and broader image of us and shows another side of the military that isn't often shown by the media," said Perry.



MAKIN ISLAND VISITS HONG KONG

Photos by MC1(SW/AW) Doug Bedford, MC1(AW) Andrew Wiskow, MCSN Kory Alsberry

Layout and Design by MC2 Dominique Pineiro





Seaman Joy Bonnett, a Sailor assigned to USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52), embraces one of her former caregivers during a community service project at the Children's Shelter of Cebu in Cebu, Philippines. Bonnett and her five brothers and sisters lived at the shelter for eight years. [Photo by MC2 Jason Behnke]

Community Service Project Serves as Homecoming for USS Pearl Harbor Sailor

By MC2 Jason J. Behnke, USS Pearl Harbor Public Affairs

Thirty Sailors from the amphibious dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52) and embarked Marines assigned to the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) took part in a community service (COMSERV) project at the Children's Shelter of Cebu in Cebu, Philippines, May 28.

During the day-long project, the group of Sailors and Marines helped to clean up and make improvements to the shelter as well as spend time with the 80 children who reside at the shelter.

For Seaman Joy Bonnett, a Sailor assigned to Pearl Harbor, the event was more than just a COMSERV project; it was an emotional homecoming as she had previously lived at the shelter for eight years.

"I didn't think I would cry, but I did," said Bonnett. "Once I saw my house parents that took care of me from when I was five years old to 13 years old, and the aunts that helped take care of me, it was heartwarming. I really felt like I was back home."

Bonnett said she has fond memories of the years she

and her five siblings spent at the shelter.

"My mom couldn't raise us and my dad passed away when I was five," said Bonnett. "So she thought it was better for all of us to be together at an orphanage rather than being raised struggling with her."

That's how she came to know her second family at the Children's Shelter.

"We take care of kids who don't have families," said Mitch Ohlendorf, executive director of the Children's Shelter of Cebu. "The kids might be orphaned, they might be abandoned by their parents or they might be neglected to the point that their parents just can't take care of them."

Ohlendorf said Bonnett's story is a familiar one to the employees who run the shelter.

"Hers is a unique story in several ways as well," Ohlendorf said. "Most kids probably don't stay here as long as she did. It's because larger sibling groups often take longer to get adopted. There just aren't a lot of families available willing to adopt older, larger sibling

groups."

Ohlendorf said luckily for her and her siblings, two young Minnesotans came into their lives.

"Her adoptive parents came here to work in our school for a couple of years," said Ohlendorf. "Joy and some of her brothers and sisters were students. They got to know the kids and fell in love with them and adopted them."

Bonnett said the couple initially got close with her autistic younger brother and ultimately fell in love with the whole family.

"They were like 27 and 24 at that time," Bonnett said. "That's amazing to have six kids at 24 and 27 years old."

Bonnett said the transition from living on the tropical Island of Cebu to the chilling winters of Middle America brought a few more challenges than just learning how to deal with snow.

"I'd get in trouble sometimes because I wasn't used to somebody telling me what to do," she said. "I remember feeling confined in a family situation. In the orphanage you can do whatever because there are so many kids. It was hard dealing with the rules at first, but I adjusted."

Bonnett said her family in Richfield, Minn., has



Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Christopher Haywood (front) and Gunner's Mate 1st Class Vincent Delisi, both assigned to Pearl Harbor, trim bushes at the Children's Shelter of Cebu. [Photo by MC2 Jason Behnke]

grown over the years. She now has 10 brothers and sisters. Her parents adopted two more children and had two of their own.

With less than a year in the Navy, Bonnett found it surprising that she was able to accomplish one of her life goals of going back to visit the shelter.

"I was pretty shocked. Out of all the islands or places we could visit we pull into Cebu," said Bonnett I was pretty excited to go back; I've always wanted to go back. That's why I joined the Navy to get money to go back to the Philippines. I'm grateful for it."

Bonnett said she had hoped to visit her birth mother during the visit as well but was not able to due to her mother living on a different island.

"I'll probably go back someday to visit her," said Bonnett. "My family back in Minnesota is my real family now, but I'd still like to meet her someday."

By days end, the group of Sailors and Marines had trimmed a row of overgrown hedges and performed other maintenance at Bonnett's former home. However, the real impact of the COMSERV came from the time they spent with the children.

"Everyone interacted really well with the kids. The kids were having a lot of fun," said Bonnett.



1st Sgt. Michael Edwards pushes a young girl on a swing during the event. [Photo by MC2 Jason Behnke]

**OPINION
ISLAND**

What was your favorite part of liberty in Hong Kong?

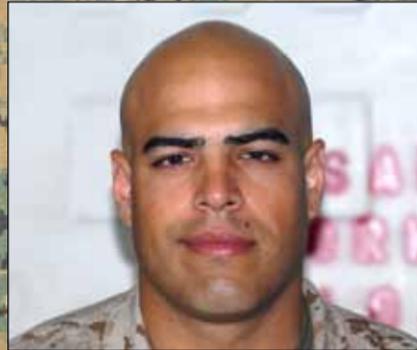


"I like the sense of style people had in Hong Kong. The way everyone dressed reminded me of home in Los Angeles."

-SN Cheyanne Thomas

"I liked the view in the city and the markets. I bought a lot of oil paintings and souvenirs."

-Sgt. Lee Sumbolinmontjio



"The Spaghetti House! They had some of the best food I've ever had. Halfway through the first plate, I ordered a second plate."

-EM2 Dustin Bell



"At the bar Escape, there was a band - they were really good."

-Cpl. Kyle Beesley



**MKI
MWR CORNER
BINGO!**

Win Thousands of Dollars!

MWR will host BINGO for the crew once again on Sunday, June 10 on the Mess Decks.

BINGO will also be broadcast from SITE TV on Channel 7.

Game Cards go on sale starting Wednesday, June 6.

Ticket Prices are as follows.

1 for \$5

2 for \$8

4 for \$16

6 for \$24

8 for \$32

... and so on.

The more you buy, the more you win!

**MAKIN ISLAND'S
UPCOMING EVENTS**

SAT. 2 JUNE

1900 EAWS Training (Mess Decks)

2000 Spades Tournament (Mess Decks)

SUN. 3 JUNE

0900 CPO 365 PT (Flightdeck)

Sights on San Diego Scavenger Hunt (ALL DAY)

2000 ESWS Training (Mess Decks)

MON. 4 JUNE

2000 Board Game Night (Mess Decks)

2000 ESWS Training (Mess Decks)

TUE. 5 JUNE

1900 EAWS Training (Mess Decks)

2000 Trivia (Mess Decks)

WED. 6 JUNE

Bingo Sales Begin

2000 Bench Press Competition (Gym)

THU. 7 JUNE

0900/1400/2000 CPO 365 Phase IIA (CPO Mess)

1900 EAWS Training (Mess Decks)

2000 Video Game Tournament (Mess Decks)

FRI. 8 JUNE

2000 ESWS Training (Mess Decks)

2000 Spelling Bee (Mess Decks)

SAT. 9 JUNE

1900 EAWS Training (Mess Decks)

2000 Movie Night (Mess Decks)



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OF THOSE APPOINTED OVER ME.**

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