

31st MEU NEWS

UNIT 35621
FPO AP 96606-5621

September 4, 2008



Commander's Message



This month's newsletter is dedicated to pre-deployment family readiness in preparation for our upcoming deployment in mid-September. Whether this is your first deployment or your spouse has been deployed multiple times, it is always a good idea to review and complete a pre-deployment checklist like that found below. By going through the checklist with your spouse, you will both become more confident and comfortable that your family is well prepared to deal with the inevitable challenges associated with these separation periods. The Command Element's Family Readiness Program, which exists to provide official communication and referral support to spouses and immediate family members, is up and running. Our program emphasizes the establishment of personal relationships based on mutual trust, shared experiences and friendship. Its purpose is to keep spouses and family members well informed and to provide information and referral support that may be required from time to time. During the deployment, spouses and immediate family members can expect to receive official information from the command in a couple of different ways. The Marine Corps is transitioning to a system known as the Mass Communication Tool or MCT. The MCT provides the capability for the unit's Family Readiness Officer (FRO) to send out official messages from the command via phone, e-mail or text message. Since this is a new system and is somewhat untested, we will back up all MCT messages with a phone call from one of our designated Family Readiness Assistants (FRA's). This will ensure that all spouses receive timely and accurate official notifications from the command. One other good source of information will be the MEU's website. In particular, I will continue to update the Commander's Posts section located under the Commander's Corner tab on the front page of the website. The Commander's Post section gives me an opportunity to provide short updates on activities of the MEU and to highlight some of the achievements of Marines and Sailors that I come in contact with on a daily basis. The address for the MEU's website is:

<http://www.marines.mil/units/marforpac/iimef/31stmeu/Pages/default.aspx>.

The successful end state for our Family Readiness Program is that Marines and Sailors of the MEU remain focused and committed to their assigned mission knowing that their spouses and immediate family members are consistently well informed and will be taken care of in the face of unexpected events.

Semper Fidelis,
Col Paul L. Damren



Are you ready for Deployment?



- _____ Do you understand what the Family Readiness Officer (FRO), Family Readiness Assistant (FRA), Marine Corps Family Team Building, Personal Services Center, Navy Marine Corps Relief Society, Red Cross, and other resources can do for you and how to contact them? (If you haven't received your 31st MEU refrigerator magnet with contact numbers, please contact the FRO to get one)
- _____ Do you know your spouse's social security number?
- _____ Are all family member passports up to date?
- _____ Do you have an up to date family care plan (if required)?
- _____ Are your dependent ID cards about to expire?
- _____ Have you arranged for an ID card for any child who will be turning 10-years old before your spouse's return date?
- _____ Have you discussed vehicle maintenance and who will take care of repairs?
- _____ Have you planned to pay for Road Tax and/or JCI on your vehicle while your spouse is deployed?
- _____ Do you and your spouse have a Will? Are they current and in a convenient, secure place?
- _____ Do you have a general or special power of attorney? When does it expire?
- _____ Do you have adequate funds to cover expenses as required? Do you know when household bills are due and where to pay them (i.e. rent, phone, internet, etc)?
- _____ Does your spouse need to establish/update any pay allotments prior to deployment?
- _____ Has your spouse signed a pre-authorization form from the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society?
- _____ Will your lease expire during the deployment? Do you plan to move in or out of base housing during the deployment? Do you know the process for moving household goods?
- _____ Do you know where important family documents are kept?
- _____ Have you told someone you trust where your important family documents are and have you included that information in your family care plans?
- _____ Do you have a signed authorization form for dependent medical treatment?
- _____ Have you given your home a security check and/or identified any necessary repairs?
- _____ Do your parents and in-laws know how to reach you and your spouse in case of an emergency?
- _____ Have you and your spouse discussed your feelings concerning the deployment; both beginning and end?
- _____ Have you talked to your children about the deployment?



ONLINE RESOURCES

www.marines.mil/units/marforpac/iiimef/31stmeu/Pages/default.aspx

This is the official 31st MEU website! Save this link to your "Favorites" on your computer. The website is updated daily to keep you informed on what your Marine or Sailor is doing at work.

www.okinawa.usmc.mil

This is a great website to get up-to-date information on Marine Corps activities on island. One can download the Okinawa Marine or click on the 31st MEU's link to view our website.

www.mccsokinawa.com

This site offers a ton of information about what is being offered on all Marine Corps bases on the island. The site has links and information for over 80 MCCS programs offered on Okinawa.

www.kadenaservices.com

Provides information about activities and services the Air Force offers to all military members and their families here on Okinawa. It also contains links to Army MWR events on Torii Station and Okuma's online reservation page. Click on PETS to get links to the Vet Clinics and Karing Kennels.

www.japanupdate.com

Provides updates on what's going on Okinawa. Plus it has great classifieds for different services you might need; like Lawn Mowing!

www.okinawahai.com

This website is compiled by military spouses for anyone coming to Okinawa. The site has sections about off-base housing, restaurants, schools, and so much more.

www.mcbbutler.usmc.mil

Provides valuable information on policies and procedures that apply directly to all residents stationed on Marine Corps bases Japan.

www.okinawa.pac.dodea.edu

This site can answer any question you might have pertaining to the on-base school system on Okinawa

www.aafes.com

This site is your resource for all AAFES business. Want to check out an on-base movie schedule? Check out AAFES.com. Need to find out where the Foster Furniture store is located? Check out AAFES.com to find a map to your destination.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ambulance 911
Off-Base 098-839-7911
Emergency Room 645-7338
Off Base 098-893-1984
Poison Control 643-7700
Car Accident 645-3423/3888

TYPHOON MOTORS 24-HOUR ISLANDWIDE TOWING

Camp Foster (0700-2100) 645-7441
Call Cell-Phone **AFTER** 2100
090-3794-2556

FOSTER SWITCHBOARD

098-892-5111
Directory Assistance
640-1110
Direct Dial from US:
011-81-98-892-5111+ number



KADENA SWITCHBOARD

098-938-1111

Calling on base from off-base: Dial the switchboard number and wait for a dial tone, then dial 7 digit number.

Deployment Support Child Care (DSCC)

DSCC offers up to 10 free hours of respite hourly care in CDC, FCC, or school-Age Care Program (SAC) while the sponsor is deployed. This program is locally funded and can only be used for respite hourly care. To obtain this type of care parents must provide the following:



-A copy of the sponsor's dependent orders or a letter from the sponsor's commander or his/her designee.

-Children's immunization record. Immunizations must be complete and up-to-date.

-A copy of Family Care Plan (for dual active duty parents or single parents) or medical / dental Power of Attorney.

To register for DSCC, child care services or request placement on a CY&TP waiting list, please contact the Resource & Referral office to schedule and appointment. *CY&TP, Team Resource & Referral 645-4062 or 645-4117*

Emergency Red Cross Messages

The American Red Cross sends emergency messages to commands of deployed service members.

Call 645-3800 M-F (0730-1630)
Call 634-1979 for after hour emergency notification.

You must have the following information:
about the service member: name, rank, social security number, and command/division.

The commanding officer makes the decision whether to grant emergency leave.

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society

Camp Foster 645-7808/2357
M-F 0800-1300
Camp Kinser 637-2112
T 0900-1500, TH 0800-1300
Camp Hansen 623-5043
M, T, & TH 0800-1300



Military One Source

Military OneSource is brought to you in partnership with Marine and Family Services.

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associated with using this service and best of all it is available anytime of the day, where ever you are. So get in touch with us today. We have consultants who speak Spanish and offer simultaneous translation into more than 150 other languages. Phones are TTY/TDD accessible.

Military One Source offers advice, support, practical solutions, and online resources. Whether you're preparing for a new baby or preparing for retirement, getting organized or getting out of debt--no matter who you are--Military One Source is for you. No question is too small, no issue is too big. The service is pre-paid and confidential.

- 24-hour service, 7 days a week
- Personal support
- Referrals to military and community resources
- Online articles, newsletters, and workshops
- Pre-paid booklets and audio recordings
- Confidential consultation.

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CONUS: 800-433-6868
OCONUS Universal Free phone: 800-237-42374
OCONUS Collect: 484-530-5908
TTY/TDD: 800-346-9188
En Espanol, llame al: 888-732-9020

In Okinawa:
On-Base: 99-001-800-869-02788 or 99-001-800-237-42374
Off-Base: Call collect 99-0051
Then provide operator: 484-530-5908

Marine Corps Family Team Building Family Readiness Training Schedule September 2008

FAMILY READINESS ASSISTANT TRAINING

September 16th

0900-1500 Camp Foster Bldg 5677

September 22nd

0900-1500 Camp Foster Bldg 5677



L.I.N.K.S. Sessions

September 22nd & 23rd
9am-12:30pm

Camp Courtney L.I.N.K.S.
Building 4408

CHILDCARE AVAILABLE!

CALL 645-3698 or 645-3689, to register.



This program introduces Japanese fiancées and spouses to military life and American culture. JSO is designed to assist Japanese spouses in their transition to a military spouse. A translator is present for all sessions and **FREE** onsite childcare is provided. Participants must be registered to attend. For more information contact Marine Corps Family Team Building at **645-3204** (bilingual line).

