The cracked pot

By Chaplain Mitch Schranz

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on the end of a pole which he carried across his neck.

One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots of full of water in his master's house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made.

But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream.

"I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you." "Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?" "I have been able for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some.

But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Each of us has our unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But, it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding.

You've just got to take each person for what they are, and look for the good in them.

Pet of the week

Whiny the Pooh is a neutered male kitten who is five months old. All his siblings have been adopted so he is looking for a home of his own. Appropriately named, he can be very talkative. He is very active and loves to play, especially with other cats. To find out more about Whiny, or any animal at Pets Are Worth Saving (P.A.W.S.) contact 243-9996, or email usskittytalk.yokosuka@gmail.com, or visit the P.A.W.S. Web site at www.pawsyokosukajapan.com.

Transition benefits: TRICARE offers post separation health care option

From TRICARE Management Activity

WASHINGTON – When service members leave active duty, TRICARE offers a transitional health care option for eligible beneficiaries and their families while they look for new health coverage.

The Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) is designed to extend TRICARE eligibility for sponsors and their family who involuntarily separate from the military prior to retirement. When separating from active duty, the sponsor and family lose TRICARE eligibility. However, TAMP permits individuals in certain beneficiary categories to retain their TRICARE coverage at no cost. For more information about TAMP and enrollment options, visit www.tricare.mil/tamp.

The beneficiary categories include:

• Sponsors involuntarily separated under honorable conditions.

• National Guard or Reserve members separated from the military, following an active duty period of more than 30 consecutive days in support of a contingency operation.

• Sponsors separated from the military, but involuntarily retained for reserve duty.

• A sponsor who separates from active duty, following a voluntary agreement to stay on active duty status for a period of less than one year.

• A sponsor who receives a sole survivorship discharge.

• A sponsor who is separated from active duty who agrees to become a member of the Selected Reserve of the Ready Reserve of a Reserve component.

A sponsor is not eligible for TAMP while on terminal leave, permissive temporary duty or authorized excess leave.

To ensure continuity of coverage during the TAMP period, it is essential the sponsor and their eligible family members' information in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) is current. Visit www.tricare.mil/deers to update information.

If a sponsor qualifies, the 180-day TAMP period begins the day after the date of separation from active duty. Under TAMP the sponsor and family members are automatically covered under TRICARE Standard and Extra. If a beneficiary lives overseas, he or she gets coverage under TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) Standard.

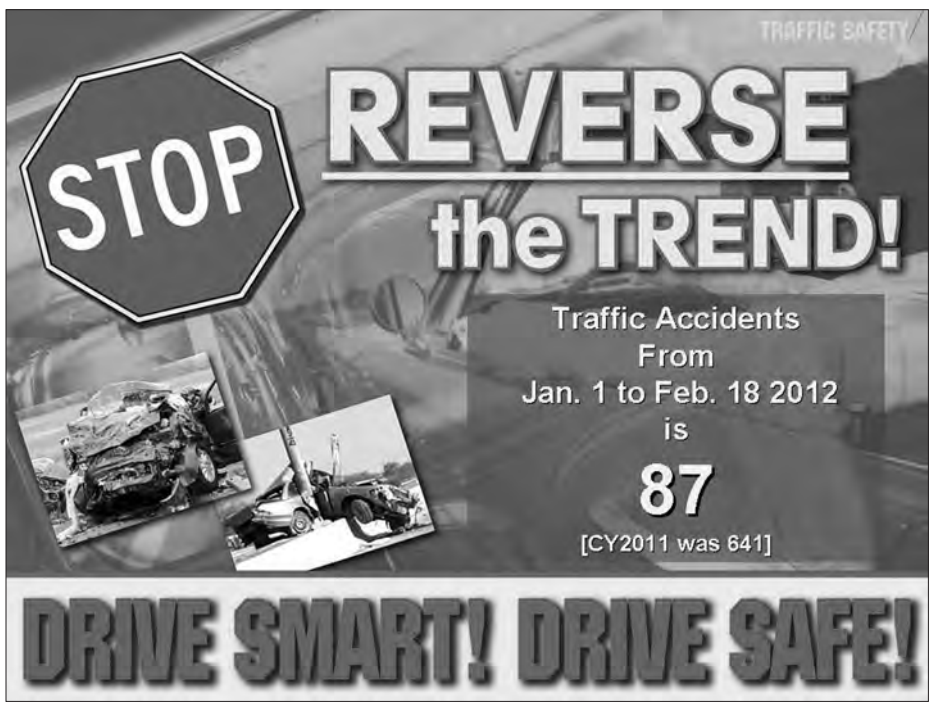
Sponsors and their eligible family members may enroll in TRICARE Prime or TOP Prime if they live in an area where either is offered during the 180-day TAMP period. If they were enrolled in Prime or TOP Prime while on active duty, they must complete a new enrollment form and send it to the appropriate regional contractor, preferably before leaving active duty, to re-enroll for the TAMP period. The enrollment date is retroactive to the sponsor's separation date.

During TAMP, the sponsor and their family members are covered as active duty family members and all rules for that beneficiary category apply, including any applicable deductibles, cost-shares and copayments. For program cost information, visit www.tricare.mil/costs.

If a beneficiary is eligible for care under TAMP and has a newly diagnosed medical condition related to active duty service, he or she may qualify for 180 days of care for the specified service-related condition. For more information, visit www.tricare.mil/tcsrc.

During TAMP, dental care provided in military dental treatment facilities is on a space-available basis.

For more information abou the TRICARE Dental Program, visit www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com.

TRICARE's transitional health care option for eligible beneficiaries and their families is one of many transition benefits available to involuntarily separating Sailors including those affected by the Enlisted Retention Board.

For the latest ERB information, visit Navy Personnel Command's ERB website; www.public.navy.mil/bupers-nps/boards/ERB/Pages/default2/aspx.