Moral courage

By Chaplain Allen Vaughan

Courage; valor; bravery. These are words that should resonate in our hearts because of our military heritage. They are qualities in a person that we all admire and, I believe, many of us aspire to every day of our lives.

When asked to come up with examples of courage, most people picture soldiers charging uphill in the face of a hail of bullets, firefighters running into a burning building, or a hero rushing in to save the day. These individuals are usually awarded for their courage with praise or recognition. For military personnel, a bronze "V" is authorized to be worn on personal awards when the act that earned the award involves valor in combat against an armed enemy of the United States.

However, is the corporate whistleblower who turns in a manager for fraud, waste and abuse given the same praise and recognition? Is the shipmate who turns his friend into the authorities after witnessing a sexual assault, or the friend who steps in and intervenes to prevent a sexual assault, awarded for his or her courage? Sadly, too often the answer is "no." But, these are acts of courage, nonetheless. These are acts of moral courage.

Our Sailors, Soldiers, and Marines are put in circumstances daily that require great courage, especially those who serve in combat, maritime interdiction, and humanitarian operations. I have had the privilege to be a personal witness to many of these courageous men and women in action at some of their finest moments.

And, yet, these same young men and women might struggle to display moral courage while on liberty in a foreign port; when they decide to look the other way because they don't want to "get involved"; or when they are faced with making a decision between right or wrong and there is little chance of being "caught."

"Courage" is the quality that permits one to face dangers or difficulties without fearing the consequences. When someone does something courageous, then personal comfort, safety or wellbeing is often set aside or sacrificed for another. "Morals" are those principles or rules that help us make a distinction between right and wrong.

"Moral courage" combines the courageous concern for the wellbeing of another person, and applies it across the whole range of moral ideas or behaviors that are considered right and wrong. Moral courage takes our personal values, our convictions, and beliefs and applies them, not only to extreme situations, but also to the more common, everyday decisions that we face.

We have to make morally courageous decisions everyday. And in most cases, these decisions may only be noticed by a very few people or none at all. However, the impact of our moral courage will be felt by many, including our spouses, our children, our shipmates, as well as the many nations in which we serve, and especially our own nation for whom we serve.

You may not ever have the occasion to save someone's life on the battlefield, or rescue a child from a burning building. You may never receive a citation for bravery or a hero's welcome. But, before the week is over, you will most certainly be called upon to display "exceptional bravery and valor in the face of overwhelming odds, strong temptation, and certain ridicule from peers. (Place your name here) has demonstrated exemplary moral courage, reflecting great credit upon yourself and upholding the highest of values and traditions." My hope is that you will be "awarded" this kind of citation on numerous occasions this week, and throughout your life.

SAMM *cont. from pg. 1*

"The experience of a sexual assault can disrupt the Sailor's life and their ability to function in their workplace, it interferes with their trust, compromises their ability to accomplish the mission and undermines their readiness," said Joyner. "It is important that a victim begins the road to recovery by getting the available resources to include medical, pastoral care, clinical counseling and advocacy care…it is important that the victim gets help so they do not have to suffer alone."

Victims of sexual assaults have options on how they want to tell someone based on their own comfort level.

"A restricted report, is a reporting option that allows victims to confidentially disclose the crime to specifically identified individuals and receive medical treatment, advocacy and counseling without triggering the official investigative process," said Joyner. "An unrestricted report is the reporting option for victims of sexual assault who want medical treatment, advocacy, counseling and an official investigation of the crime. NCIS conducts the investigations of sexual assaults and the details of the incident are limited to those with a need to know."

According to Joyner, if someone would like to submit a restricted report, whether you are service member or a civilian, they can go to the SAPR Victim Advocate, SAPR Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), a medical provider, or the Chaplain.

Unrestricted reports can be filed through a SAPR Victim Advocate, the command SARC, a medical provider, Chaplain, NCIS, base security or their command.

"Everyone has a role in stopping sexual assault," said Joyner. "This year's theme 'Hurts One. Affects All,' not only conveys that sexual assault affects the victim, it affects bystanders. Preserving mission readiness can serve, then, as motivation for acts of bystander intervention."

Road tax, vehicle decal issuance season begins

From CFAY Vehicle Registration Office

Annual road tax for your vehicle is paid every spring. Payments, which must be made in yen, can be made at the Kanagawa Tax Office for regular sized cars and trucks.

Payments for motorcycles and mini-cars can be made at the local city hall or ward office, starting April 1.

In accordance with U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) Policy Letter, vehicles are to be registered at the closest military installation of which vehicle owners are assigned.

To provide a better service to our base community, Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) has arranged for the representatives of the Kanagawa Tax Office to collect this year's road tax on board CFAY on the first floor of the Vehicle Registration Office (VRO), April 24, 26 - 27.

This is the last chance to pay on base. After these dates drivers will have to go off base to pay this tax, because effective June 1st, 2012 Cars with the red 2011 road tax decal will be prohibited entry to the base.

This service on board Yokosuka is also intended for Ikego and Negishi Housing Detachment residents.

It is recommended that personnel who require only normal registration services come on times other than road tax payment days due a high volumes of customers.

Vehicle owners can obtain the 2012 U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) base decal at VRO after road tax has been paid for all vehicles registered to that owner.

In order to obtain the base decal the following documents must be presented:

- Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) ID card
- Proof of payment of the 2012 road tax
- Military Registration and Certificate of Title of Motor Vehicle (DD Form 430)
- Japanese title
- Current Base Inspection sheet
- Japanese Compulsory Insurance (JCI)
- Liability Insurance (a minimum of $300,000 or 30,000,000 yen for bodily injury and $30,000 or 3,000,000 yen for property damage)
- SOFA Driver's license, USFJ form 4EJ (additional driver's license will be necessary if member has more than one vehicle)
- Parking Certificate (if applicable)
- Registration with the Defense Biometrics Identification System (DBIDS) completed.

Vehicle owners who have not updated their residency information at VRO must provide the address of their current residence and a valid parking certificate before being issued a 2012 USFJ decal.

This means the above mentioned personnel now living in base housing will be required to have an approved Parking Certificate Residence Verification form from the Yokosuka Housing Office.

Those personnel now living in off base housing will need an approved parking certificate from the appropriate police station.

Off base residents will then need to come to VRO to receive the necessary documents to be taken to the Land Transportation Office (LTO) in Yokohama to change the residence address.

Contact VRO for further information concerning the need for a parking certificate prior to decal issue.

Vehicle owners with more than one vehicle will have to present the above documents for each vehicle before a base decal can be issued. Vehicle owners with unfinished paperwork on any registered, sold or junked vehicles will not be able to receive a new decal for their vehicle until these matters are resolved.

We are making every effort to accommodate those deployed and their families during this road tax season.

We are encouraging spouses and friends to pay road tax, however, an original power of attorney will be required to obtain a base decal for anyone other than a sponsor.

The amount of road tax to be paid depends on the type of vehicle, which can be determined by the number shown on the top of the license plate. The respective tax amount is as follows:

- 40/400Y and 50/500Y plates - 7,500 yen
- 30/300Y plates 4.5L and below - 19,000 yen and 22,000 yen for 4.6L and above
- 11/100Y plates - 32,000 yen

Mini cars and motorcycles - Road tax for mini cars and motorcycles must be paid at the local city hall or ward offices starting April 1.

Their respective tax amount is as follows:

- Mini cars - 3,000 yen
- Motorcycles 1cc-125cc - 500 yen
- Motorcycles 126cc and above - 1,000 yen

Vehicle owners may check to see if their documents are up to date by looking at the Motor Vehicle Registration Report, which should be in each vehicle registration package. This report lists all the expiration dates of your paperwork.

It is recommended that you check to see that all requirements are met and up to date prior to standing in line, as this will ensure expeditious service.

Simple questions can be answered by telephone by calling VRO at 243-5011, but for detailed questions our staff will be required to look at your paperwork.

Once the road tax has been paid and all paperwork is verified to be in order, vehicle owners, spouses and/or persons with powers of attorney, must remember to stop by VRO to get your 2012 decal.

Base decals must be affixed to the top center of the front windshield, next to the Japanese inspection sticker.

The current Japanese inspection sticker, current base decal, installation sticker and rank decals (if applicable) should be the only decals affixed to the windshield.

All other decals and inspection stickers from the previous years must be completely removed.

For more information contact the CFAY CRO office at 243-5011.