Navy families: A force multiplier

By Chaplain Bruce Vaughan

If you or a family member has been in the military for very long, chances are you have eaten an MRE, or "Meals Ready-to-Eat." You may be familiar with those tan, plastic pouches that most people serving in our nation's armed forces love to hate.

Attached right on the side of every MRE package is a label that has these words: "Nutrition: A force multiplier."

The label goes on to state, "Nutrient levels in the MRE are adapted to meet operational requirements," and fortification with added vitamins and minerals "provides you the additional edge to maximize your performance."

Some may dispute whether an MRE gives you an edge or gives you something entirely different, like a bad case of constipation.

I would like to offer a variation on this theme, one that I don't think anybody could dispute.

I believe that Navy families are a force multiplier. If we have strong, healthy and happy families, then we have Sailors who are ready to train, fight and serve whenever they are called upon to do so.

However, strength, stamina and energy can be zapped from the healthiest of families in no time at all, especially while stationed overseas and forward-deployed.

If our families are suffering, then the readiness of our Sailors may suffer as well.

Therefore, great care needs to be taken continually to replenish and nourish our Navy families.

If our families are fortified and strengthened, then our Sailors have an edge that will maximize their performance.

A "force multiplier" refers to a capability that, when added to and employed by a combat force, significantly increases the combat potential of that force, and thus enhances probability of successful mission accomplishment.

By this definition, healthy Navy families are definitely a "force multiplier." One of the most important roles of the chaplain, the ombudsman, or the Fleet and Family Support Center is to assist the command in the area of family readiness.

This may be accomplished in many different ways, but the goal is the same: to strengthen our Sailors by strengthening our families.

Don't Drink and Drive

By MAC(SW) Michael Marino,
CFAY Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor

The abuse of alcohol and the use of illicit drugs are a problem which, not only affect adults, but our youth as well. Driving after drinking, even a small amount of alcohol, can put you at risk of being arrested on a Driving Under the Influence (DUI) charge or, even worse, cause injury to yourself or someone else. Use these tips to help keep you and our community safe:

- Don't ride with someone who has been drinking.
- Stop an intoxicated person from driving.
- Offer to be a non-drinking driver for any Sailor or friend.
- Report suspected drunk drivers to base security or the Japanese police.
- Call a non-drinking friend, supervisor or a chief for a ride home.

There is always an option. Ensure everyone understands that stopping drinking and driving and alcohol-related incidents are a top priority. Have a plan, drink responsibly, and don't drink and drive, not even one!

The Chief asks:

"Did you know the largest cave on the base, the command cave, currently occupied by Commander Destroyer Squadron 15, is one of only three caves still in use?

"Between 1938 and 1945, more than 260 caves in more than 20 separate tunnel and cave networks were built all over the base. There are more than 27 kilometers of tunnels and caves that we know of scattered in a hodgepodge fashion around the base. Many more tunnels are scattered throughout the city of Yokosuka.

"During the war, these tunnels and caves provided areas in which work could be done in secrecy, safe from air attacks. A 500 bed hospital, a large electrical power generating facility and a midget submarine factory and warehouse were among the many facilities in caves around the base.

"More than 800 personnel actually lived in these caves during the war. Each naval base department was ordered to dig its own caves, which accounts for the lack of an overall organization to the cave and tunnel system.

"In 1992, a complete survey of all known caves was conducted, and all the caves except for three still in use were sealed up for safety reasons.

"If you didn't know, now you know." – MCC(SW/AW) Eric Hannah, CFAY Public Affairs