Personal growth leads to marriage growth

By Chaplain Allen Vaughan

Watching television on military installations overseas is a little different than what we are used to in the United States. Most of the programming is recorded in the states and then rebroadcast several days later on American Forces Network. Trying to guess what time and channel the season premier of "American Idol" or the next episode of "Survivor" is going to air is a great mystery.

Additionally, any live sports or news programs we want to watch are aired at odd hours, effected by the time difference between the United States and Japan. For example, "Monday Night Football" is on Tuesday, and the "Evening News" is on in the morning. When I was stationed in the Middle East and wanted to watch the Super Bowl, I had to get up at 2 a.m. It takes a little getting used to, but eventually you adjust to the odd schedule, and it takes some skilled channel surfing to locate the programs you want to watch in your free time.

Adjusting to your loved one's absence during deployment and long periods of separation also takes a little getting used to. But eventually you adjust to the odd phone calls at strange hours, the added responsibilities of parenting all by yourself and the general uncertainty of deployment schedules. Some very important qualities to develop are patience, a sense of humor and skill in juggling time and commitments just to make it through the day, through a deployment, or a whole tour here in Japan. Hopefully, it doesn't take too long before you begin to settle in and establish new routines.

While establishing routines at home during a spouse deployment can offer a certain amount of comfort and familiarity, you must also be watchful of boredom and sameness. For the spouse who has to stay behind, it may seem like life is the same, day in and day out. All the while, the active duty spouse appears to be broadening his or her horizons, taking on new responsibilities, advancing in rank and experiencing all sorts of new and exciting ports of call. Routine and sameness at home can lead to feelings of resentment that the active duty spouse has opportunities for growth and change, whereas the stay-at-home spouse is merely running in place.

So, deployment can be a time to start working on some of the personal goals you have set for yourself – things that you want to accomplish while your spouse is away. If you both have been through more than one deployment, then you know that the best way to make time seem to go by faster is by keeping busy. However, keeping busy always needs to be balanced with time for relaxation and self-care… a balancing act that is made even more difficult when you have children.

Being separated from your spouse is never easy, but there are ways to use the time apart to accomplish your goals, grow inwardly and strengthen yourself spiritually and personally. For instance, you may: pursue personal or professional studies; set a physical fitness goal to achieve before your significant other comes home; enroll in a college course; learn a new skill or hobby; or set aside 30 minutes each day for no other purpose than simply taking care of yourself.

Never forget that there are numerous resources available to you to help you accomplish your goals. All you need to do is seek out a chaplain, drop by the Fleet and Family Support Center, talk to your ombudsman, or to another spouse who has been around the Navy for a while. When your loved one comes home, you will discover that you have new experiences to share also. Opportunities for personal growth can then turn into opportunities for you to grow in your marriage, as well.

Afloat Training Group: Making a difference one country at a time

By ITC Ben Tomlin, ATGWP Public Affairs

La Union province Philippines was one of many areas severely damage by typhoon Parma in early October, leaving the area flooded and with very little drinking water available.

In coordination with Operation Handclasp, a Chief of Naval Operations directed program, Afloat Training Group Western Pacific (ATGWP) volunteer personnel coordinated shipments of pallets to the Philippines via Navy Air Logistics Office transportation.

The shipped supplies, costing nearly $23,000, consisted of numerous pallets of clothing and water containers destined for La Union province, Barangay Cadaclan and Bangar, San Fernando City, Philippines.

The water containers and food were specifically requested due to the current inhospitable living conditions left from the destruction of the typhoon. The focus of Operation Handclasp was to support the children left behind in the wake of the typhoon's disaster.

During their week temporarily assigned in the Philippines, seven ATGWP personnel spent time sorting clothing and food items for distribution to needy families and participated with the provincial National Police feeding program for Children's Appreciation Month. Numerous ATGWP personnel donated enough money to feed 600 needy families with rice and canned goods.

"I truly feel lucky to have participated in an event that helps people in their every-day lives and builds bonds between countries," said Chief Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Electrical) (SW) Adrian Lucina, who coordinated ATGWP humanitarian participation. "I will always remember this event."

This rare event is historically significant since support to Operation Handclasp is typically provided by afloat units. ATGWP has embraced this operation and pledged support for future military humanitarian aid efforts whenever possible.

Heads Up Yokosuka

Community Announcements

Child and Youth Programs (CYP) Fine Arts Exhibit – A CYP Fine Arts Exhibit will be held Dec. 4 from 5 to 6 p.m. at the Yokosuka Youth Club (formerly the Yokosuka Teen Center), building 1257. The exhibit will showcase a variety of artwork created by CYP members in ages 9 to 18 years. An art contest will also be held with a winner from each age group selected by a panel of judges for each project category. The entire CFAY community is invited to attend and see the artwork of our youth displayed in real art exhibit fashion. Contact the MWR CYP Coordinator Lee Leach at 241-4100 or by e-mail to lee.leach@fe.navy.mil for more information or to volunteer as a judge for the art contest.

The Yokosuka Semper Fi Society Toys for Tots Campaign – The Yokosuka Semper Fi Society is collecting new, unwrapped toys for children in local group homes, hospitals, single-parent military families in Yokosuka and orphanages in surrounding countries. Donation boxes are currently located at the Navy Exchange in Yokosuka, Ikego and Negishi. Fundraising barbecues and commemorative Toys for Tots coin sales will also be held this holiday season in the commissary red brick area. The last day to donate is Dec. 20. The Semper Fi Society's goal is to collect 2,000 toys. Contact Sgt. Ato Waithe at 243-6303 for more information.

Navy College Office (NCO) Tuition Assistance (TA) – NCO TA/Electronic TA (ETA) Briefs are conducted on the first and third Thursday of each month at 11 a.m. Command TA/ETA Briefs are provided for groups of eight or more at your location. Contact the Navy College Office at 243-8131 or by e-mail to navycollege_yokosuka@fe.navy.mil for more information.

Seahawk Community Announcements and Article/photo Submissions – Deadline for community announcements and article/photo submissions for the Seahawk is the Friday before the next Seahawk edition. E-mail your submissions to Seahawk-Umitaka@fe.navy.mil. Please include your telephone contact information in the body of the e-mail. Contact the Seahawk editor at Seahawk-Umitaka@fe.navy.mil or call 243-2567/3003 for specific submission requirements or for or more information.

Base Movie Theater Closure – The Benny Decker Theater will be closed from now to Dec. 2 for repairs and minor renovations. Call the MWR Entertainment Office at 243-5215 for more information.