

B E T W E E N *heaven* & EARTH



Cpl. Eric Longley, a chef with Headquarters and Service Company, Combat Assault Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, adds his chevron to a "Lucky Torii" Aug. 31 on the way to the top of Mount Fuji. He was one of more than 150 CAB Marines who climbed to the volcano's top for "endurance training." Photos by Cpl. Jenn Calaway

Combat Assault Battalion Marines conquer the climb

Cpl. Jenn Calaway

CATC CAMP FUJI PUBLIC AFFAIRS

"How can you be stationed in Japan and not climb Mount Fuji? This is why I joined the Marine Corps – to travel and do things like this," said Cpl. Eric Longley, a chef with Headquarters and Service Company, Combat Assault Battalion, 3rd Marine Division. "Climbing Mount Fuji should be on everyone's list of things to do once in their life."

Longley joined more than 150 other CAB Marines Aug. 31 as they made their way up the painstaking twelve-thousand foot ascent the local Marines

fondly refer to as "The Fuj."

The opportunity arose during CAB's yearly training evolution at Combined Arms Training Center, Camp Fuji, Japan.

"We wanted to give the Marines training that didn't just involve being out in the field working on combat operations," said Maj. Kevin A. Williams, the commanding officer of CAB. "We're already here at Camp Fuji, why wouldn't we give the Marines a crack at the mountain?"

When Williams refers to the climb as training, he's not kidding. The hike takes an average of three to four hours – and that's only one way.

"Between the steep

terrain, the lack of oxygen in the air up here, and the black volcanic ash we're walking through, this maybe isn't as fun as I thought it was going to be," joked Longley.

Williams said sentiments such as Longley's were exactly what he was aiming for among his Marines.

"There are hills in Afghanistan, there are mountains in combat zones and I want these Marines to look back on this experience when they're faced with those challenges and think to themselves: 'I climbed Mount Fuji...this is nothing,'" Williams said.

Longley said he's looking forward to bringing

his newly earned bragging rights back to Camp Schwab, Okinawa, and to his family and friends back in the states.

"How many people do you know back home who

have climbed that mountain? I don't know anyone (who's done it)," said Longley.

"Plus, that was way better than our regular battalion PT!"



Cpl. Eric Longley, a chef with Headquarters and Service Company, Combat Assault Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, admires the view from Station 5 Aug. 31 on his journey to the top of Mount Fuji.