

CAB Marines become kids again at orphanage

Cpl. Jenn Calaway

KATC CAMP FUJI PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Marines from the Schwab-based Combat Assault Battalion crowded the playground as they joined children from the Shin-sen Orphanage for a day of fun Sept. 14.

The 3rd Marine Division Marines and sailors made the visit to the orphanage at the end of almost a month of field operations at Combined Arms Training Center Camp Fuji.

"I feel like I'm back home with my brothers and sisters not on deployment training," said Lance Cpl. Terrell C. Hagins, an administration clerk with the battalion's Headquarters and Service Company.

The visit was a good opportunity for the Marines to break away from training to learn about local

culture, said Chief Warrant Officer Ivory Johnson, a communications officer with H&S Company.

"This is a training tool we can utilize to show we have a focus and a mission of humanitarian assistance, not just combat operations and war fighting," said Johnson. "It's part of our job to build schools, help infrastructure, and serve those who are in need. This is just one small way to do that."

Some Marines went the extra mile to make the visit memorable for the children at the orphanage, Johnson said.

"It's Sunday, this is the Marines day off, but they volunteered to come out here," he said. "Some even brought stuffed animals and candy; they spent their own money. They really stepped up to come out here and have fun with these kids,"



Combat Assault Battalion Marines from 3rd Marine Division interact with local children during their visit to the Shin-sen Orphanage Sept. 14 near the conclusion of an exercise at Camp Fuji. Photo by Cpl. Jenn Calaway

he said. "It shows me that you don't have to tell a Marine to be a good person, they just are."

The Marines and sailors ended the day with heartfelt goodbyes to their new friends

and lasting memories.

"I just picture them in bed trying to fall asleep and asking their (caretakers) 'when are the Marines coming back,'" Hagins said.

HMM-265 Dragons breathe .50 cal fire on offshore range

Lance Cpl. Joseph A. Cabrera

OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

The Dragons of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265, Marine Aircraft Group 36, took to the skies in their CH-46E Sea Knight helicopters Sept. 12 to conduct aerial gunner training for their crew chiefs.

The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing unit used .50-caliber machine guns during the exercise at a training range located several miles off the coast of Okinawa.

The purpose of the aerial gunner is to provide suppressive fire to allow the aircraft to land and take off in a combat environment and to provide cover fire for ground units engaged in combat, said Capt. Jason Potter, a pilot with HMM-265.

The training consists of five training sets. The first set involves one aircraft and aerial gunner engaging single targets while the second and third sets involve two helicopters with gunners engaging targets simultaneously.

The fourth and fifth sets involve two heli-

copters with gunners engaging moving target during day and night conditions requiring the use of night vision goggles and laser sights, said Sgt. Geoffrey M. Green, a weapons and tactics instructor for HMM-265.

Crew chiefs fire an average of 5,000 rounds during the course. They receive classes with the weapons including four to five hours of ground training. The ground training consists of servicing and maintaining the weapons and procedures for preflight preparations, Green said.

"The most valuable aspect is the experience — getting a person as familiar with that weapon as possible," Green said.

Knowing how to maintain control over the weapon ensures safety for the aircraft crew and the Marines on the ground, Green said.

The training was demanding and tested the gunners' ability to safely fire the weapon on target and position the ammo boxes to load quickly and continue firing.

"It is probably one of the more physically and mentally demanding things I've done so far as a crew chief. There is a lot of stuff you need to know about the weapon and the concepts of where you can and cannot shoot," said Cpl. Andres I. Salas, a crew chief with HMM-265.

The training served as Salas' initial certification as an aerial gunner and was annual refresher training for crew chiefs needing to renew their qualification, Green said.

"The biggest take-away for them — they can learn all the numbers, they can learn all about the systems, but until they actually get

