

Battalion dining tradition signals fun

By Esther Dacanay
Torii Editor

Nobody likes to get picked on, especially for wearing the wrong thing, speaking at the wrong time, or even showing up late.

Ridicule, in the name of good, clean fun, is what Soldiers of the 78th Signal Battalion had to face when breaking the rules of the mess during their annual *Dining In* tradition held Oct. 4 at the Camp Zama Community Club.

However, "clean" fun for these Soldiers is a matter of opinion. After all, penalties for breaking mess rules include taking a swig from "the grog," an affectionate term for a lethal concoction of alcoholic beverages served right from a toilet bowl. Not to worry, though, the toilet bowl is said to have never been used. There is also a non-alcoholic beverage option available.

Believe it or not, Soldiers subject themselves to this type of treatment in front of their peers as a means to help build comradery among the ranks in a unit.

"These types of events provide everybody in the unit an opportunity to witness uncommon behavior for that rank," said Capt. Jeffrey Marmito, 78th Sig. Bn. Headquarters & Headquarters Detachment commander. "It allows us to let our guards down for a little while to show others in the unit

our human side. It builds up the team morale and when we go back to work, we're back to being professionals again."

Other penalties for breaking the rules of the mess include performing ridiculous dance routines in front of the head table, singing songs, telling jokes, doing push ups or performing menial tasks to entertain the audience while dinner is served.

"Typically, Civilians aren't invited to the *Dining In*," said James Stamford, 78th Sig. Bn. deputy S-3. "It's sort of a special occasion for us to be here and be part of a military tradition."

After all the formalities of the *Dining In* were performed, including the entrance and exit of the colors, the Unknown Soldier table ceremony and cutting of the unit cake, all fun and games were briefly set aside when the guest speaker, Col. Bruce T. Crawford, commander of the 516th Signal Brigade at Ft. Shafter, Hi., was introduced.

"The comradery you see among the Soldiers here says something about this organization," said Crawford, who talked about Joint operations among all branches of the military. "Joint is not all about the technical aspects of our jobs. It's about values and it's about getting to know our people."



Photo by Kiyoshi Tokeshi

Soldiers from the 78th Signal Battalion do a little dance in front of the head table during the annual *Dining In* held Oct. 4 at the Camp Zama Community Club. Pictured from left to right are Capt. Kendrick De Vera, Capt. Jeffrey Marmito, 1st Sgt. David Ames and Capt. Brian Jones.

Take a shot at influenza!



Photo by Tetsuo Nakahara

Spc. Marlana Yazzie, a medical specialist at BG Crawford F. Sams U.S. Army Health Clinic, administers a flu shot to Maj. Gen. Elbert N. Perkins, commanding general of U.S. Army Japan, in the USARJ headquarters building at Camp Zama on Oct. 4.

The flu vaccine is now available from BG Crawford F. Sams U.S. Army Health Clinic. Flu vaccines and mists will be available for free Oct. 22 at the Camp Zama Community Club during the schedule provided below. The intent is to provide this free to all members of the Camp Zama community.

However, the final legal review is still pending for making the vaccines available at no charge to Family members of non-active duty Soldiers. For those Family members, bills will be held until the final decision is made. Bills will be rescinded if vaccinations are available for free, according to Sams USAHC officials.

For more information, call 263-4127.

The flu vaccine/mist schedule for Oct. 22 is as follows:

Soldiers: 6 – 10 a.m.

**First Responders, Fire Dept., MPs,
Emergency Essential Personnel:** 10 – 10:30 a.m.

Sams USAHC, CHPPM-PAC, DENTAC, JDVC:
10:30 – 11 a.m.

Department of Army Civilians at Camp Zama:
11 a.m. – noon

**Department of Army Civilians at Sagami Depot
and Sagamihara Family Housing Area:** 1 – 2 p.m.

Family members: 2 – 4:30 p.m.