

A knight's tale plays out in Sigonella

BY ANTHONY BURGOS

Sigonella bureau

NAVAL AIR STATION SIGONELLA, Sicily — Mother's Day at the Navy's base in Sicily looked like Halloween came early, or someone was casting for a Shakespeare play. What was really going on was a Renaissance tournament and a demonstration led by some of Sigonella's residents.

About 40 people, dressed in costumes and holding swords, came together for the Adrian Empire's Colony of Trinacria monthly meeting.

During the opening of the event, Lord Ivan Miklov, also known as Petty Officer 1st Class Tyler Turner, wished all mothers around the globe a fine Mother's Day. His subjects cheered a hearty "Huzzah!" as they prepared for the day's events.

Dressed in an embroidered purple vest, baggy white shirt and sporting ornate silver rings that covered every finger, Turner (Lord Ivan) described why he and his merry men and women gather each month. "We try to be historically accurate without reenacting historical events."

The members of Trinacria often turn to modern technology to find out about the past. "We look up a lot of things on the Internet and try to recreate events, clothing and weapons from the year 1150 to about the 1600s," said the colony's minister of war and jousting, Ronald the Norseman, also known as Steve Williams when he takes off the tights.

Turner said he and Williams have been involved in Renaissance fairs for several years. The colony's parent organization, Adrian Empire, is based in Phoenix, Ariz.



Photos by Burgos/Stars and Stripes

Tyler Turner, left, and his son, Tyler, battle each other in a rapiers demonstration Saturday at the Navy's base in Sicily. More than 40 members of the Adrian Empire's Colony of Trinacria came out to give onlookers a peek into the Renaissance period with a weapons tournament, arts and a costume display. The younger Tyler, known as Gustav Miklov in the match, gave his father, Lord Ivan Miklov, a run for his money.



Turner ties bells around daughter Christa's ankle during a Renaissance ceremony Saturday. Christa, known at the festival as Anna Miklov, was named as the page of her father. Bells were used to let a lord know when his page left his side.

Turner has been stationed in Sigonella for about a year and a half, and it's taken almost that long to set up his local group. "We had so many hoops to jump through," he said.

Getting the command to sign off on sword fighting was one of the biggest challenges.

Turner is a torpedoman at the base's weapons department, but he had to get base security to inspect the swords that would be used at the gatherings. "I showed the weapons to a patrolman and he had no idea what to look for. It was funny because I actually taught them a thing or two, but they were the ones who had to give me approval."

The base officially sanctioned the group in January, and since then they have recruited about 80 members into their ranks. "I think that it appeals mostly to people between 18 and 21," said Petty Officer 1st Class Robert Collett.

While in character, Collett goes by the name of Roland of Aquataine. He said the exhilaration of combat and the clash of steel at the gathering can't be matched. "But there are some older people here who are reliving their youth, too."

Even the meal at the end of the day stayed true to the period. Turkey legs and Cornish hens were being roasted. "We really get into it. It's only fun if you really get immersed," Tyler said.

The group will hold a ceremony next month to promote their leader to the rank of Knight. "I worked almost two years to get to this point," Turner said. The colony's ruler hopes to one day become a history teacher after his life in the Navy. But he also plans to continue taking part in Renaissance activities for a while.

"We believe that honor is the law and chivalry is the code to live by. It's fun to act this way for one weekend out of the month because the politeness and formalities we follow are something that's fallen by the wayside in our modern culture."

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N. Korea pulls troops, equipment from rail site

BY JIM LEA

Stars and Stripes

North Korea has pulled its troops and equipment from a camp opened last year to support work to restore the rail link between the two Koreas.

The move has prompted South Korean officials to speculate that

the project will not be completed this year as planned.

A Defense Ministry source said North Korea had begun some preliminary construction work north of the Demilitarized Zone last year before closing the camp in September.

South Korean officials had

thought the camp was closed in preparation for winter. But, he said, the camp has not reopened although South Korean soldiers have resumed site preparation work south of the buffer zone.

Last month, Unification Minister Lim Dong-won said if work on the North Korean side of the buffer zone is not resumed this month the rail link cannot be restored this year.

The North also has not signed an agreement setting up security arrangements for work to be done inside the DMZ.

That agreement must be signed before work inside the 2½-mile-wide DMZ can begin.

The Defense Ministry source speculated that the North Korean soldiers who will do the rail restoration work may have been pulled back to work on other construction projects.

Some 3,000 South Korean soldiers will handle the 12 miles of

work from Munsan, 25 miles north of Seoul to the Military Demarcation Line that marks the center of the DMZ.

North Korea has said 35,000 soldiers will do the 12 miles of work from the demarcation line to Kaesong.

The \$95 million project originally was scheduled to be completed by November. It will link South Korea with Sinuiju, near the Chinese border.

Eventually, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung says, it will provide rail access for both South and North to trade markets in Europe.

The DMZ work site is also littered with thousands of land mines, many left over from the Korean War. Those mines must be removed before construction work can begin.

Bae Gi-chul contributed to this report.

Ehime Maru move mullied

HONOLULU — Navy officials met with federal and state agencies Friday to review preliminary results of an environmental assessment on the impacts of moving the sunken Japanese fishing vessel Ehime Maru.

The training vessel sank on Feb. 9 nine miles off Diamond Head after it was struck by the Navy submarine USS Greeneville.

Nine people aboard the Ehime Maru, including four students, were killed.

The vessel lies in about 2,000 feet of water, and the Navy plans to move it to shallow waters where divers can search for the nine missing crew members believed to be entombed inside.

The Navy has to complete an environmental assessment before the vessel can be moved. Navy officials expect to complete the assessment next month.

The assessment will examine potential sites to which the ship can be moved.

From The Associated Press

Soldier injured when struck by streetcar

FRANKFURT, Germany — A 21st Theater Support Command soldier was on life support Sunday at Hoechst Hospital after getting struck by a streetcar Saturday night.

Sgt. Gerald Kissling of the 23rd Ordnance Company, 191st Ordnance Battalion, 29th Support Group, was listed in critical condition at the hospital.

Kissling was leaving a Frankfurt Galaxy football game when he was struck by the streetcar at around 11:30 p.m., according to a news release from the 21st TSC.

The incident is under investigation by German and U.S. military authorities.

From staff reports