

U.S. Marines get taste of Tahoe before deployment

By Kathryn Reed



American flags are apt to be in abundance today as 75 Marines arrive on the South Shore for a bit of mountain fun before being deployed overseas.

When the men and women took off first thing this morning from Hawthorne, Nev., they didn't know where they were headed.

"It's a random act of love," is how Gary Weigel described it.

His friends, Greg and Jeanne Burns of Gardnerville, have a son-in-law (Sgt. Steve Morris) in the 3rd Recon Battalion. The Burnses set up the Carson Valley fun, while Weigel used his connections at Lake Tahoe.

The idea was simply to provide the soldiers some fun after spending the last six weeks in mountain warfare training in California and Nevada. The soldiers' home bases are Okinawa and Arkansas.

Breakfast will be at Minden Park. Then the bus is scheduled to arrive at 10:30 this morning at the transit center near Stateline, where the public is welcome to greet the soldiers.

Andrew Strain, with Heavenly Mountain Resort, will welcome the men and women. (His father served in the Marines.)

Then the platoon will take a ride on Heavenly's gondola. Shopping is also on the agenda.

Then it's back on the bus to go to Zephyr Cove Resort for a barbecue. It's possible a local bagpipe group will serenade them on the shores of Lake Tahoe.

Now that their training is complete, these Marines have two weeks to spend with their families before being deployed to the Middle East.