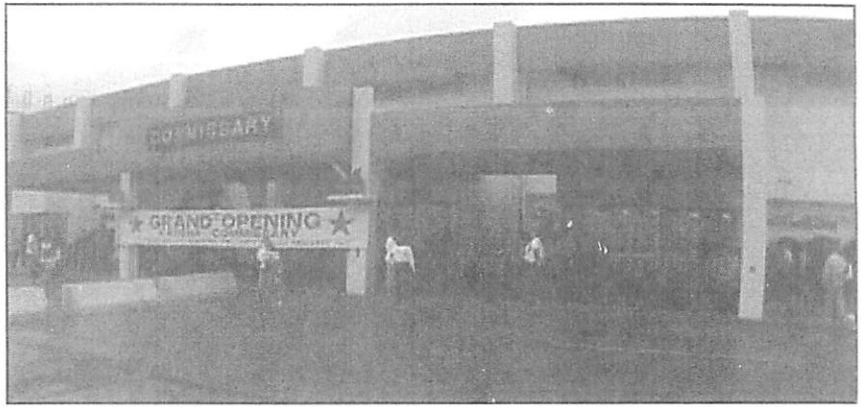


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## Commissary reopens on Kadena



Kadena's "new" commissary opened Feb. 24.

*"And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights."  
-- Genesis 7:12*

**September 15, 1997.** Actual on site construction activities begin at the Kadena Commissary.

**January 14, 1998, 1800 hours.** The Kadena Commissary closes its doors for 40 days and 40 nights for the interior renovation and refrigeration system changeout.

While we were not faced with a task quite as big as Noah's was, we did have our orders from above. Have all the work within the sales area of the Kadena Commissary complete within 40 days so the store can reopen, no exceptions.

We all know that at times Noah must have sat down and said "Lord, it just can't be done, I can't get this Ark completed in 40 days. Can't I get a time extension? Can't you hold off on that rain just a couple more weeks? I'm having a problem with material shipments from CONUS, and I'm having problems finding qualified laborers. What do you think? Maybe a couple more days? No? Alright, the ark will be ready in 40 days."

At times, we did the same thing. We begged the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) allow us a few more days accomplish the mission. But it was no use; DeCA would not budge from its original position. We could close the Kadena Commissary for 40 days and that was it. Besides, why should DeCA give us more time? It had never allowed a commissary to be closed while undergoing renovations before. But it bought into this concept during the planning phases, and now it was the Corps responsibility to pull this miracle off.

**February 23, 1998, 1800 hours.** A Pre-Grand Opening Preview is held for all unit commanders assigned to Kadena Air Base to view the results.

And what results they were. A new floor. A new ceiling. New lighting. All new refrigeration cases. New check out counters. New grocery shelves, fully stocked. A fresh coat of paint on the interior and exterior (at least the front side) of the building. And two of the four sets of new entry/exit doors installed. Nothing short of a miracle. Forty days to the hour, and the Kadena Air Base Commissary was ready to open.

But, it wasn't without prayers, as we did feel like Noah towards the end of the closure period. The project was actually going along very well, so the project manager for Kumagai Gumi, Pat McLean, decided to try to get at least three sides of the exterior of the building painted for the Grand Re-Opening. For the first 25 days of the closure period, we had fairly decent weather. As soon as the exterior scaffolding went up, the rains came down, and down, and down. We thought we would never see the end of it. The contractor, the Corps and DeCA were fortunate that the rain stopped long enough to allow us get the front of the store painted. The front scaffolding came down on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February.

While this is truly a success story, none of it could have occurred without the cooperation and the coordination of all of the various players involved. Immediately after closing, DeCA had three days to get the

groceries off the shelves, and the shelves removed from the store. Thanks go to the 18<sup>th</sup> Base Civil Engineers, who took the shelves for use in their new hardware store. Once the product was emptied from the store, the contractor went to work. At the same time, DeCA executed a contract to have the checkout counters removed and new ones installed. The two contractors worked side-by-side in harmony. On Feb. 15, the contractor gave DeCA approval to seal and wax the floor. This cleared the way for DeCA to install the new grocery shelves. While DeCA installed shelves, the contractor continued his activities on the interior and exterior of the building. On Feb. 18, representatives from the grocery industry arrived from the U.S. and began stocking the shelves. From the 18<sup>th</sup> thru the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, the commissary was bustling with activity. DeCA personnel, vendor personnel, contractor personnel, and of course, personnel from the Corps of Engineers, all working to ensure the final touches were complete so the commissary could re-open.

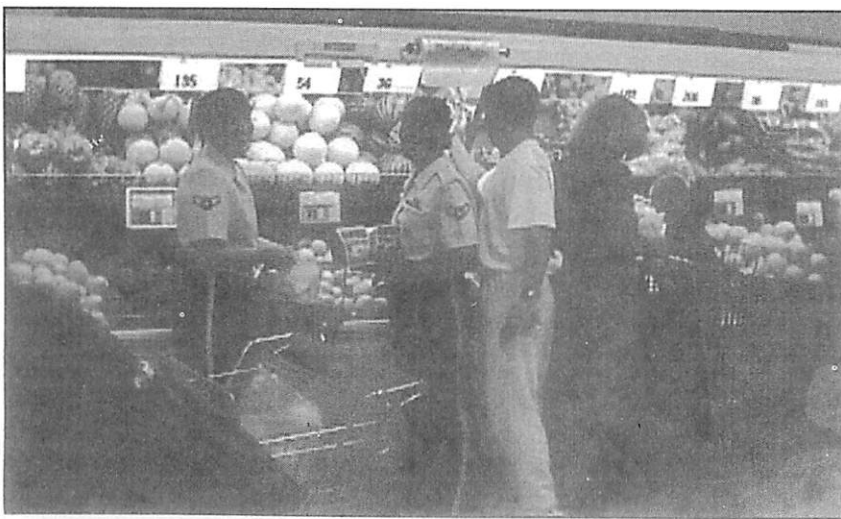


**February 24, 1998.** On the morning of Feb. 24, the Kadena Commissary officially reopened its doors for business. Brig. Gen. John R. Baker, 18<sup>th</sup> Wing commander, USAF; William Labay, DeCA zone manager; Ed Koerner, DeCA commissary officer for Kadena Air Base; Patrick McLean, project manager for Kumagai Gumi; Daryl S. Garner, project superintendent for American Engineering; Maj. William Windsor, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Okinawa, Japan; and James Bennett, project engineer, USACE, Okinawa, Japan, had the honor of cutting the ribbon officially reopening the commissary for business.

**Mission accomplished, the ark is afloat.** The goal now is to keep the ark floating while the remaining three commissaries on the island undergo renovation.

The renovation of the Kadena Commissary was a success due entirely to the partnership established for this project, and to the dedication of the all people involved. Without their efforts and contributions, the goal could not have been achieved. Special thanks go first to the workers for all the long hours they put in to make

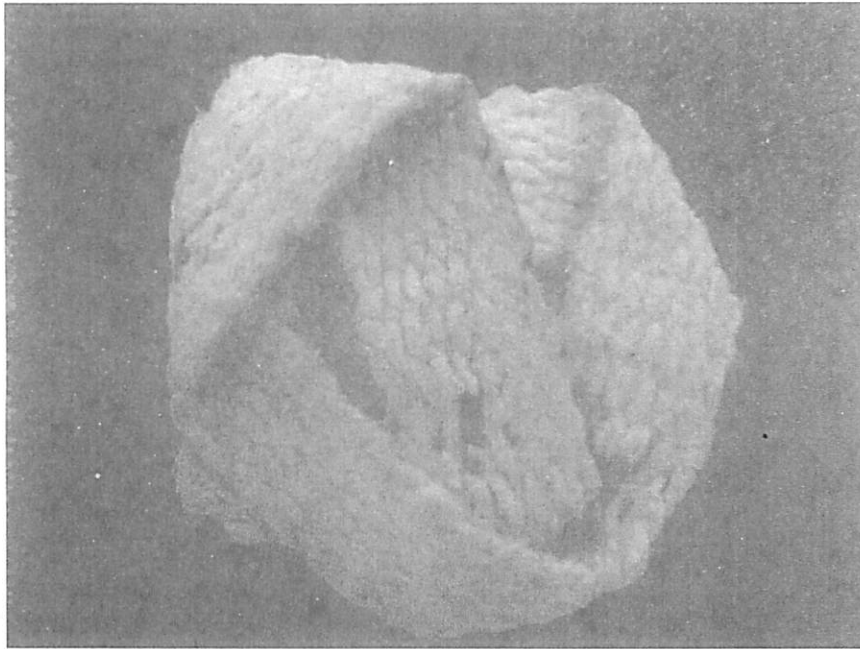
this a reality; to the prime contractor and his management staff, Kumagai Gumi Company, Ltd.; to the subcontractors and their management, American Engineering and Taishin Construction Companies; to DeCA for providing all the opportunity to excel; and finally to the Headquarters, Japan Engineer District for the support to make it a reality. -- *Jim Bennett, project engineer*



Customers make their selections in the "new" produce section.

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# Dust Busters...the rest of the Kadena Commissary story



Actual work on the Kadena Commissary began in mid-September 1997, with a 40-day closure set for January 15 - February 23, 1998. Everything was running smoothly. Then on November 20, a snag appeared.

A portion of the Kadena Commissary contract called for the removal of various sections of the air conditioning equipment, to include ductwork. The contract identified the flexible duct connections between the air handling unit and supply and the return air ducts as asbestos containing material (ACM).

On November 20, the contractor reported the discovery of additional ACM within the air conditioning ductwork.

During an investigation of the attic space above the bakery area, the contractor found two sections of ductwork that had been removed from the duct system and abandoned in the attic space. The two sections had a total of eight flanged joints. Closer inspection revealed that the gaskets between the flanged joints used to connect the duct sections were made of a woven asbestos material.

On November 26, the Japan Engineer District Okinawa Area Office (OAO) inspected the situation and confirmed the worst. Not only was there the ACM  
**Bamboo Bridge 6**

the contractor found, but all of the ductwork within the commissary had asbestos between each flange in the ductwork.

“One flange face had the ACM gasket in place. The other seven were missing the gasket, however, you could see fibers along the flange face. While inspecting the area, we found what appeared to be the ACM gasket from another joint lying on top of the ceiling insulation,” said Jim Bennett, OAO project engineer.

The removal of ACM from a building is not a difficult task; however, it is time consuming. In this case, most of the ductwork and ACM gaskets to be removed were insulated. This helped the situation. Unfortunately, they also discovered some left in place was not insulated and the ACM gasket extended beyond the edge of the flange, said Maj. William Windsor, OAO deputy chief.

For renovation work to occur adjacent to the duct and to protect workers from damaging the gasket causing it to release fibers, the flanges had to be encapsulated.

The main concern centered on the gasket material missing from the abandoned duct flanges. The potential for contamination of the ceiling system now existed. If this were the case, the time it would take to properly remove the ceiling system could drastically extend the closure period.

Extending the closure was a no-go. When the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) agreed to the Kadena Commissary closure, it vowed to hold the Corps to the closure period without any time extensions. An actual closure period less than or equal to 40 days would be considered a success. Anything greater, even an hour, a failure, said Windsor.

During the next two weeks, the Corps expended its efforts to determine the extent of any potential contamination.

The Corps had the contractor take air samples. The results came back negative.

“Based on this, we felt we had no airborne asbestos to contend with,” said Bennett.

Research indicated the facility was constructed in 1980 with remodeling above the bakery in 1991.

On December 15, the OAO began receiving proposals from the contractor for costs to perform the abatement.

While the costs to perform the work were reasonable, the contractor requested an additional 15 days to the closure period to properly remove or encapsulate the ACM. He and his asbestos abatement personnel believed the work required a controlled environment for both removal and encapsulation. This activity would affect the critical path of his construction activities.

“The contractor’s biggest concern was in the demolition of an existing ceiling system located between six and 12 inches below the ductwork that had exposed flanges with ACM. He felt that the ACM would become friable during his demo work. We felt that all the asbestos could be either encapsulated in place, or removed by a glove bag method. The contractor did not agree,” said Bennett.

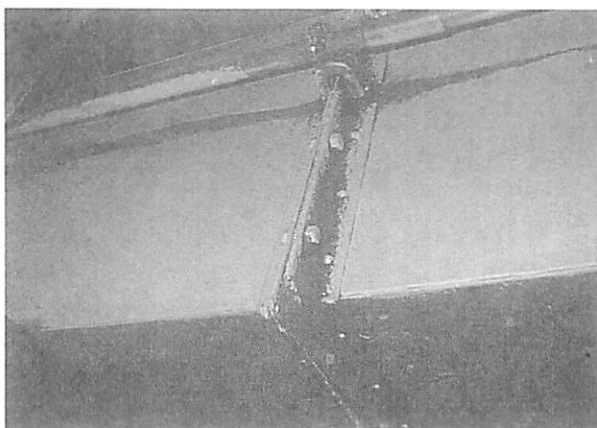
Over the next several weeks, the parties reached a standoff. At one point, the contractor suggested that if the Corps couldn’t extend the closure time, it could remove or encapsulate the ACM.

The Corps held that the ACM was in a non-friable condition and that the contractor did not need a controlled environment, but did need worker protection, Karl Anderson, JED’s safety and occupational health officer said. He classified the work as an Occupational Safety and Health Administration Class IV debris cleanup.

On January 9, the Kadena Air Base Lab tested

samples of dust and debris collected the previous night from the top of the ceiling insulation system. Results indicated no apparent widespread contamination. The OAO notified the contractor of the results but he still wouldn’t budge from his position.

With the January 15 closure date just around the corner, Anderson and the OAO decided to take up the contractor’s suggestion.



Why not? Corps personnel had the right training and it would be a good chance to put that training to use.

To solve the problem, the “Dust Busters” — Masayasu Saito, Mary Karen Scullion, Jim Bennett and Karl Anderson — mobilized on the evenings of January 9 and 10 to remove any potential ceiling contamination and to encapsulate the

ACM and duct flanges

Bennett and Anderson surveyed the area once more and reconfirmed no widespread contamination.

During the day January 9, Anderson and Bennett bought additional equipment needed for the operation.

That night and the next, after donning disposable suits, hard hats, 3M half-face respirators with HEPA filters and fall protection, the group went to work.

The operation included:

- \* The removal and abatement of about 400 square feet of ceiling insulation from the area adjacent to the bakery that could have contained asbestos fibers

- \* Encapsulation of the two sections of abandoned ductwork .

- \* Encapsulation of about 40 duct flanges within the sales area that had exposed ACM gaskets.

- \* Encapsulation of about 87 flanges in the mechanical rooms.

On January 12, the Corps advised the contractor that the ACM in the areas that immediately impacted his work activities had been removed or encapsulated.

The contractor inspected the “Dust Busters” work and agreed that the ACM would no longer cause a problem with his construction activities.

The action of the Dust Busters plus John Gerlach, Shigeru Yoshimoto, Tsutomu Nakasone, Isao Kaneshiro and Noboru Itokazu paved the way for a successful renovation. It also saved DeCA almost \$ 40 thousand, not bad for two nights’ work.