

# THE BLUE DIAMOND

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February 11, 2011

## Blue Diamond turns 70



Members of the 1st Marine Division Association salute during the marching on of the colors during a morning colors ceremony in front of the 1st Marine Division's headquarters building, Feb. 3. The colors ceremony was part of the division's 70th anniversary celebrations. Events in recognition of the anniversary were held Feb. 1-3.

*Story and photos by Cpl. Zachary Nola*

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Marines, sailors, veterans, friends and family joined together to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the 1st Marine Division during a morning colors ceremony in front of the division's headquarters Feb. 3.

The 1st Marine Division, the oldest, largest, and most decorated division in the Marine Corps, was activated aboard the battleship Texas Feb. 1, 1941.

The Blue Diamond, which has been awarded nine Presidential Unit Citations, has played major roles in World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The division's headquarters element is currently deployed to Afghanistan, and its subordinate units continue to support Operation Enduring Freedom and marine expeditionary units as the ground combat element of the I Marine Expeditionary Force.

In honor of this year's anniversary, the division hosted veteran Marines and sailors from the 1st Marine Division Association.

Association members began anniversary events Feb. 1, with a memorial service in honor of those Marines and sail-

ors, from the division, who fought at the Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War.

Once the service concluded, association members, including some members who fought at the "Frozen Chosin," were treated to exhibits and displays throughout Camp Pendleton.

These same members, as well as current Marines and sailors of the division, friends and

time to address those veterans, as well as veterans of other foreign wars, and thanked them for their contribution to the Blue Diamond.

"Whether you were a private, a buck sergeant or a sergeant major, you

*(COLORS, page 5)*

## MoH recipient bonds with 3/5



Photo by Cpl. Paul Basciano

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Medal of Honor recipient and retired Col. Jay Vargas shakes the hand of a 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment Marine during his visit with the battalion's remain behind element. Vargas came to the San Mateo area of Camp Pendleton to visit 3/5, Jan. 27. Vargas was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1970 for his conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty.

# “Thundering Third” welcomes new commander

Story and photos by Cpl. Zachary Nola

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Lt. Col. Benjamin T. Watson, relinquished command of 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, to Lt. Col. Fridrik Fridriksson, during a change of command ceremony at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 4.

Watson, and the rest of the “Thundering Third,” returned in November from a seven-month deployment to Garmsir District, Helmand province, Afghanistan. The unit conducted counterinsurgency operations in support of Afghan national security forces and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan from April-November 2010.

Before the unit’s deployment to Afghanistan, Watson led the battalion into the Western Pacific as a battalion landing team element for the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Fridriksson joined the 1st Marine Division after receiving his commission and served with 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion.

He returned to 1st Marine Division in 2009, and served as the Headquarters Battalion executive officer and assistant operations officer for Regimental Combat Team 1.

After the customary sequence of events which included the marching on of the colors, national anthem and publication of orders, both men took time to address those in attendance.

Watson spoke first and was quick to thank the Marines and sailors of the battalion.

“It’s been an incredible honor, and if I could sum it up in one word, it would be humbling; serving with some of America’s finest young



Lt. Col. Benjamin T. Watson, the former battalion commander of 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, after relinquishing command to Lt. Col. Fridrik Fridriksson, the battalion’s new commander, during a change-of-command ceremony at Camp Pendleton’s Camp Horno, Feb. 4. Fridriksson reported for duty to the 1st Marine Division in 2009 and served as the Headquarters Battalion executive officer and assistant operations officer for Regimental Combat Team – 1. Watson assumed command of 3/1 in January 2008, deploying with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

men,” said Watson, from Syracuse, N.Y. “It’s certainly been the most humbling experience of my 20 years. My men are my heroes.”

Fridriksson, who began his Marine Corps career as an enlisted Marine with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, also recognized the Marines and sailors of the battalion during his address.

“To stand here with these men of the battalion is the absolute highlight of my career,” said Fridriksson, from Alaska.

Fridriksson is a graduate of several U.S. Army courses and the Marine Corps Command and Staff College. He is married with two children.



Lt. Col. Benjamin T. Watson, the former battalion commander of 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, relinquishes the battalion’s colors to Lt. Col. Fridrik Fridriksson, the battalion’s new commander, during a change-of-command ceremony at Camp Pendleton’s Camp Horno, Feb. 4. Fridriksson reported for duty to the 1st Marine Division in 2009 and served as the Headquarters Battalion executive officer and assistant operations officer for Regimental Combat Team – 1.



Lt. Col. Fridrik Fridriksson, the battalion commander of 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, sits next to Lt. Col. Benjamin T. Watson, the former battalion commander of 3/1, during a change-of-command ceremony at Camp Pendleton’s Camp Horno, Feb. 4. Fridriksson reported for duty to the 1st Marine Division in 2009 and served as the Headquarters Battalion executive officer and assistant operations officer for Regimental Combat Team – 1.

COMBAT OUTPOST CASTLE, Afghanistan – Petty Officer 3rd Class Dylan Morris, a corpsman with Delta Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Forward), gives candy to local children during a patrol through the area, Jan. 27.

Morris, a 25-year-old native of Dayton, Ohio, befriends the children of the community in an effort to win the support and trust of the villagers.



# Dragoon Devil Doc diagnoses a brighter future for Afghanistan

Story and photos by Cpl. Ned Johnson

COMBAT OUTPOST CASTLE, Afghanistan— Navy corpsmen are some of the most respected men on the battlefield in today’s fight against the Taliban.

They carry an extra 25 pounds of medical equipment that can save the lives of their Marine brothers in an emergency situation. Their unique mission of counter-

insurgency requires them to do so much more, and one corpsman with 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Forward) does all that he can.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Dylan Morris is a corpsman and jack of all trades deployed to southern Helmand province, Afghanistan.

Morris, a 25-year-old native of Dayton, Ohio, is the corpsman for the Police Mentoring Team assigned to Del-

ta Company, who calls themselves the Dragoons, but Morris says this deployment is about more than just his medical skills.

“I do all sorts of different things out here and even though I am a ‘doc’ I have to be technically sound,” Morris said.

Morris talks to the locals every chance he gets on patrol to see if there is

*(DOC, page 5)*

COMBAT OUTPOST CASTLE, Afghanistan— Petty Officer 3rd Class Dylan Morris, a corpsman with Delta Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Forward), talks on the radio during a patrol through the local area, Jan. 27.

Morris, a 25-year-old native of Dayton, Ohio, understands he must be tactically sound, even as a ‘doc,’ as he reminds the patrol to stay properly dispersed.



COMBAT OUTPOST CASTLE, Afghanistan— Petty Officer 3rd Class Dylan Morris, a corpsman with Delta Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Forward), talks to a local Afghan man during a patrol just outside Combat Outpost Castle, Jan. 27. Morris, a 25-year-old native of Dayton, Ohio, talked to the man about the project he was working on and how the coalition forces could help.



# 1st Marine Division's 70th Anniversary: a celebration to remember 70 years of warfighting history, while still forging it today

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan— Sgt. Steven Sabo, a bandsman and armory security Marine, with Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Forward), performs during the 70th anniversary ceremony, Feb. 1. Sabo, a trombone player, along with other bandsmen, played their rendition of "When the Saints Go Marching In," "Brooklyn" and "Chameleon" and closed the ceremony with "Waltzing Matilda," "Anchors Away" and the "Marines Hymn." Bandsmen perform security roles when deployed and not needed for ceremonial duties.



Photo by LCpl. Glen Santy



Photo by Cpl. Zachary Nola

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.— A memorial stands in honor of those Marines and sailors who fought at the Chosin Reservoir during the commencement of the Chosin Memorial service outside Camp Pendleton's South Mesa Club, Feb. 1. The memorial service was held before the opening ceremony of the 1st Marine Division's 70th Anniversary. Events in recognition of the anniversary are being held Feb. 1-3.



CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.— Sgt. Justin Scrivner, an instructor with 1st Marine Division schools, shows Thomas England, a 1st Marine Division Association member and Korean War Veteran, a display of munitions currently used by Marines and sailors at Camp Pendleton's Camp Margarita, Feb. 2.

Photo by Cpl. Zachary Nola



Photo by Pfc. Glen Santy

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan— Brig. Gen. Joseph L. Osterman, commanding general, 1st Marine Division (Forward) and Sgt. Maj. Philip Fascetti, 1st Marine Division (Forward) sergeant major cut the birthday cake during the 70th anniversary of the Blue Diamond, Feb. 1. A Marine from each regimental combat team and division unit in theater joined Osterman and Fascetti for the first piece of cake.



Photo by Cpl. Paul Torres

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.— Maj. Gen. Michael R. Regner, commanding general, 1st Marine Division, cuts the cake at the 1st Marine Division 70th anniversary dinner ceremony at the South Mesa Club on Camp Pendleton, Jan. 3. The ceremony paid tribute to the veterans of the Korean war.

## COLORS

*cont. from page 1*

set a path for the division and for the NCOs of the division,” said Sammartino.

On the same day the division’s rear element was kicking off its celebrations Feb. 1, the unit’s forward element held a ceremony at Camp Leatherneck in Afghanistan.

More than 6,000 Marines and sailors are currently serving with 1st Marine Division (Forward), and forward commanding general, Brig. Gen. Joseph L. Osterman, took time during that celebration to recognize them.

“Over this past year we’ve gone from a situation where we were reacting to the enemy, to where we are now the ambusher and the enemy fears every day we are on the battlefield,” said Osterman. “I just want to say happy birthday Marines and sailors. You’ve added a wonderful year to the division and its accomplishments. It is one that will go down in history as a year that was very challenging yet very successful.”

## DOC

*cont. from page 3*

some way he can help them. “I ask them if they have any medical issues or I let them know they are my friend,” he said.

With his “can do” attitude, Morris has helped at least one Afghan person on every patrol he has been on, which he considers to be his claim to fame. He also understands clearly, that his job and the survivability of his men, requires more than just seeing patients in Helmand province.

His patrolling skills must be on the level with his fellow Marines. He understands that one wrong step by himself or one of his Devil Dogs, could be their last. Morris recalled one lucky instance, that has helped to make him keener of every movement he makes.



CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.— Members of the 1st Marine Division color guard stand at attention after marching on of the colors during a morning colors ceremony in front of the 1st Marine Division’s headquarters building Feb. 3. The colors ceremony was part of the division’s 70th anniversary celebrations.



COMBAT OUTPOST CASTLE, Afghanistan— Petty Officer 3rd Class Dylan Morris, a corpsman with Delta Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Forward), takes an Afghan man’s blood pressure during a patrol through the local area, Jan. 27. Morris, a 25-year-old native of Dayton, Ohio, says he has given medical treatment to at least one local Afghan during every patrol he has been on.

“I was at most 10 to 15 meters when a remote-controlled improvised explosive device went off” Morris said. “The only reason I am alive is because they buried it on the wrong side of a berm.”

When not on patrols, Morris is helping give classes to locals and schoolchildren about hygiene and basic health and attending to the Afghan Uniform Police.

While his fellow corpsmen love the different stories he has to tell, he also has his normal duties.

As corpsman for the PMT, Morris is responsible for the health and emergency care of over 20 men. Morris says he will never forget to take care of his Marines even as new missions arise.

He hopes to continue helping the locals and gaining experience. He prides himself on his positive outlook. The proof of this? Any day you catch him, he will always have a smile on his face.

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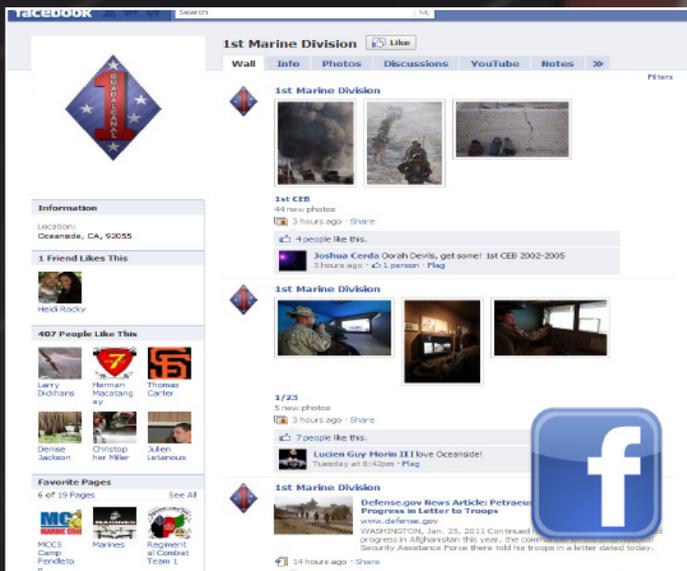
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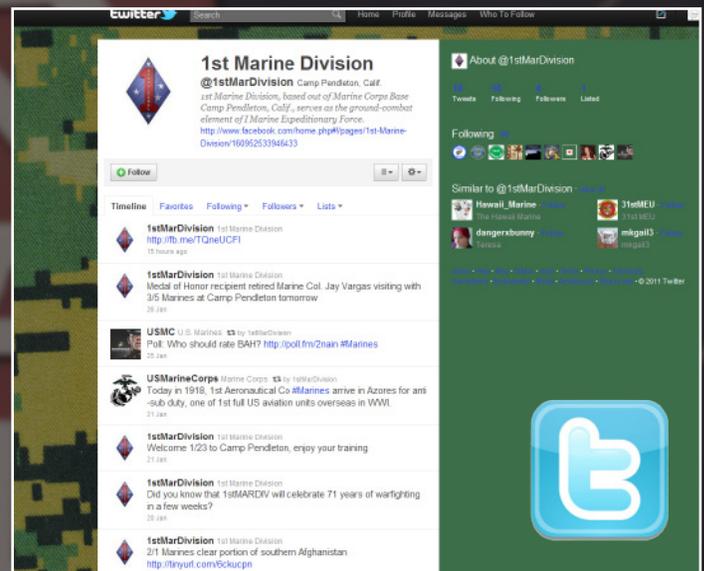
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FROM THE EVERYDAY STRESSORS OF LIFE TO THE STRESSORS RELATED TO COMBAT, STRESS CAN AFFECT EVEN THE STRONGEST MARINE. THE DSTRESS LINE WAS DEVELOPED BY THE MARINE CORPS TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL, ANONYMOUS COUNSELING FOR MARINES, THEIR FAMILIES AND LOVED ONES WHEN IT'S NEEDED MOST.

- FOR ANY STRESS RELATED ISSUES INCLUDING WORK, PERSONAL, RELATIONSHIP, FINANCIAL AND FAMILY
- AVAILABLE 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK
- ANONYMOUS CONSELING PROVIDED BY TRAINED PROFESSIONALS
- EXCLUSIVELY FOR MARINES, THEIR FAMILIES AND LOVED ONES.



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