



The Convoy

May 27, 2011

Delivering quality information on the 1st Marine Logistics Group

Volume 2 Issue 51

Memorial service honors fallen comrade



More than 200 family members, friends and fellow service members mourned Lance Cpl. Victor Zepeda during his memorial service on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., May 20. Zepeda, a mechanic with 1st Platoon, Motor Transport Maintenance Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group, was killed in a motor vehicle accident, May 11, while home in San Antonio reuniting with loved ones and meeting his newborn son after a 7-month deployment. Photo by Sgt. Shannon McMillan

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EOD Marines awarded for valor

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – After recently returning from a deployment to Afghanistan, Marines with 1st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, received awards for valor here, May 18.

Gunnery Sgt. Benjamin Lepping, Gunnery Sgt. Travis Bouten and Staff Sgt. Matthew Jackson were awarded Bronze Star Medals with the combat distinguishing device.

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Five Marines with 1st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company stand at the position of attention during an awards ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., May 18.

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CLB-X provides logistical support

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Kenneth Jasik
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. – Exercise Urban Thunder, a training exercise designed to promote core competencies utilizing combined arms between 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division and 1st Tank Battalion, 1st MarDiv, was logistically possible thanks to the Marines and sailors of Combat Logistics Battalion X, 1st Marine Logistics Group.

During the exercise, which ran from May 8-18, the logistics Marines and sailors provided overflow maintenance support, transported and distributed water, supplied food and provided helicopter support teams in order to air-lift supplies to the training sites.

“I like helping these guys out,” said Pfc. Tyler J. Pressley, supply clerk, CLB-X, 1st MLG. “As long as our mission is accomplished and they can train, we’re happy.”

While their first priority was to

support Exercise Urban Thunder, Marines and sailors supporting the training evolution used the opportunity to become better logisticians themselves.

“Luckily for us, their support is our training,” said Maj. Jason A. Gaddy, operations officer, CLB-X, 1st MLG, who added that the Marines and sailors supporting the mission were able to refine their standard operating procedures and rehearse possible scenarios while interacting with other units.

The Marines train as they provide real-life support because they know their job is important both while in the United States and overseas in a combat environment.

“If they don’t get the things they need, the division guys can’t train,” said Pressley, 20, West Valley City, Utah. “They have to depend on us, and most of the units are glad we’re helping them out.”

The 1st MLG Marines have shown a level of skill that has impressed the Marines they’ve been supporting, said Gaddy.

“I’ve heard nothing but good

things from the [7th Marines] regimental commander, their [admin] shop and the units we’re supporting,” said Gaddy, 40, from Ona, W. Va.

The support, combined with the training, has made the unit more confident in their capabilities and has set a precedent to how they will work in the future.

“The Marines have been performing extremely well,” said Gaddy. “I’m very proud of them.”



Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion X, 1st Marine Logistics Group, drive a Logistics Vehicle System Replacement .



Landing support specialists with Combat Logistics Battalion X, 1st Marine Logistics Group, prepare to attach a Humvee to a CH-53E helicopter at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., May 14.

HAPPENINGS

Semper Ride Dirt Days

Active duty off-road motorcycle and quad riders are invited to attend the Semper Ride Dirt Days event June 17 and 18 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. The event will take place at Thunder Horse Ranch, located off Interstate 8 at exit 54. The event will feature two motocross tracks and two trail loops. Motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle training will be given by professional riders Ronnie Renner, Tommy Clowers and Chris Wheeler. Classes include a motorcycle cornering and jumping clinic, a Motorcycle Safety Foundation dirt bike school and a Specialty Vehicle Institute of America ATV course. Call 760-725-1154 to sign up.

Motorcycle Safety Courses

An Advanced Riders Course will be held weekly on Wednesday from 7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. A Basic Riders Course will be held weekly, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Both courses will take place at Bldg. 200071. For more information, call Kevin Frantum at (760) 725-2897.

Fort Rosecrans Memorial Day

The Fort Rosecrans Memorial Day celebration is one of San Diego’s largest and most celebrated memorials dedicated to our fighting men and women. The Memorial Day service and Day of Remembrance ceremony will be held at the Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, in Point Loma, Calif., May 30 at 8:45 a.m.

Greenwood Memorial Park

Greenwood Memorial Park will hold a Memorial Day service May 30 at 1:30 p.m. at the cemetery, 4300 Imperial Avenue in San Diego, in partnership with the American Legion San Diego Post 6. The event is free and open to the public.

Navy Marine Corps Relief Society

The NMCRS is in need of volunteers to work in their thrift shop. Participants will help collect/sort donated items, and arrange sales area. For more information, call (760) 725-5337.



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Marine honored for dedication, sacrifice

Story and photos by
Sgt. Shannon E. McMillan
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PEDLETON, Calif. – A 21-gun salute was performed here, May 20, for a fallen service member of 1st Maintenance Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group.

More than 200 family members, friends and fellow service members mourned Lance Cpl. Victor Zepeda, a mechanic with Combat Logistics Regiment 15, who was killed in a motor vehicle accident, May 11, while home in San Antonio. He was reuniting with loved ones and meeting his newborn son after completing a 7-month tour in Afghanistan.

“It was a great tribute to the life of Lance Cpl. Victor Zepeda,” said Staff Sgt. Richard Barnhurst, maintenance chief, 1st Platoon, Motor Transport Maintenance Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion, CLR-15, 1st MLG.

Zepeda graduated South San High School in 2006 and joined the Marine Corps May 11, 2009. He received the National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Sea Service Deployment ribbon and the International Security Assistance Force Medal.

He is survived by his loving wife, Phylicia Zepeda, daughter, Juliette Zepeda, son, Jordan Zepeda, and parents Cesar and Anita Zepeda.

“His family and children will always know that their dad was a hero who answered his nation’s call and valiantly served to give them a better life. He fought the good fight,” said Lt. Col. Kevin Stewart, battalion commander, 1st Maintenance Bn., CLR-15, 1st MLG.

“My friend Victor Paul Zepeda is a person that no one would ever forget,” said Cpl. Gilbert Alexandre, mechanic, MTM Co., 1st Maintenance Bn. “Mostly because he enjoyed what he did as a Marine, a loving father, and a husband.”

During the memorial, Alexandre spoke of fond memories while deployed with Zepeda.

“When we would work long



Marines with 1st Platoon, Motor Transport Maintenance Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group, hold flowers and a shadow box during the memorial for Lance Cpl. Victor Zepeda on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, May 20. Zepeda, mechanic, 1st Platoon, Motor Transport Maintenance Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group, was killed May 11 in a motor vehicle accident while home in San Antonio reuniting with loved ones and meeting his newborn son. Zepeda had recently returned from a 7-month tour in Afghanistan.



Lance Cpl. Victor Zepeda

hours in Afghanistan, he wouldn’t look on the down side of it, but as a challenge to get a truck out before I did,” said Alexandre, 22, from Delray Beach, Fla. “He strived to be the best in his field of expertise.”

Not only was Zepeda remembered as a good Marine, but his fellow colleagues remember him as a great friend.

“I want to thank Victor for being a great friend, a Marine, a family man, and a great person all around,” said Alexandre. “I will never forget the positive impact that he had on my life. That’s why I will truly miss him.”



A Marine pays his final respects in front of a memorial display of an upturned rifle, combat boots and helmet during a memorial service for Lance Cpl. Victor Zepeda on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, May 20. ‘His family and children will always know that their dad was a hero who answered his nation’s call and valiantly served to give them a better life. He fought the good fight,’ said Lt. Col. Kevin Stewart, battalion commander, 1st Maintenance Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group.



- GIVE HIM ONE! - A SALUTE TO OUR FALLEN

Story by
Sgt. Shannon E. McMillan
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.

– Memorial Day is a federal holiday observed on the last Monday in May, dedicated to honoring those who have given their lives for our country. It was formerly known as Decoration Day and was originally conceived as a day to decorate the graves of those who lost their lives during the Civil War.

The growth of the holiday was largely due to a friendship between Army Maj. Gen. John Murray, a civil war veteran from Waterloo, N.Y., and Maj. Gen. John A. Logan, who helped bring attention to the event nationwide.

On May 5, 1868, Logan, the commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization for Union Civil War veterans, issued a proclamation: ‘Decoration Day’ should be observed nationwide.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs Web site, Maj. Gen. Logan declared that ‘Decoration Day’ should be observed on May 30 because flowers would be in bloom all over the country.

The first large observance took



Photo by Sgt. Rocco Defilipis

A Marine walks through the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery following a Memorial Day service commemorating the 93rd anniversary of the Battle of Belleau Wood. This year’s ceremony marks the first time in 93 years that the Marines of the 5th and 6th Marine Regiments have returned to the battlefield together to honor their fallen comrades. More than 1,800 Marines from the 5th and 6th Regiments lost their lives in the 21-day battle that stopped the last German offensive in 1918.

place May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

By the end of the 19th century, Memorial Day ceremonies were being held, May 30, throughout the nation. State legislatures

passed proclamations designating the day, and the Army and Navy adopted regulations for proper observance at their facilities, according to the Web site.

After War World I, the day was expanded to honor those who have died in all American wars. In 1971, Memorial Day was declared a national holiday by Congress.

Across the United States, veterans’ final resting places are decorated with flowers and American flags by loved ones and mourners as a thank you for their service, dedication and commitment.

The National Moment of Remembrance encourages all Americans to pause wherever they are at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day for a minute of silence to remember and honor those who have died in service to the nation.

“We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance... Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic.”

Army Maj. Gen. John A. Logan
commander-in-chief
Grand Army of the Republic

How to observe:

Visit cemeteries and place flags or flowers on the graves of fallen heroes.

Visit memorials

Fly the U.S. flag and ‘POW/MIA’ flag

Participate in a ‘National Moment of Remembrance’ for one minute at 3 p.m. local time.

Valor

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According to the citation, on August 31, 2010, Lepping, 30, from Louisville, Ky., serving as an explosive ordnance team leader with 1st EOD Co., 1st MLG (Forward), encountered a trip-wire improvised explosive device. With complete disregard for his own safety, Lepping disarmed the device using hands-on procedures under the cover of darkness.

"I had to do what I had to do," said Lepping, EOD team leader, 1st EOD Co. "Even if it meant putting my life in danger to save the other Marines."

Bouten, 28, from Spokane, Wash., who at the time was a staff sergeant serving with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 2, 1st Marine Division (Forward), as an EOD team leader, was providing EOD support, July 17, 2010, to a company of engineers who were building a road in a heavily-vegetated area. While attempting to resupply the engineers, a vehicle struck a roadside bomb less than 50 meters away from him. He began sweeping for secondary explosives around the downed vehicle when an IED detonated less than 30 meters from his position, also injuring a Marine. He and his sweep team began searching for additional IEDs and quickly spotted a second pull string aimed at a squad of Marines. Without regard for his own safety, he dropped an explosive charge to detonate the IED before the enemy could initiate it. Within minutes, he spotted a third pull string IED aimed at his sweep team. The string to this explosive was actively being pulled when Bouten quickly grabbed and cut the string with his knife.

"I just reacted to the situation how any of us would," said Bouten, EOD team leader, 1st EOD Co. "With lives in danger, we had to make sure we found and disarmed the IEDs before anyone else was injured."

The last Bronze Star recipient, Staff Sgt. Matthew Jackson, 31, from Calabasas, Calif., who at the time was a sergeant with 3rd

Battalion, 1st Marines, RCT-7, 1st MarDiv (FWD), as an EOD team leader, received the award for displaying tremendous technical proficiency, mental agility and physical determination in facilitating the battalion's ability to combat the diverse enemy IED network and challenging counterinsurgency environment. As the battalion's lead EOD technician, he constantly led clearing efforts from the front, traveling from one position to another and systematically neutralized more than 100 IEDs, production facilities and weapons caches.

"He was the first sergeant I ever put as a team leader," said Maj. James Shelstad, company commander, 1st EOD Co., 7th ESB, CLR-1, 1st MLG. "With his tremendous effort, he showed that he can hold that billet and perform well."

Because of Jackson's work ethic and proficiency, he was named a team leader while he was deployed to Afghanistan.

"The [commanding officer] trusted me as a team leader, so I went out and did my job well to show I was capable of the position," said Jackson, EOD team leader, 1st EOD Co.

The two Purple Heart Medal recipients were Staff Sgt. Mario Maldonado, EOD technician, 1st EOD Co., and Sgt. Robert Conlon, EOD technician, 1st EOD Co. The two Purple Heart Medals were awarded to the EOD technicians for wounds received in Afghanistan.

Maldonado, 28, from Chandler, Ariz., was injured by an IED blast, February 5, 2011. Conlon, 30, from Rockaway, N.J., suffered a gunshot wound to the arm December 6, 2010. Each Marine made a full recovery and finished their tour.

"Staff Sgt. Maldonado got hit and came back; he says he's about 99 percent right now, and he will be coming back out with us [on the next deployment]. Sgt. Conlon is amazing, he got shot through the arm, rehabbed and went back out with recon on the rest of the deployment," said Shelstad, 43, from Canby, Ore. "It just goes to show you how dedicated these Marines are."



Gunnery Sgt. Benjamin Lepping



Staff Sgt. Matthew Jackson



Sgt. Robert Conlon



Staff Sgt. Mario Maldonado



Gunnery Sgt. Travis Bouten

Sailors set up field dental station

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Kenneth Jasik
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER, Calif. – For Marines and sailors training in the desert here, oral care is not too far away.

Thanks to a few sailors with 1st Marine Logistics Group, dental exams can be performed from a small dental office comprised of a tent located near the training site where Marines with 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division are conducting Exercise Urban Thunder.

The Dental office provides exams and cleanings to the personnel of 7th Marines and 1st Tank Battalion, 1st MarDiv.

“Offering our services to these Marines makes them very happy to get service right in their back yard while they’re out here,” said Navy Lt. Stephen M. Wade, dental officer, Combat Logistics Battalion X, 1st MLG. “We’ve been open from 0800 to 2100 so we can cater to everyone.”

Despite the desert setting, the mobile dental office provides the same quality services that Marines would find in a less austere environment.

“We’re able to provide the same care you would get in garrison out here in a field environment,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Marcos M. Romero, hospital corpsman dental assistant, CLB-X, 1st MLG. “We do cleanings, exams and even X-rays. The advantage of us being out here is that we

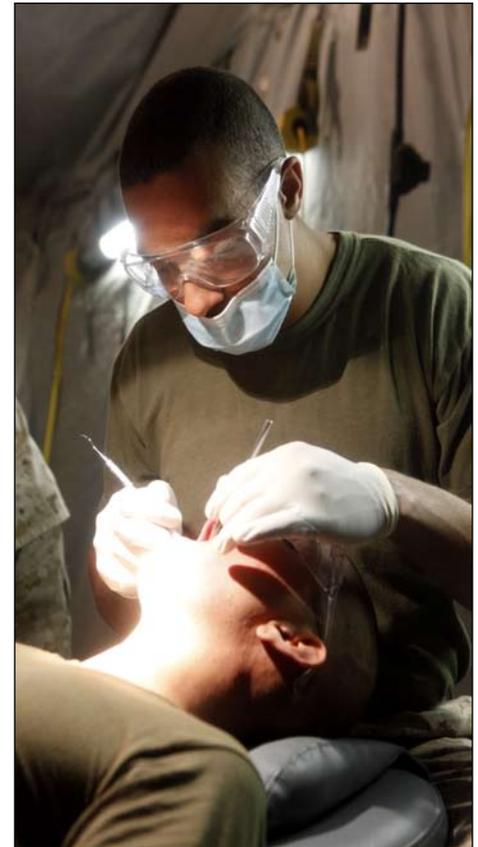
come to you instead of you having to come to us.”

With no buildings or utilities, the sailors faced the unique challenge of setting up a dental office head-on.

“The conditions are definitely not ideal, but we’re definitely making it work,” said Wade, 30, from Montserrat, West Indies. “For one, the heat. Also, we don’t have a complete floor, but we’re making it work.”

Such challenges are relatively new for these sailors because rarely do they set up operations like this. The dental techs and the dentist said they enjoy having an opportunity to work in a new kind of environment.

“I’m just proud to be out here,” said Romero, 22, from Las Vegas. “This gives us a sense of purpose and accomplishment along with a little joy because the Marines are watching our back.”



(Above) Navy Lt. Stephen M. Wade, dental officer, Combat Logistics Battalion X, 1st Marine Logistics Group, examines a patient. (Left) Wade consults a patient at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., May 16.

Marines learn about Maritime Prepositioning

Story by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Maritime Prepositioning Force operations play an important role in the military being a force in readiness, able to respond to a crisis situation anywhere around the world in only a matter of days.

To learn more on the subject, noncommissioned officers with Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, participated in an abridged version of the traditional MPF course here, May 19.

The purpose of MPF is to enable rapid deployment and engagement of a fully-capable Marine Air Ground Task Force anywhere in the world.

“The reason we are giving a light course is so that the NCOs and below can get an idea of what their specific [role] is during an MPF,”

said Capt. Kathryn Bryan, MPF instructor, Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Pacific. “The original course is for staff NCOs and above, and it is longer and gets more in depth than this one.”

During the course, the Marines learned the history and growth of the MPF program, roles, missions and limitations of an MPF.

“Some of the roles of an MPF [are] to support or reinforce amphibious operations or establish a sizeable force ashore in support of sustained operations,” said Capt. Miguel Valle, MPF course manager, from Inglewood, Calif.

The course provided the Marines with insight as to how their job enables an MPF operation to work.

“We learned how our job falls into the whole [Maritime Prepositioning Force operation],” said Cpl. Justin Ronk, landing support specialist, Landing Support Company, CLR-17, 1st MLG. “We also learned how important [Mari-

time Prepositioning Force operation] is when it comes to moving Marines and gear to another part of the world.”

The Marines also learned about every section that helps make the MPF run and the different vessels used. There are six main sections, and together they make up the Arrival and Assembly Organizations. The sections are the Arrival and Assembly Operations Group, MAGTF Offload Liaison Team, Arrival and Assembly Operations Element, Landing Force Support Party, Movement Control Center and the Technical Assistance and Advisory Team. Each section plays a vital role in making sure all personnel and gear quickly arrive to its destination.

“The course is a great way for them to learn about MPF,” said Bryan, from Longview, Texas. “Every Marine or sailor who takes the course will have some sort of idea of what happens during MPF operations.”