

# THE BLUE DIAMOND

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July 15, 2011

## Semper Ride entertains, teaches safety



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Christopher R. Rye)

Professional motorcycle riders Jason Britton and Eric Hoenshell perform for a crowd of Marines and family members of 1st Marine Division at the Area 16 Landing Zone, July 8. The performance was part of the annual Semper Ride event, an event intended to inform Marines and their families of proper motorcycle safety.

Story by

Cpl. Ned Johnson

Over 300 motorcycles line the asphalt and rough men in leather and helmets are everywhere, but “Hell’s Angels” is not on base.

Those warriors are the Marines and sailors of 1st Marine Division attending a safety seminar and exposé hosted by Semper Ride.

“The idea and objective today is to make them aware of the dangers that exist out there,” said Sgt. Maj. Michael Kufchak, sergeant major of 1st Marine Division. “But more importantly to make them more conscious riders and observe the safety features of the machines they ride.”

Semper Ride is an hour-long film designed to teach Marines safety through entertaining footage and tips from professional riders.

“We wanted to get involved in safety,” said Ronnie Renner, a professional motocross rider who starred in the movie. “We love the Marines and it was the perfect time.”

The expo offered a large variety of learning opportunities for the motorcyclists to include places to buy new and used bikes, safety classes available to riders, and even California Highway Patrol officers.

“Traffic safety is one of the most important things for us, and educating riders on traffic safety and how to prevent future incidents like crashes,” said Officer Chris Parent, a public information officer

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## 1st Combat Engineer Battalion bid farewell to fallen comrades

Story and photos by  
Lance Cpl. Tyler Reiriz

The Marines and sailors of 1st Combat Engineers Battalion held a memorial ceremony at San Mateo, July 1, to pay tribute to the Marines who made the ultimate sacrifice during the unit’s recent deployment to Afghanistan.

Family and loved ones of the fallen Marines joined the unit to honor the lives of Lance Cpl. Ar-

den Buenagua, Cpl. Eric Torbert, Cpl. Joseph Whitehead and Staff Sgt. Jason Rogers, who were killed during operations in Afghanistan from November 2010 to April 2011.

The families were joined by members of 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, who served with 1st CEB during the deployment to Afghanistan. The service members

(MEMORIAL, page 2)



Marines of 1st Combat Engineer Battalion bow their heads during a memorial ceremony at San Mateo, July 1. The memorial service was held to honor the four Marines of 1st CEB who were killed during the unit’s deployment to Afghanistan.



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Christopher R. Rye)

Staff SgAt. Jerry Allen, a motorcycle rider with Truck Company Alpha, Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division and Sgt. Andrew Wright, a machine gun instructor with Division Schools, HQBn., 1st MarDiv. park their motorcycles at the Area 16 Landing Zone, July 08. The Semper Ride event is held annually to inform Marines and their families of proper motorcycle safety.

**SAFETY**

*(cont. from page 1)*

with the CHP. "It's events like this that help educate riders, especially in the Marine Corps, on safety on the road."

The professional riders from Semper Ride also put on a professional stunt show

involving dirt bikes and sport bikes. The pros popped wheelies, burned rubber, and flipped backwards to the cheers of the crowd.

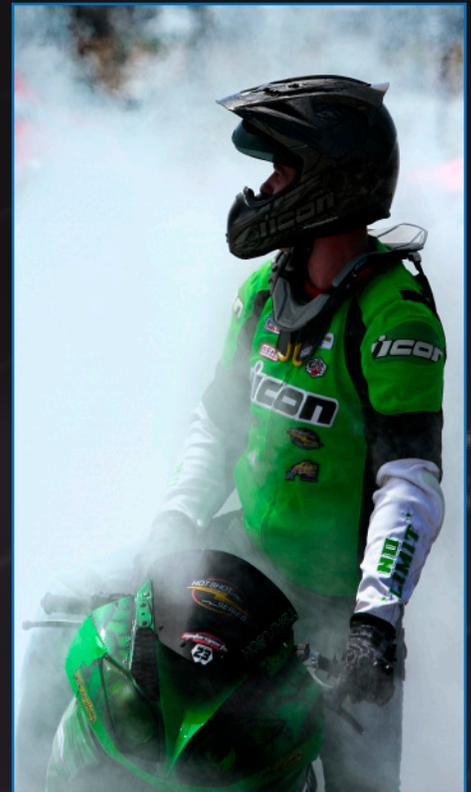
"We are at the top of our game and I think giving those tips helps guys see what we really think about," said Tommy Clowers, a professional motocross rider. "We don't just go out there and go for it, we put in a lot of practice and this is our job."

After the stunt shows and movie premiere, the riders left in small groups on a "poker run" across the base. The ride gave the Marines an opportunity to meet other motorcyclists, and prizes were awarded at the end of

the day.

While the participants enjoyed the free lunch, movie and expert tips, the overall lesson for today and tomorrow is still safety.

"I likye it. More and more riders these days are growing up in the Marine Corps," said Staff Sgt. Jerry Allen, ya Division Marine and seasoned motorcyclist. "We need to focus on safety and letting our young riders know that there are people out there who can help them."



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Christopher R. Rye)

Professional motorcycle rider Eric Hoenshell burning rubber during his performance during the Semper Ride event at Area 16 Landing Zone, July 08. The performance was part of this year's annual safety event, an event intended to inform U.S. Marines and their families of proper motorcycle safety.



Maj. Gen Michael Regner, former commanding general of 1st Marine Division, and his wife, Mary Regner, pay their respects to the four Marines of the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion who lost their lives during the unit's deployment to Afghanistan.

**MEMORIAL**

*(cont. from page 1)*

of 3/5 stood solemnly beside their comrades in 1st CEB and joined them in bidding farewell to the fallen Marines.

The audience fell silent as memorials made of rifles, helmets, boots and identification tags were assembled. The simple tributes stood alongside large wreaths and photographs of the deceased to honor their lives, service, and sacrifice.

The ceremony continued with Bible readings from Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 and Psalm 23.

Speakers paid tribute to the memory of each fallen Marine by sharing personal reflections on their lives. Several wounded warriors were amongst the speakers who shared memories of

serving alongside their comrades in arms. Some memories were somber, while other speakers couldn't help but smile while recalling the good times they had with their friends.

The attendees fell silent as a bagpiper clad in traditional Scottish dress, played "Amazing Grace" before the final reflections and a recitation of the Marines Prayer.

Sgt. Maj. Simburger called roll to symbolize that though they are gone, the Marines will remain a part of the unit. A rifle detail then fired three volleys to honor the fallen with a 21-gun salute.

As the ceremony came to a close, Taps was played, and family and friends approached the memorials to say their final goodbyes.

"My life means something today because of these men," said Lt. Loren Crone, the chaplain. "The way they lived and the way they died gives meaning to all of our lives."

**Brought to you by:**

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# 5th Marine Regiment hosts family day

Story and photos by  
Lance Cpl. Alfred V. Lopez

Marines and sailors of Regimental Combat Team 5 enjoyed a summer brunch with their families and friends during the regiment's pre-deployment family day at Camp San Mateo, July 1.

The Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group hosted the event at the 5th Marine Regiment Memorial Garden, providing food and refreshments for the guests. Other support organizations, such as the American Red Cross, Marine Corps Community Services and Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society, set up booths to provide information about their services for Marines, sailors and their families.

"Today was a great time to get all the Marines, sailors and their families together one more time before they deploy," said Kimberly Merkel, the RCT-5 family readiness officer. "It's a chance for everyone to sit back, relax, and take it all in."

Headquarters Company recently returned from Marine Corps Air Ground

Combat Center Twenty-Nine Palms after completing the Enhanced Mojave Viper portion of their pre-deployment training.

"We were really blessed to have a great group of people that went through all this training," said Col. Roger Turner, RCT-5 commanding officer. "Everybody came together as a team, and it's a great organization."

Dana Point is the regiment's adoptive city. Since 2004, their mission has been to provide support and outreach to the RCT-5 Marines and sailors when deployed, and to take care of their families living in the Camp Pendleton area. From fundraisers to family day events, the adopted city has shown tremendous support for the regiment.

"This was a great event," said Turner. "It really allowed everyone to come together after the 90-day or so training days that we've had."

RCT-5 is set to deploy to Helmand Province, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in August.



Sgt. Maj. Ernest K. Hoopii, Regimental Combat Team 5 sergeant major, and Kimberly Merkel, RCT 5 family readiness officer, read off raffle ticket numbers during the RCT 5 pre-deployment family day at the 5th Marine Regiment Memorial Garden in Camp San Mateo, July 1.

## Headquarters Battalion holds a day of fun and food



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Tyler Reiriz)

Volunteers from Armor of Light Military Ministry join Marines and sailors in grilling food for families during the 1st Marine Division, Headquarters Battalion, Headquarters and Service Company family day. The volunteers lent a helping hand to let the Marines and sailors enjoy the time with their families. Participants in the family day played football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, and grilled food during the event. The family day also featured inflatable bouncing castles and a clown for the children.



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Tyler Reiriz)

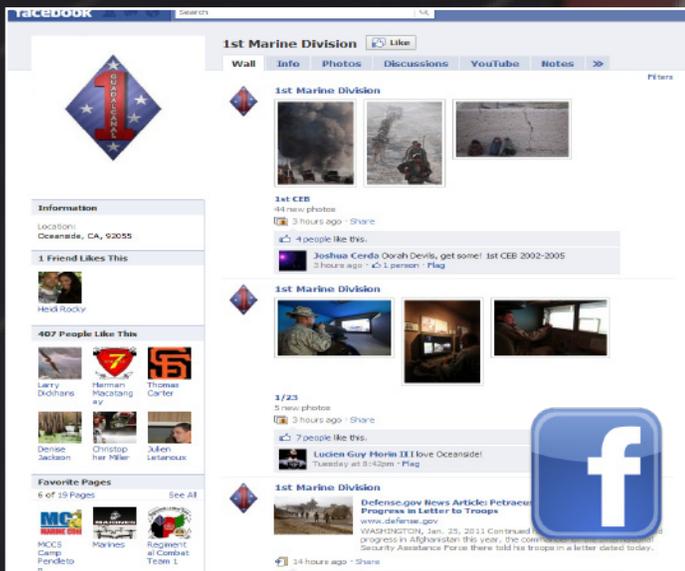
Bonzo the clown, also known as Bradley Lincoln, poses with a Marine proudly holding Bonzo's latest balloon animal during the 1st Marine Division, Headquarters Battalion, Headquarters and Service Company family day event at Lake O'Neil, July 9. Bonzo made a variety of balloon animals, including this creation of Elmo riding a bicycle, for the Marines, sailors and families of H&S Co. Participants in family day played football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, and grilled food together. The children at the event were also able to enjoy two inflatable bouncing castles.

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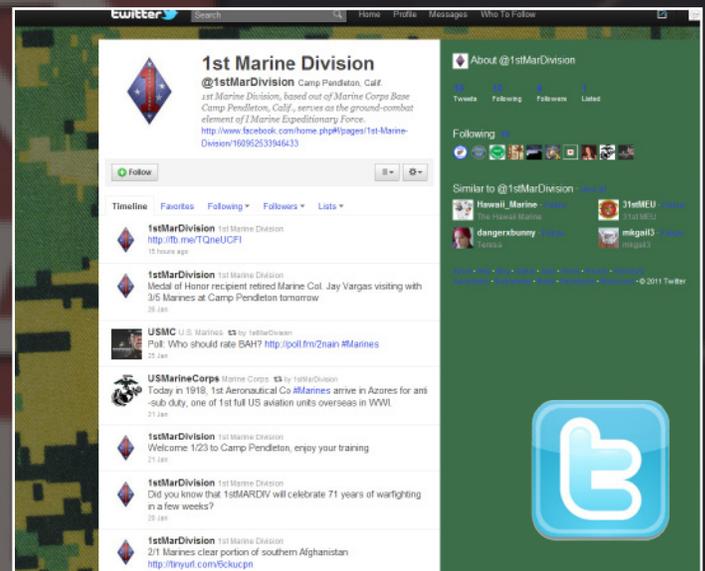


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