

Stepping up

Junior Marines with CLR-17 conduct motivational run

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – It’s the early morning hours and hundreds of Marines gather on the field preparing for their daily dose of motivation.

Junior Marines with Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, ran a 3-mile course throughout mainside here, Oct. 18.

More than 200 lance corporals and below, still half asleep, slowly made their way to the dark field to join their respective companies for formation. Finally, the lights came on to reveal a thick layer of fog that covered the area.

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Marines with Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, go on a 3-mile motivational run led by Sgt. Maj. Robert E. Ledferd, sergeant major, CLR-17, 1st MLG, at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 18.



A Marine clears his M50 gas mask during annual chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear training at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 21.

Marines brave tear gas for annual training

Story and photos by
Pfc. Timothy Childers
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – A plume of tear gas rises from the center of the dark and claustrophobic room, where three Marines stand beside each wall. After the Marines are instructed to break the seal of their masks, the gas slowly fills the room as the Marines hold their breath.

Marines with Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, conducted their annual chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear training here, Oct. 21. The exercise allowed Marines to refresh their skills and their knowledge of Mission-Oriented Protective Posture gear in case of a CBRN threat.

“It’s important to receive this
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GIVE HIM ONE!

SGT. MAJ. WILLIAM SOWERS

Story and photo by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
Staff Writer

Sgt. Maj. William Sowers has seen a lot throughout his 23-year career in the Marine Corps, from the time he stepped on the yellow footprints, to his current assignment as the regimental sergeant major for Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group.

With eight deployments under his belt, from Iraq and Afghanistan to Okinawa and afloat, and having completed two tours on the drill field, Sowers' breadth of experience and leadership continues to help shape future generations of Marines.

Sowers, 40, from Stuart, Va., began his career in October 1988 when he attended recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. After recruit training, he went on to graduate from the School of Infantry and received orders to Scout Platoon, 2nd Tank Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, N.C., where he spent four years as an anti-tank assault man. During that time, Sowers participated in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm as a forward observer for the company.

In 1997, Sowers became a drill instructor aboard MCRD Parris Island where he helped transform raw recruits into U.S. Marines. While on the drill field, he was meritoriously promoted to gunnery sergeant, and after a successful tour, he received orders to 2nd MarDiv.

In December 2001, in response to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, Sowers deployed to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, where he served as the company gunnery sergeant of Company L, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines, 2nd MarDiv.

While with 3/8, he was selected



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to first sergeant and received orders to the drill field again, this time at MCRD San Diego as the company first sergeant for Company E, 2nd Battalion where he achieved his current rank of sergeant major and was assigned as the 1st Battalion sergeant major.

Having spent the majority of his career in infantry units, Sowers said being assigned to CLR-15, his first logistics unit, gave him an appreciation for all the hard work that goes into providing logistics support, from transporting supplies to providing medical care for Marines on the battlefield.

"Coming from the infantry, working with 1st MLG, I've always been on the other side," said Sowers. "On the infantry side ... I ask for something and it shows up. Now that I'm on this [logistics] side, I see the work and the effort and how much it takes to get the [supplies and equipment] from A to B and the effort from the youngest

guy working at the [Supply Management Unit] all the way up to the [combat logistics battalions] delivering it out to you."

Throughout his career, Sowers said he has had a lot of positive influences.

"My first four years in the Marine Corps I had an outstanding company gunny, Gunnery Sgt. M. Z. Brown," said Sowers. "Those are the guys, as I grew up, I tried to emulate, because they were both outstanding role models as Marines ... They taught me the right way, took me under their wing and showed me the way to do it."

Sowers hopes to impart the same sense of esprit de corps into the today's generation of noncommissioned officers.

"For the young leaders, every Marine that joins the Marine Corps has the right to be led morally, ethically and professionally. And as a young NCO, that's how they should treat their young Marines

that come in."

In addition to having strong leadership, Sowers credited his wife of 20 years, Yolanda, for helping him succeed in his career.

"My success rests solely on the strength of my wife," said Sowers. "She takes care of the family, the household. I've got eight deployments in the Marine Corps. It makes it difficult on the family, and I'm lucky to have a strong wife and a strong family that's able to overcome the stresses that come with what we do."

Even though he has enough time under his belt to retire, Sowers has no desire to leave the Marine Corps "gun club" just yet.

"I'm going to stay in the Marine Corps until I don't enjoy it anymore," said Sowers. "I've had the opportunity to work in some great units. I've been surrounded by great individuals, and as long as I continue to enjoy what I do I'm definitely going to stay in."

MOTIVATION

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Then all of a sudden, “Good morning, Marines.” Sgt. Maj. Robert E. Ledferd, CLR-17 sergeant major, was on deck. He was greeted with a booming “GOOD MORNING, SERGEANT MAJOR!” And the run began.

The purpose of the “motivation” run was to build camaraderie between the Marines and to give some of the junior leaders a chance to take charge.

During the run, the Marines took turns calling cadence, which could be heard all around as they made their way through the 14 Area.

“Let’s go, keep it up Marines,” shouted some of the runners. “We’re doing great, let’s finish this thing.”

Towards the end of the run as the massive formation ventured closer to the end, each person dug deep into whatever energy they had left to finish out strong.

After they formed up, they received the command to form a school



Sgt. Maj. Robert E. Ledferd, sergeant major, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, speaks with Marines after participating in a 3-mile motivational run at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 18.

circle around the sergeant major.

“How are we feeling,” asked Ledferd. “Good, sergeant major,” they all responded.

Ledferd expressed how proud he was of the Marines’ performance.

“They all did great out there,” said Ledferd. “The reason there were no [noncommissioned officers] in this run is because I wanted the lance corporals to take over.”

He also added that they are the future leaders and they did an outstanding job of taking charge

and doing what they had to do.

Ledferd thanked them for their hard work and for representing the Marine Corps well on and off duty, and for reducing safety mishaps through Operational Risk Management.

“You all have been practicing good ORM,” he said. “I really appreciate it.”

At the end of the run, the Marines and the sergeant major engaged in a motivating chant shouting, “TURN UP THE HEAT!”

HAPPENINGS

Motorcycle Safety Courses

An advanced riders course will be held weekly, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. A basic rider’s 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.

Tuition Assistance changes

According to the office of Education and Career Resources, Headquarters Marine Corps, Marine Corps Tuition Assistance has been restored to fiscal year 2011 levels. On Oct. 17, a Marine Administrative Message had reduced TA benefits by 75 percent. The TA policy does not affect Montgomery G.I. Bill or Post 9/11 G.I. Bill benefits. For more information on financial assistance resources, call the Joint Education Center at (760) 725-6660.

Halloween Fright Night

The Single Marine Program is hosting a scary movies marathon at the 21 Area’s SMP Center, starting 6 p.m., Oct. 31. Free snacks and beverages are provided to all participants. For more information about the event, call the 21 Area’s SMP Center at (760) 725-2019.

Veteran’s Day sale

In celebration of Veteran’s Day, Marine Corps Exchange will have a sale at all MCXs from Nov. 9-14.



Photo by Cpl. Michele Watson

Col. James Clark (right), regimental commander, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, accepts a check for \$1,000, on behalf of CLR-17, for placing second in the 101 Days of Summer challenge, from Scott Macfarlane, the director of Semper Fit, Marine Corps Community Services, at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 21.

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Corporals Course Graduation



Photo by Cpl. Michele Watson
Cpl. Glenn Cooke (left), a Marine with Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group, receives a plaque and a certificate for being the top honor graduate during the 1st MLG Corporals Course graduation at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 21. During the 3-week course, Marines received classes and practiced becoming stronger leaders through physical training, sword manual exercises, land navigation, and other aspects of the Marines Corps that create strong leadership traits.

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training every year,” said Gunnery Sgt. Andrew J. Walters, staff noncommissioned officer, Food Service Company, CLR-17, 1st MLG. “If the Marines are required to use the training they learned here in a combat situation, they need to know how to use their equipment proficiently.”

The Marines were instructed by CBRN specialists on the elements of the new M50 Joint Service General Purpose Mask that offers more protection and capabilities than the previous mask, the M40.

Before the hands-on qualification, Marines received instruction on the proper usage of the MOPP gear, including the mask, protective overgarments, contamination testers and decontaminating resin kits.

Upon completion of the classes, the Marines hiked to the gas chamber where they tested the masks and their ability to clear them. Once in the confidence chamber, the Marines performed jumping jacks to raise their heart rates while a CBRN specialist burned pellets, releasing the gas.

According to the Web site “Absolute Astronomy,” the gas used during the qualification is 2-chlorobenzalmononitrile, more commonly known as tear or CS gas. The chemical reacts with moisture on the skin and in the eyes, causing a burning sensation and the immediate

forceful and uncontrollable shutting of the eyes. It is commonly used by police forces to temporarily incapacitate or subdue aggressors, but for the training it was used in place of deadly gasses that could be deployed on the battlefield.

The agents most used against Marines today are not nuclear or biological, but are known as hazardous agents. The chemicals used in improvised explosive devices may be hazardous materials that need to be decontaminated, said Pfc. Brandon E. Sutton, CBRN defense specialist, Headquarters Company, CLR-17, 1st MLG.

Once the chamber was filled with the vapor, the Marines lifted the masks off their faces in order to breach the seal. After holding their breath for about 30 seconds, the Marines donned and cleared the masks by sealing the outlet valve of the mask and exhaling with enough force to push the gas out of the mask. If the Marines failed, they felt the painful burning of gas in their lungs, eyes, and sinuses.

“The exercise went great,” said Maj. Rugsithi D. Meelarp, G-4, 1st MLG (Forward). “This was my first time with the new masks; training beforehand was definitely useful.”

The rest of the day went smoothly as the remaining Marines finished testing and clearing their masks. The Marines left the chamber, confident in their masks and qualified before their upcoming deployment this spring.

CLR-17 Marines learn about decontamination

Story and photo by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Marines with Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group participated in a decontamination class here, Oct. 19.

The purpose of the class was to teach Marines some of the things they would do as a decontamination team.

The first topic the Marines learned about during the class was the three types of chemical biological agents, which are nerve, blister, and incapacitating agents. Nerve agents are considered the most toxic and attack the nervous system eventually causing death. The blister and incapacitating agents aren't as deadly but they are used to render a person ineffective.

“Chemical warfare has been around for over 1,000 years,” said Cpl. Zach Harbour, Chemical, Biological, Nuclear and Radiation special-



A Marine demonstrates how to protect himself from a blast in a decontamination class at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 19.

ist. “The U.S. won't use chemical weapons under any circumstances.”

Besides a lesson on history, Marines learned about nuclear bombs and the types of radiation. Nuclear bombs have five types of bursts which are high-air, low-air, surface, sub-surface, and underwater.

“When nukes explode, the initial blast causes most of the damage,” said Harbour. “Then after that, sort of like a back wave comes through, but it's not as powerful.”

After the period of instruction, it was time for

them to learn the most important part of being on a decontamination team, the decon process.

During the decon portion, students learned the purpose of the process, which is to neutralize or remove hazardous levels of contamination.

They also learned the methods of decontamination. One method is to neutralize the hazard by using a type of decontaminates, another method is to physically remove the hazard, and the last method is weathering, which means to let ‘mother nature’ take care of the problem.

As a decon team, they have a lot of tools at their disposal to aid them in detecting and keeping hazards to a minimum, Harbour explained. “Each one serves a different purpose, but they're all important.”

Some of those items are the M256 Detector, M8 and M9 paper, and the M4 JCAD.

At the end of the class, every student gained a massive amount of knowledge and they now have a sense of what actions they would take if a contamination were to occur.



Story by
Pfc. Timothy Childers
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – At the time, the Marine Corps’ deployment to the Persian Gulf was the largest movement of Marine forces since World War II. This movement was only made possible by the Marines and sailors in the logistics combat element, of which were the predecessors of Combat Logistics Regiment 17.

According to “*U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991 Combat Service Support in Desert Shield and Desert Storm*,” by Maj. Steven M. Zimmeck, Ret., the first month after Iraq invaded Kuwait was chaotic for Marine units as American forces rapidly moved to defend Saudi Arabia. The 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, was the first U.S. combat organization to arrive in the Persian Gulf with the essential capabilities to defeat Iraqi forces in the open desert. Supporting I MEF, was 1st Force Service Support Group.

On Aug. 2, 1990, 1st FSSG, now 1st Marine Logistics Group, was organized into eight battalions that provided engineer, motor transportation, supply, landing support, medical, dental, and other services. Brig. General James A. Brabham Jr., Ret., commanded 1st FSSG during the time.

Like most Fleet Marine Force units, the group had the ability to task, organize and deploy into smaller organizations such as Marine expeditionary unit service support, and brigade service support groups. Among the BSSG’s was Brigade Service Support Group 1.

BSSG-1 provided general logistics support to the units of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade. The support group was dedicated to maritime prepositioning ship operations. The group would later merge with the Headquarters and Support



Photo courtesy of Lt. Gen. James A. Brabham, Jr.

Marines from BSSG-1, now Combat Logistics Regiment 17, prepare to unload ships from Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron 3 at the Port of Jubayl, circa 1990. The ship Motor Vessel Pfc. Dewayne T. Williams is seen in the foreground. The Marine Corps’ deployment to the Persian Gulf was the largest movement of Marine forces since World War II.

Co. of 1st FSSG to form what is now Combat Logistics Regiment 17.

1st FSSG administratively and medically screened every deploying Marine and sailor. The unit also issued orders, administered vaccinations, exercised training for nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare, taught Arab customs, and ensured all departing Marines fired their rifles.

During the month following Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, 7th MEB entered the Persian Gulf and arrived at the Port of Jubayl. The port was a major stop used by Marines during Desert Shield and Desert Storm. 1st FSSG played a major role in the deployment of equipment and supplies from the beginning of 7th MEB’s arrival.

It was essential for 1st FSSG to unload the ships in order to set up the defense of the port. The rapid unload allowed 7th MEB to announce its readiness to defend the Port of

Jubayl on Aug. 25, 1990. From that point on, the focus of 1st FSSG was mainly to occupy the infrastructure of the port and surrounding airfields in Saudi Arabia.

“There’s been a lot of changes since I joined the Marine Corps 26 years ago,” said Col. James W. Clark, regimental commander, CLR-17, 1st MLG. “The Gulf War conflict was an operation of amphibious character. Since 9/11 we have gotten away from our amphibious roots. In these past years, we became a second land army, but the touchstone that we always hearken to as Marines is the expeditionary nature of the Corps.”

More than 20 years have passed since Marines landed in the Persian Gulf. A lot has changed since that time, but the Marines who served during the Gulf War are not.

“The spirit of the Marine Corps has not changed since the Gulf War,” said Master Gunnery Sgt. Roderick W. Coleman, staff noncommissioned

officer in charge, Group Safety, Headquarters Company, CLR-17, 1st MLG, who deployed to Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm/Desert Shield. “Marines are still willing to fight, to look out for each other, and push forward.”

The Marine Corps is returning to its amphibious roots today. Specifically, CLR-17, the logistics combat element for 1st MEB, has been vigorously trying to get back to operating primarily as an amphibious force, said Clark.

“Marines have always taken care of each other but now the Marines are better trained, smarter, and safer than before,” said Maj. Roy L. Miner, commanding officer, HQ Co., CLR-17, 1st MLG.

It has been a long time since Marines were pushing back Saddam Hussein from Kuwait during the Persian Gulf War, but the values, spirit and power of those Marines remain strong today.

Military policemen attack MOUT town

Story and photos by
Pfc. Timothy Childers
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – “Set!” yells the fire team leader as he waits outside a doorway, rifle at the ready position. The Marine behind him grabs his shoulder and gives the command, “Go!” The 4-man team rushes into the room.

Marines from 1st Platoon, Military Police Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, trained for Military Operations in Urban Terrain at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 25. The Marines practiced clearing buildings, breaching doors, procedures when finding weapon caches, detaining and handling enemy prisoners of war and setting casualty collection points.

The training area, commonly known as a “MOUT town,” tested the Marines’ knowledge and skills on operations in austere areas like Afghanistan. The range portrays how an urban battlefield may look in a combat operation, complete with salvaged cars, mailboxes, street signs and gas stations.

Each building is designed differently to allow an unpredictable layout that Marines would normally experience in MOUT. The rooms are filled with distracting elements such as furniture, holes in the walls and open ceilings.

“This was the first time the Marines have trained together as a new platoon,” said Staff Sgt. Stacy N. Roman, platoon sergeant, 1st Platoon, MP Co., CLR-17, 1st MLG. “The training today has helped build unit cohesion and teamwork skills that the Marines will have to apply when they’re deployed.”

The majority of the Marines have a basic understanding of MOUT, but this training brought them together and allowed them to build on what they’ve learned and fix their mistakes for when it really counts, said Roman.

MOUT can be more dangerous than the open battlefield. Marines have the possibility of



Marines from 1st Platoon, Military Police Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, train for Military Operations in Urban Terrain at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 25.

close-quarter combat that puts them face-to-face with danger. It requires Marines to be extra cautious and aware of their environment. The terrain gives enemy combatants the upper hand. It allows a greater possibility for “booby-traps” and concealment of the enemy. Evacuation of casualties also can become difficult without the support of motor transport and aircraft.

The platoon learned and sustained the basics of MOUT in preparation for the Infantry Immersion Trainer slated for next week. The trainer is designed to immerse a platoon into a simulated environment of combat, said 2nd Lt. Elisha Woienski, platoon commander, 1st Platoon, MP Co., CLR-17, 1st MLG.

“It’s important for Marines to sustain their training,” said Woienski. “In the military police field, it’s hard to know when the Marines will be called upon for a mission.”

Apart from the sustainment of training, the Marines of 1st Platoon enjoyed their experience in the MOUT town.



Marines from 1st Platoon, Military Police Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, clear a set of stairs while training for Military Operations in Urban Terrain at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 25.

“It was good training. I felt that the hands-on experience was more enjoyable than the classes we took,” said Lance Cpl. Martin J. Kim, military policeman, 1st Platoon, MP Co., CLR-17,

1st MLG. “It’s good for the Marines that have never deployed to learn the basic fundamentals of MOUT. Next time, they will have the experience and knowledge that they will need.”