



# The Convoy

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Delivering quality information on the 1st Marine Logistics Group

Volume 3 Issue 18

## Happy 236th Birthday, Marines



Commandant's Birthday Message Page 2

## Welcome home Marines return from deployment

Story and photos by  
Cpl. Khoa Pelczar  
Staff Writer

**MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.** – Families and friends of more than 200 Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 7, 1st Marine Logistics Group, and its attachments waited here anxiously, Oct. 26, to welcome home their heroes who deployed to Afghanistan's Helmand Province in support of Op-

eration Enduring Freedom.

During the 7-month tour, Marines conducted numerous operations to include combat logistics patrols, vehicle recovery missions, resupply missions and training the Afghan National Army.

For the first time since its opening the new 7th Engineer Support Battalion barracks were packed. Loved ones waited patiently for the

**See Homecoming Page 3**



Friends and families of more than 200 Marines welcome home the returning heroes at a homecoming aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 26.

**INSIDE**



### Marines, sailors train to save lives

Page 4

Marine hangs up uniform after 30 years .....Page 5

ECT prepares Marines for deployment .....Page 6

Marines support 11th MEU .....Page 8

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# Commandant's Message

*For ten years now, our Corps has been engaged in continuous combat operations against those who threaten the security of America and our allies. We turned the tide in the Anbar Province of Iraq and continue to see success today in southwest Afghanistan. While it has come at a cost ... we have much to be proud of.*

*This past year in operations around the world including humanitarian disaster relief, counter-piracy, theater security cooperation, special operations, counter-insurgency and many more, you continued to solidify our place as America's expeditionary force in readiness. Since the Continental Congress created two battalions of Marines 236 years ago, our legacy as an ever-ready, ever capable, victory producing organization remains intact.*

*Our rich heritage of selfless service and fidelity to nation and to one another lives on in all who currently wear the eagle, globe and anchor - those who have answered the clarion call to duty with remarkable courage, dedication and unshakable resolve that Marines are so well known for. To all Marines - past and present - and especially to our families ... I extend my deep gratitude for all you have done and all you continue to do.*

*As we celebrate our 236th birthday, let us look forward to future challenges - whatever they may be - and reaffirm our pledge to be America's premier crisis response force; to be the first to fight ... always ready for the toughest and most challenging assignments.*

*Happy birthday Marines and Semper Fidelis.*

*Gen. James F. Amos  
Commandant of the Marine Corps  
U.S. Marine Corps*

**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.

**Lithium Battery Safe Storage**

Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton announced new lithium battery storage and handling procedures due to several fires that have occurred within the last few years caused by improper storage of these batteries. Lithium batteries shall be stored in a cool, dry location. If personnel have any reason to believe that a battery is venting, they should evacuate the area immediately and contact the base's Emergency Dispatch Team at (760) 725-3333.

**Book Signing**

Don Mann, author of 'Inside SEAL Team Six,' will hold a book signing at the Country Store, Camp Pendleton, Calif., 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., Nov. 18.

**Thanksgiving Day Feast**

The Single Marine Program will provide free food for all service members aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., starting 11 a.m., Nov. 24. Service members can come to any SMP center on base to enjoy their feast. For more information, call (760) 725-6722.



**COMMANDING GENERAL**

BRIG. GEN. JOHN J. BROADMEADOW

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1ST LT. JEREMY MCLEAN  
2ND LT. TYLER MORRISON

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# HOMECOMING

continued from Page 1

arrival of the troops, including the family of Staff Sgt. Derick Kneeland, motor transport operator, CLB-7, 1st MLG. They couldn't wait for him to meet his 3-month-old son for the first time.

"I'm more excited for him to see our son than for myself," said Kneeland's wife, Crystal, from Dallas. "He has already missed so much, I doubt that he would want to do anything else but be with Ethan."

Besides his wife, Kneeland's mother and grandmother drove for 12 hours from Utah to share this moment. His brother Michael also flew in from Texas to welcome him home.

"It's going to be great," said Teresa, Kneeland's grandmother. "We've been praying for his safe return. Now he can finally hold his son and see him face to face."

As the buses pulled up, the loved ones rose to their feet and Crystal prepared to find her husband in the sea of camouflage.

The moment the bus opened its door, Kneeland, from Dallas, immediately reunited with his family, rushing over to hold his baby boy in his arms. He was lost in his son's eyes, as if nothing else mattered and it was just him and his son in the entire world.

Kneeland was so excited to see his son that he couldn't think of anything else he wanted to do at that moment but be with Ethan. After a while, he finally calmed down and decided the first thing he would do.



**Sgt. Jerry Pickron, from Vidor, Texas, motor transport operator, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, 1st Marine Logistics Group, kisses his wife after seven months apart, at the 7th Engineer Support Battalion homecoming aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 26.**

"I want some steak," said Kneeland, who deployed as part of the Embedded Partnering Team to train the Afghan National Army. "I don't care where as long as I can have some. But for now, I just want to go home with my family."

Kneeland might have missed the birth of his first son, but he wasn't the only one who was longing to see their kids. Sgt. Jerry Pickron, motor transport operator, CLB-7, 1st MLG, was also thrilled to see his 18-month-old daughter after spending the past seven months in Afghanistan.

"I left to go on deployment three days before her first birthday. She's so big now and I can't believe

I've missed so much already," said Pickron, from Vidor, Texas. "I just want to play with my daughter. That's all I can think of right now."

Being separated from their loved ones during deployment tours has always been one of the most difficult aspects of deployment, but for some it has become a part of their everyday lives.

"It was harder this time around with him missing the birth of our first child," Crystal said. "But the separation gets easier as you get used to it through our journey together. You begin to accept the fact that it's a part of their career. I'm just glad that it's over and he got home safely to us."



**Staff Sgt. Derick Kneeland, motor transport operator, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, 1st Marine Logistics Group, meets his 3-month-old son for the first time at the 7th Engineer Support Battalion homecoming aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 26.**



**Sgt. Brad Loyd, from Rockmart, Ga., combat engineer, Bravo Company, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, holds his daughter for the first time in seven months at 7th ESB's homecoming aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 26. More than 200 Marines with 1st MLG returned home after a 7-month deployment to Afghanistan.**



*A simulated improvised explosive device detonates during the first Operational Medical Symposium at Naval Medical Center San Diego, Oct. 28.*

# Marines, sailors learn to save lives in combat

Story and photos by  
Pfc. Timothy Childers  
Staff Writer

**NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER SAN DIEGO, Calif.** — Exploding fireballs and corpsmen screaming from the top of their lungs set the scene as Marines and sailors took part in the first Operational Medical Symposium here Oct. 28, in which service members simulated treating casualties in a combat environment.

Marines and sailors from 1st Medical Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, joined by corpsmen from Naval Medical Center San Diego, provided training and education to the active duty staff of NMCS, who have never deployed in a combat setting, in order to prepare them for upcoming deployments.

Approximately 450 doctors, nurses and hospital corpsmen participated in 90-minute training blocks covering the five medical echelons of care used by Navy Medicine. Echelons begin at the point of wounding, illness, or injury, and provide a continuum of care extending through prolonged rehabilitation, according to Sonja Hanson, public affairs officer, NMCS.

During one of the training blocks, sailors were required to treat casualties during a simulated improvised explosive device blast. The casualties had fake injuries such as severed limbs and face lacerations

which the sailors had to treat, as instructors sprayed fake blood on the wounds and their faces.

Many of the Marines and sailors who have seen combat found that the realism of the training reflected what they had experienced overseas.

“I have had a similar experience while deployed in Afghanistan,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon B. Brown, corpsman, Simulation Center, NMCS. “The simulation was very realistic. It’s essential for the [Marines and sailors] training to have a level of realism so they will be ready when it counts.”

To simulate the stress of combat, the instructors screamed questions at the corpsmen as they performed Combat Lifesaving Skills on the casualties.

“It’s very important that we induce stress on [the sailors],” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Joseph Gagucas, formal instructor, Advisory Training Group, 1st Medical Bn., 1st MLG. “Their concentration will be required in a real-life scenario to save lives.”

Combat medicine is the first and most critical moment of the medical echelons. Stabilizing the patient in the field may be the difference between life and death for the casualty.

Motor transportation operators also play a major part in saving the lives of service members injured in combat. It’s their job to drive the casualties from the sight of injury



*Corpsmen provide medical care to a simulated casualty during the first Operational Medical Symposium at Naval Medical Center San Diego, Calif., Oct. 28.*

to higher echelons of care. They need to get the patients from the field to the rear as fast as possible, said Lance Cpl. Michael B. Halick, motor transportation operator, 1st Medical Bn., 1st MLG.

The Advisory Training Group comprises Marines and sailors with deployment experience who teach service members about important combat medicine concepts, including Tactical Combat Casualty Care and CLS.

“I think the nurses and corpsmen already have a basic understanding of what’s required of them to save lives,” said Navy Lt. Kelly A. Trout, officer in charge, ATG, 1st Medical

Bn., 1st MLG. “We bring the experience of working as a team in the austere. This is one of the obstacles we can help prepare them for.”

After the training blocks were completed, the instructors reviewed the sailors’ performance. They pointed out the difficulties that they had during the event and also what they excelled at, so they would know their strengths and weaknesses. In the end they congratulated the service members on dealing with the stress and completing their mission. They were confident that if it came down to the real thing, the Marines and sailors could pull through and save lives.



# GIVE HIM ONE!

## CWO4 JEFFERY D. GRASZ

Story and photo by  
Cpl. Khoa Pelczar  
Staff Writer

After 30 years of dedicated service to the nation, a Marine wore the desert utility camouflage uniform for one last time at his retirement ceremony here, Oct. 27.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jeffery D. Grasz, one of only five electro-optical maintenance officers in the Marine Corps, said goodbye to the Marines and sailors he served with as he retired from the Corps.

For his final duty assignment, Grasz returned to Ordnance Maintenance Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group, where he worked for most of his career. The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Christian D. Richardson, said he was humbled and honored to be Grasz' retiring officer.

"I couldn't be more proud standing in front of the man retiring here today," Richardson said. "During his 30 years, he has made a tremendous influence on Maintenance Company due to his leadership, his technical expertise and his selfless dedication."

Contributing to the ceremony was a message from the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James F. Amos, addressing Grasz.

"During your career, the Marine Corps has been involved in combat, and it has been because of Marines like you that the Corps has acquitted itself so well on the battlefield," Amos wrote. "You can be proud to have been a part of that legacy and to have attained your grade in an organization such as ours."

Looking back at his career, Grasz witnessed countless changes the Marine Corps had made.

"Every piece of gear that we have, we've changed them twice since I've been in," he said. "A lot has changed since 1981, but we're still training Marines and we always get the job done."

During the ceremony, Grasz ad-



**Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jeffery Grasz, one of only five electro-optical maintenance officers in the Marine Corps, Ordnance Maintenance Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group, speaks to guests attending his retirement ceremony aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 27.**

ressed the Marines and thanked them for their hard work.

"The Marines I've worked with were phenomenal," he said. "They worked hard and I've never seen them complain. It's rewarding to be a Marine and see what they're capable of doing each and every day."

As proud as he is to be a Marine, Grasz said he knew that he wasn't doing it alone as his family, especially his wife, has been there every step of the way to support him.

"My family has been phenomenal. I can't say enough I appreciate their support," Grasz said. "My wife has been there for me from the beginning. There have been times that she had to take care of all four children all by herself. She would do anything to lighten my workload. I wouldn't be where I am today without her."

His wife, Lori, took care of the family whenever Grasz was away on assignments or deployments. Grasz has deployed in support of numerous operations during his

30 years, including Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Grasz said he owes all of his achievements to his wife.

Richardson recognized the sacrifices made by his wife during the ceremony.

"As Marines, we know what we're getting ourselves into once we joined this organization," Richardson said. "But our family, they didn't sign up for this. As much as this ceremony is about one of our brothers leaving the Corps, it's more of a tribute to the sacrifices made by his family and friends."

Grasz also received a letter of appreciation from the Commander in Chief, President Barack Obama. In the letter, Obama wrote, "I extend to you my personal thanks and the sincere appreciation of a grateful nation for your contribution of honorable service to our country... Your commitment and dedication have been an inspiration for those who will follow in your footsteps, and for all Ameri-

cans who join me today in saluting you for a job extremely well done."

Amos also expressed his appreciation in his letter: "As you leave our active ranks, go with the knowledge that your distinguished service will have a lasting influence... The Corps is better because you served, and our nation can stand proud because it produces Marines like you."

Now retired, Grasz' dream is to work for the Expeditionary Systems Evaluation Division, a contracting organization hired by the U.S. Navy to test and evaluate weapon systems for the Navy and Marine Corps.

But before leaving with his family, Grasz shared a few words with the junior Marines.

"For the lance corporals and below, there are four things that will make you a good Marine and that is - be at the right place, at the right time, in the right uniform and just do what you've been told. You can't go wrong. That's what made the Marine Corps so successful."



*Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group, evacuate a 'casualty' after a mock firefight at the Enhanced Combat Training course aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 27.*

# Enhanced Combat Training

## Field training prepares Marines for deployment

Story and photos by  
Cpl. Michele Watson  
Staff Writer

### CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.

– The sky was dark, with only dim light from the moon showing the way for a squad of Marines preparing to assault. The crisp cold air made the smallest movement echo.

Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group, spent a week receiving classes and training on basic principles of conducting patrols through Enhanced Combat Training, Oct. 24-28, here. The final exercise of the week-long course was the night operation, where Marines took the training they learned and applied it during the dark of night.

In the distance, a group of instructors, dressed as the enemy, prepared to begin the fire fight and engage Marines with rubber AK-47s, and mock bombs.

“It’s harder to assault at night because you have to have noise discipline,” said Sgt. Michael Rivas, an instructor with Combat Skills Training, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st MLG. “It’s also



*Instructors dressed as locals approach the Forward Operating Base to train Marines on how to interact with elders from nearby villages during the Enhanced Combat Training course at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 27.*

harder to keep accountability of your Marines.”

Rivas said the instructors will usually try to kidnap at least one Marine during the night patrol to show the importance of keeping track of all the members of a squad.

During the day, squads of Marines would set out to the woods to track and locate the enemy. For those staying behind, a fully operational Forward Operating

Base was set up that required security and entry control points at all times. Marines received training on conducting searches for “locals” trying to get on the base, as well as how to interact with the elders of nearby villages.

“We’re here to train Marines in order to better prepare them for deployment,” said Sgt. Justin Garner, instructor, CST, CLR-17, 1st MLG. “Training is the only form of troop welfare.”

To make the training more realistic, instructors used ‘toe poppers’, which are hidden under sand and explode when stepped on. They also utilized mock bombs filled with CO2 that sprays baby powder with a loud boom when pulled.

For the students, whether combat veterans or those preparing for their first deployment, the training increases confidence in their skills.

“We’re practicing basic patrol operations and going over contact drills, whether it be (improvised explosive device) strikes or small arms fire,” said Cpl Preston Carmichael, military policeman, CLB-15, 1st MLG. “This training teaches Marines who haven’t deployed yet how to react in a combat situation and refreshes the skills of those who have.”

Regardless of the time of day, instructors use every means they have to give the best training they can offer.

“We try to use a lot of the ambushes that we’ve see in country,” said Rivas. “I like being an aggressor because I have free game to run around and use whatever tactics I want.”

# Extra Eyes

## How to help catch traffic violators

Story by  
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin  
Staff Writer

**MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.** – The military policemen are good at what they do, but they can't be everywhere at once, especially on the roads, so drivers are urged to report traffic violations.

Anyone aboard Camp Pendleton can report a moving violation that occurs on base and be the extra eyes for the base policemen by submitting a Traffic Violation Report.

According to the Camp Pendleton Web site, a moving violation is any violation of certain provisions of the California Vehicle Code (CVC), committed by the driver of a vehicle, while it is in motion – such as speeding, failure to use seatbelts and failure to stop for pedestrians at crosswalks.

A person can report a violation by filling out a TVR online at <http://www.marines.mil/unit/basecamp-pendleton/Pages/BaseStaffandAgencies/SecurityBn/PMO/index.htm>.

The Web site was designed to assist service members in recording information about traffic violations on base. Users will be asked to fill out a questionnaire to include name and contact information, a description of the vehicle, and a detailed statement.

Since its launch in April 2007, numerous violators have been brought to justice, according to the base Provost Marshal's Office. The completed report will be e-mailed to the Police Records Section (Bldg. 1523). The reporter can also print out the TVR and mail it to: Provost Marshal's Office (Attn: Police Records), P.O. Box 555051, Camp Pendleton, Calif., 92055-5051.

"I think this is a great thing for everyone to know," said Petty Officer 1st Class Glorille Jackson, safety representative, 1st Marine Logistics Group, from Angeles City, Philippines. "We have the power to police our own and make sure everyone is doing the right thing. If more people participated and report violations they see, it would definitely help cut down on vehicle mishaps."

## Costume winner



Photo by Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin

**1st Lt. Thomas Alldridge, platoon commander, 2nd Platoon, Military Police Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, wins best costume at the regimental Halloween run aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 28.**

# Four Chiefs, one family



Photo courtesy of Lori Rabago

Lori Rabago (left), a retired Navy Chief and current executive assistant to the commanding officer of 1st Dental Battalion, stands at attention after her sister, Terese McClain Lagana (second from right), is pinned to the rank of Chief during a recent promotion ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. Also in attendance were the sisters' father, retired Chief James Ball (second from left), and sister, retired Chief Shelly Nelson (far right). The newly-promoted McClain Lagana became the fourth Navy Chief in her family.

# LS Marines support expeditionary unit

Story and photos by  
Pfc. Timothy Childers  
Staff Writer

## UNITED STATES NAVAL STATION SAN DIEGO, Calif.

– Navy ships are out in the open ocean and away from port for months at a time, so the supplies and equipment they receive while docked are vital to their success during deployments. In many cases Marines will load the gear for the service members of Marine Expeditionary Units.

The Marines from Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, staged vehicles and equipment here Nov. 3, in preparation for loading onto the fleet of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

The 11th MEU, consisting of the USS Makin Island, USS New Orleans and USS Pearl Harbor, is scheduled to deploy to the western Pacific and Middle East regions this month.

The Marines staged tactical vehicles including several 7-ton trucks and Humvees, and equipment such as generators, medical supplies, pallets full of engineer stakes and fuel tanks transported from Camp Pendleton, Calif. The Marines unloading and staging the equipment were heavy equipment operators, utilizing vehicles such as Light Compatibility Rough Terrain Forklifts, John Deere 624J TRAMs and SkyTrak MMV forklifts.

“I enjoy my job,” said Cpl. Joshua A. Petruso, heavy equipment operator, LS Company, CLR-17, 1st MLG. “I like using the full-sized equipment and being able to supply the Marines and sailors of the 11th MEU.”

Landing support specialists take accountability of equipment and supplies loaded and offloaded onto ships. It’s also their job to prioritize and track the personnel and gear that are aboard a ship to ensure the most efficient deployment possible, said Cpl. David A. Powell, landing support specialist, LS Company, CLR-17, 1st MLG.

“Our job can be very tedious because it requires a lot of coordination between units to complete most operations,” said Powell.

To assist in their operations,



**Marines with Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, stage vehicles and equipment to be loaded onto the fleet of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit at U.S. Naval Station San Diego, Nov. 3, before its deployment to the western Pacific this month.**

landing support specialists use Portable Deployment Kits, which use Radio-Frequency Identifiers to track equipment. The tracker uses remote ID tags placed with gear that transmit its location to the RFI, said Cpl. Chad E. Rodriguez, landing support specialist, LS Company, CLR-17, 1st MLG.

If the Marines and sailors can track where gear is at a certain time and place, they can easily distribute and maintain accountability of the equipment, allowing operations to run smoothly.

According to the 11th MEU’s official webpage, “The 11th MEU provides a forward-deployed, flexible sea-based Marine air-ground task force capable of conducting amphibious operations, crisis response and limited contingency operations, to include enabling the introduction of follow-on forces and designated special operations in order to support the theater requirements of geographic combatant commanders.”

The success of the Marines and sailors deployed with a MEU relies on the logistical support the Marines of LS Company provide.

“Landing support specialists are the first to go in and last to leave wherever we go,” said 1st Lt. Ryan D. Betters, officer in charge, LS Company, CLB-11, 11th MEU. “Our job is very important for any mission’s success.”



**Lance Cpl. Andrew N. Albers, heavy equipment operator, Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, mounts a John Deere TRAM before unloading the cargo of a 7-ton truck at U.S. Naval Station San Diego, Nov. 3.**



A young girl sits in the driver's seat of a Humvee at the 2011 Mission Bay Montessori Academy Halloween Carnival, San Diego, Oct. 28.

# Marines volunteer at Halloween Carnival



Cpl. Jordan Perrell (right), from Lexington, N.C., motor transport operator, Headquarters Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, helps a young boy put on protective gear at the 2011 Mission Bay Montessori Academy Halloween Carnival, San Diego, Oct. 28.

Photos by Cpl. Khoa Pelczar



A young girl puts on a flak jacket at the 2011 Mission Bay Montessori Academy Halloween Carnival, San Diego, Oct. 28.



A young girl starts up a Humvee at the 2011 Mission Bay Montessori Academy Halloween Carnival, San Diego, Oct. 28. The Humvee, along with protective equipment such as flak jackets and Kevlars, were provided to the carnival as static displays by the Marines of Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group.