



THE WARRIOR'S LOG

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 37

'Excellence, Innovation & Quality' for the Marines and Sailors of the 2nd Marine Logistics Group

NOV. 18, 2011

'MAKING A Difference'

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Brandon Smith, the officer in charge of Heavy Equipment Platoon, Support Company, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), speaks with locals while his unit conducts road repairs in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Nov. 3. Marines with 7th ESB repaired Route 611 in multiple areas in support of Operation Eastern Storm. The work the Marines are performing in preparation for the upgrade in the region's infrastructure has also improved relationships with the local Afghans, evident by their positive reaction to the Marines and convoy operations.

Photo by Cpl. Katherine M. Solano



See the full story on Page 4

INSIDE



Training leads CLB-1 EPT to success with ANA ... Page 6

Also:
Blotter Page 2
2nd Med Bn. Page 2
Warrior of the Week Page 3

Follow us on

Sailors with 2nd Medical Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 25, 2nd Marine Logistics Group perform surgery on a simulated patient during a field exercise at Landing Zone Lark aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C., Nov. 2, 2011. The five-day exercise included patrols, simulated improvised explosive device training, ambushes by insurgents and treating wounded patients for an array of injuries.



Photo by
Pfc. Franklin E. Mercado

Field exercise sharpens Sailors' skills, assesses first-timers

Pfc. Franklin E. Mercado
2nd MLG Public Affairs

CAMPLEJEUNE, N.C. – Marines and Sailors with 2nd Medical Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, participated in a field exercise at Landing Zone Lark aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C., from Oct. 29 to Nov. 3.

The battalion used the time to reacquaint itself with a deployed environment. The five-day exercise included patrols, simulated improvised explosive device training, ambushes by insurgents and treating wounded patients for an array of injuries.

The training had an extra

sense of importance, because of the amount of Sailors who have never deployed or participated in a field exercise, said Petty Officer 2nd Class Jason Figgeroa, a hospital corpsman and lead petty officer with the battalion operations section.

“A lot of the Sailors here haven’t been to the field,” he said. “Since it’s their first time in this type of environment, the training is critical.”

The training was so crucial to the battalion Navy Capt. Cameron L. Waggoner, the commanding officer for 2nd Med. Bn., also participated.

As the Sailors waited for simu-

lated casualties to arrive at their position, Waggoner fell to the ground with a fake snake bite. Once on the ground, he began to yell for help and waited for assistance.

Corpsmen sprung to action and put their training to the test, thoroughly and quickly checking their patient for any weapons or contraband. As soon as they finished patting him down, the litter team transported their simulated victim to a tent where all medical procedures were conducted.

“You have to keep them on their feet one way or another,” Waggoner said.

Though he’s been the battalion’s

commanding officer for a short period of time, he’s made his presence felt, mentioned Figgeroa.

“Since he’s been here we’ve seen he’s very hands-on,” he said. “Not many other commanders will fall to the ground and fake an injury for the purpose of the exercise.”

The battalion began their training priming Charlie Company for its deployment scheduled for next year.

With their commanding officer spreading the hands-on attitude, the battalion will undoubtedly put forth their best effort to be ready to support their comrades in Afghanistan.

BLOTTER



8 November 2011 - A Marine with 2nd Maintenance Battalion reported an unknown person(s) utilized his Navy Federal Credit Union Visa check card and made several unauthorized transactions. The investigation continues. The estimated value of stolen funds is \$1,500.

10 November 2011 - A Marine with Combat Logistics Regiment 27 reported an unknown person(s) stole money from his wallet, which was left unsecured on his night stand while he was asleep. The Marine also stated when he woke up the next day he discovered his wallet across the room. An investigation revealed no leads or suspects. The estimated value of stolen funds is \$60.

Meritorious promotion, re-enlistment in combat zone:

Cincinnati Marine Does It All

Cpl. Katherine M. Solano
2nd MLG (FWD) Public Affairs

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Sgt. Jennifer Chitwood, the manpower chief with Headquarters and Service Company, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), can be described with one word: stubborn. Since stepping on the yellow footprints at recruit training aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., she has not let anyone or anything deter her from her goals.

Mere hours from earning the title of United States Marine, Chitwood had to cease training due to a pelvic fracture. She admits she was devastated as she watched the new Marines she had trained with for the past 13 weeks, the standard amount of time in recruit training, complete their training and become Marines. Eleven months and an unshakable amount of determination later, the Cincinnati native graduated boot camp.

"I just wanted to get through training with everyone else," she said, after describing the frustration of watching platoon after platoon become Marines. "I felt out of place because all of my fellow Marines graduated before me."

Upon arrival to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., she set her sights on her next accomplishment. Chitwood wanted to deploy. She picked up speed and never looked back, absorbing everything she could about her military occupational specialty as an administration specialist. Her proficiency soared, allowing her to hold a staff noncommissioned officer billet as a lance corporal.

In August 2011, Chitwood met her next challenge head on. She deployed to Afghanistan to, in her words, "be with my Marines".

After touching down aboard Camp Leatherneck, Chitwood set a loftier goal of becoming a meritorious sergeant. She started physical training not once, but two or three times a day. She continued to strive to learn more about her

job. She mentored Marines regardless of unit.

"Being a noncommissioned officer, to me, is being able and willing to help junior Marines, and not just yours," Chitwood said. "Being an NCO is about helping all fellow Marines."

Perhaps most importantly, in her eyes, Chitwood arrived in country with the mentality that "if my Marines can do it, so can I."

Chitwood went on to further explain that, "being an NCO is not just telling your Marines to do something, but being able to get out there and get your hands dirty and do the exact same thing you are asking your Marines to do."

Hence the two-a-day PT sessions, and the willingness to stay late and come in early. Chitwood even volunteers to participate in additional duties such as morning colors.

Her hard work and dedication to the well-being of her Marines paid off. She was meritoriously promoted to sergeant Nov. 2.

Just two weeks prior, she had once again raised her right hand to devote four more years of her life to serving as a United States Marine. This time, she wasn't standing in a room surrounded by other young adults, unsure of what the future would bring. This time, she was in the back of an aircraft, flying above a battlespace in Afghanistan.

Recently, Chitwood participated in a hike for charity with a group of servicemembers aboard the base. Due to her competitive nature, she admittedly pushed herself a little too hard, resulting in a minor injury to her pelvis. Unable to operate at the same fast-paced tempo she is so well known for, her frustration is evident.

"I want to hurry up and get back in the fight, so I can PT with my Marines, go running, get them where they need to be, and I cannot do that if I am not where I need to be," Chitwood said with a slightly subdued, but matter-of-fact, tone.

But Chitwood knows she will be back to better-than-ever soon enough. It's all she knows how to be.

WARRIOR - OF THE - WEEK



Photo by Cpl. Katherine M. Solano

Sgt. Jennifer Chitwood (center) is meritoriously promoted aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Nov. 2

SERGEANT JENNIFER CHITWOOD

JOB: Manpower Chief

HOMETOWN: Cincinnati

Q: If you were stranded on a deserted island, what is one piece of gear you would want with you and why?

A: "A bayonet, because it can help me feed myself and help build a shelter. I can adapt and overcome everything else."

Q: What is your favorite baseball team?

A: "My all-time favorite team is the N.Y. Yankees!"

Q: What's your favorite MRE?

A: "I do not really have one. I only eat the fruits out of them!"

'IT HAS Improved a Lot'

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Brandon Smith, the officer in charge of Heavy Equipment Platoon, Support Company, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), shakes hands with a local elder during operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Nov. 3. The Marines with 7th ESB repaired various points along Route 611 while working to improve relationships with the local population.

Photo by
Cpl. Katherine M. Solano



7th ESB brings commerce, growth to Helmand province while supporting Operation Eastern Storm

Cpl. Katherine M. Solano
2nd MLG (FWD) Public Affairs

PATROL BASE ALCATRAZ, Afghanistan - As Operation Tofan Sharq (Eastern Storm) continues in the upper Sangin Valley of Helmand province, Afghanistan, Marines and Sailors with 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), conducted multiple route repairs throughout early November.

Operation Eastern Storm began in October as the Marines of 1st Battalion, 6th

Marine Regiment routed the Taliban from Sangin to Kajaki – the last enemy stronghold in Helmand province – in an effort to secure Route 611.

The engineers moved slowly and methodically along the route between Patrol Base Alcatraz and the Kajaki Dam. The area was previously impassable in some areas due to erosion and improvised explosive device damage. Not only did 7th ESB help to improve and repair the road, but they also helped to build multiple observation posts along the route.

Along the way, there were several observation posts to be built, command outpost and a forward operating base that were all going to be constructed, said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Brandon Smith, the officer in charge of Heavy Weapons Platoon, Security Company, 7th ESB.

“1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment now mans all those positions and holds the route from PB Alcatraz to the dam, so we could come in and build and repair the

See IMPROVEMENT, Page 5



Photo by Cpl. Katherine M. Solano

(Above, Left) Afghan locals load and transport various crops in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Nov. 3. The Afghans in this area have begun using Route 611 more frequently due to the route repairs conducted by 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), in support of Operation Eastern Storm. (Above, Right) Locals transport crops on the back of a donkey in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Nov. 3. (Below) Afghan locals shop, visit and work in a bazaar in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Nov. 6.



**IMPROVEMENT,
continued from Page 4**

route,” Smith continued. “Now, commercial trucks can start transporting the proper materials and assets up to the dam for the turbine work they have to do there to start producing more electricity in the area.”

According to the United States Agency for International Development, this turbine will be the third in an ongoing project to bring more reliable power and irrigation to both Helmand and Kandahar provinces.

The additional turbine is key to growth in the area and will allow the dam to provide enough electricity to some of the farther-reaching villages of Helmand province, said Staff Sgt. Davison Slivers, the 7th ESB motor transport platoon staff noncommissioned officer in charge, as he explained how important the route improvement project is.

The work the Marines are performing in preparation for the upgrade in the region’s infrastructure has also improved relationships with the local Afghans, evident by their positive reaction to the Marines and convoy operations.

“Every day we go out on the road, we see little kids, people waving. We are actually making a difference for the people here, even on a small level. We have made routes to places locals couldn’t even get to before with vehicles. It has improved a lot,” concluded Slivers.



'Working ourselves out of a job'



Photo by Cpl. Katherine M. Solano

The Marines with the Combat Logistics Battalion 1 Embedded Partnering Team, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), stand outside of their compound entrance aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Nov. 12. The team works with their Afghan National Army counterparts to train and advise them on various operational and tactical procedures.

Extensive training leads CLB-1 EPT to success with Afghan Nat'l Army

Cpl. Katherine M. Solano
2nd MLG (FWD) Public Affairs

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Like those before them, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), made a concerted effort to put together a well-rounded group of Marines to create their Embedded Partnering Team.

The EPT is responsible for training, men-

toring and advising Afghan National Army units as they work to become independent from coalition forces, a priority of 2nd MLG (FWD) as they prepare to transfer authority to 1st MLG (FWD) in the coming months.

According to 1st Lt. Owen Finnegan, the CLB-1 EPT assistant officer-in-charge, not only were the individual Marines hand-picked, but their pre-deployment training was crafted, planned and carried out over

the span of multiple months.

“There was a real attempt by the leadership of CLB-1 to ensure there wouldn’t be anything we weren’t ready for, so we wouldn’t be caught unaware or unprepared,” Finnegan said.

For Marines on partnering and advising teams, the survivability training they receive, including advanced medical and combat readiness courses, is crucial because they often conduct operations without coalition support as they work to increase the ANA’s independence.

The particular unit that the CLB-1 EPT is mentoring is the 5th Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th ANA Corps Logistics Battalion, and thus far they have shown they are ready and willing to learn and operate without assistance, according to Finnegan.

“Our [ANA] unit is actually rather proficient,” Finnegan said. “They run all their convoys on their own.”

Despite the unit’s ability to operate on many tactical levels on their own, there are still challenges that the EPT faces while mentoring the Afghan soldiers.

“Our major issue is now that the Afghans can do a lot of these things on their own, how do we step away?” Finnegan pointed out. “Now they don’t even want us to go on the convoys with them. They do that on their own and they are proud of it and they should be. This ANA kandak has become a success story very quickly.”

Finnegan added once the Marines finish supply and maintenance training with the ANA, their job will be even closer to being complete.

“It’s our goal to work ourselves out of a job, so we aren’t in this business anymore,” he said.

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