



The Convoy

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Delivering quality information on the 1st Marine Logistics Group

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1st MLG takes over operations in Afghanistan



Photo by Sgt. Justin Shemanski

Brig. Gen. John J. Broadmeadow (right), commanding general of 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), and Sgt. Maj. Antonio Vizcarrondo (left), the group sergeant major, uncasing the unit's colors during a transfer of authority ceremony aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Feb. 15.

Story by
2nd Lt. Tyler Morrison
Public Affairs Officer

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – After a successful deployment providing logistical support to combat operations, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward) relinquished their responsibilities in Regional Command Southwest to 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) in a transfer of authority ceremony here, Feb. 15.

2nd MLG (Fwd) conducted one last symbolic action in theater as they cased their colors, fresh with a new Afghan Campaign streamer. Conversely, 1st MLG (Fwd) unfurled their colors into the stiff Afghan wind representing their assumption of the logistical support responsibilities in Helmand province.

Maj. Gen. John A. Toolan, commanding general of

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CLR-17 utilizes railhead in exercise

Story and photos by
Cpl. Thomas Bricker
MCLB Barstow

MARINE CORPS LOGISTICS BASE BARSTOW, Calif. - With its premier location for transportation methods, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow offers many training opportunities for United States service members including its sizable railhead.

Marines with Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group from Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., utilized the railhead at MCLB Barstow for a training exercise, Jan. 27.

The week-long exercise allowed the Marines of LS company to re-familiarize themselves with certain

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Lance Cpl. Kellby Gietl, landing support specialist, LS Co., Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, waves on traffic during a training exercise aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow's Yermo Annex, Feb. 2.

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GSMT supports 11th Marines

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Marines with General Support Motor Transport, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, conducted a field exercise in support of the 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division here, Feb. 6-10.

During this period, 11th Marines conducted a live-fire exercise. Spread out in various locations throughout 25 Area, the loud booms could be heard from far away. The weapons that were being used were the M777 howitzer, which is a towed artillery weapon, and mortars.

Marines with GSMT were not only there to support, but to train and become more proficient with missions they have to accomplish while deployed. They set up a field motor transport lot and refueling stations. Marines also performed multiple resupply missions in order to get more practice with conduct-



Marines with General Support Motor Transport, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group examine a 7-ton truck during a live-fire field exercise with 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 8. GSMT provided fuel and water for support to 11th Marines fire exercise.

ing combat logistics patrols and vehicle recovery missions.

They provided fuel, water, and motor transport support to aid the warriors of 11th Marines continue with their training. As the training period progressed, members from

both units benefited from each other.

“We’re out here providing 11th Marines with Motor T support,” said Sgt. Michael Stephens, motor transport operator, GSMT, CLR-1, 1st MLG. “We have [motor transport] operators, [heavy equipment] and refueling stations.”

During the exercise, the Marines worked hard to make sure all vehicles were up and running, as well as maintaining their direct support to 11th Marines as needed. The training also gave the Marines who recently joined the unit time to get more hands-on training during a real life situation.

“It’s good to be out here with [11th Marines] training with them,” said Stephen. “It may not seem like we’re doing much to most, but without support, they wouldn’t be able to sustain the operation.”

By providing combat service support in garrison, it prepares the Marines better for the mission they will carry out while forward deployed.



Marines with General Support Motor Transport, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group prepare a truck to deliver water during a live-fire field exercise with 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 8.

HAPPENINGS

Tuition Assistance Class

Every Wednesday at 11:30 a.m., Joint Education Center offers College 101 class to inform service members about different college offers, on and off base, as well as providing information about tuition assistance and how to use it. For more information, call the JEC at (760) 725-6660.

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.

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TRANSFER

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RC(SW), was present at the ceremony to extend his thanks and appreciation to the Marines and sailors of 2nd MLG after a job well done.

"I have rarely ever seen Marines from MLG, or Marines anywhere, operate with such intensity and such purpose as I have seen with all the Marines at MLG," said Toolan. "As a result, Helmand province has transformed before our eyes over the past year."

In his remarks, Brig. Gen. Michael G. Dana, commanding general, 2nd MLG (Fwd) took the time to thank the other commands in RC(SW) that work together to accomplish the mission as one team. Most importantly, he praised the hard work and constant dedication of the Marines under his command.

"[The Marines] do a lot of everything. They distribute money, they run the exchange, they move mail, they run the convoys, and they look for bombs and disarm them. They do everything across the logistics spectrum, and [they represent] the best generation we've ever had."

Dana then went on to welcome Brig.

Gen. John J. Broadmeadow, commanding general, 1st MLG (Fwd).

"I can't think of a better team to turn over with. You have a great wealth of combat experience; you've got a great staff and a great team. I welcome you to the theater."

Broadmeadow took the opportunity to recognize the importance of the International Security Assistance Forces coalition as well as the members of the Marine Air Ground Task Force by saying, "We can't do it alone, this is truly a joint coalition operation ... I look forward to working with you."

The Pawtucket, R.I., native then highlighted the three priorities that 1st MLG (Fwd) will focus on during its deployment: providing tactical logistical support, growing the capability of the Afghan National Security Forces, and repositioning Marine Corps forces through good stewardship of supplies and equipment.

"We are going to [accomplish the mission] with enthusiasm and aggressiveness, with an eye on safety and effective operations. Most importantly we are going to do it as U.S. Marines and we will keep our honor clean."



Photo by Sgt. Justin Shemanski

Brig. Gen. John J. Broadmeadow, commanding general of 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), addresses guests during a transfer of authority ceremony aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Feb. 15.

EXERCISE

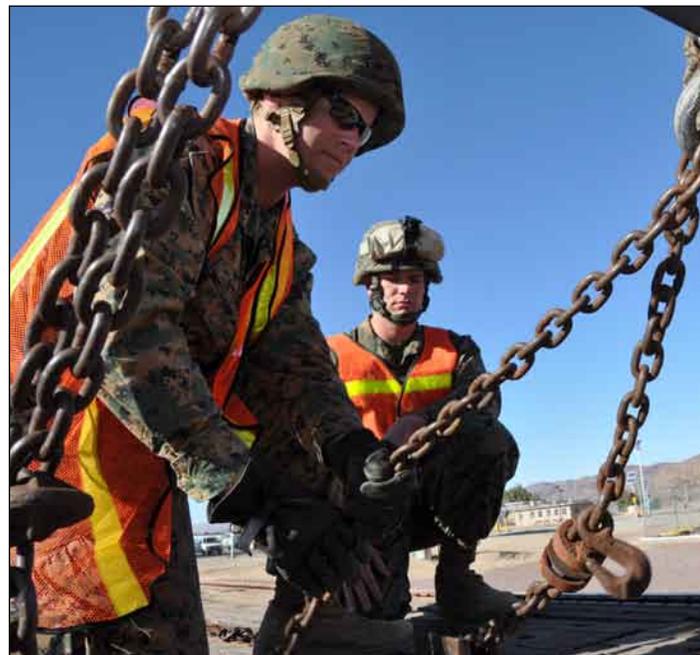
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aspects of their military occupational specialty. During their operations here, the LS Marines loaded and secured cargo to rail cars, prepared groups of military vehicles for transportation, and acted as safety officials during the Army's transfer of material.

"The purpose of this training here was to re-instill the knowledge and importance of railhead work within the continental United States for our Marines," explained Sgt. Kevin Myers, landing support specialist with LS company. Myers said during the week-long event, the Marines were enhancing skills in their MOS they usually don't do.

With the recent draw-down in Afghanistan, Marines will need to begin focusing more on the logistical aspects of transportation within CONUS instead of cargo transportation by sea or air, Myers explained.

The company's training opportunity came about because of the soldiers' daily work on the railroad. MCLB Barstow has the largest railhead in the Department of



Marines with Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, Camp Pendleton, partake in a training exercise held at the Yermo annex railhead on Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, Feb. 2.

Defense and it only seems fitting to conduct the training here.

Myers explained joint operations started four years ago when a Marine from LS company contacted the Army Movement Con-

trol Company to see if the Marines could participate in railhead operations with the soldiers.

"Since then, we've been doing joint training with the Army here and it's worked out well for both

services," said Myers, a 27-year old Avon Park, Fla., native.

The Army MCC stationed at MCLB Barstow complimented the Marines of LS company for their contributions over the week-long event.

"It works out for both services when they're up here training," said Sgt. 1st Class Chris Hammersky, senior movement coordinator with MCC. "While they're here, we have twice as many people to keep an eye out for safety issues and get the work done faster and easier."

Training conducted on base by the LS Marines has become an unofficial annual event for the company. Since their first training exercise in 2008, the LS Marines have contacted the Army for possible training opportunities for the future.

Along with scheduling potential training events in Barstow, the Marines have invited the soldiers to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton to train together in various exercises.

"While they don't get to do much training with railways, the same goes for us and beach operations. It's good to know we can help each other out in these ways," Hammersky added, referring to the Marines and soldiers' training events.



A Marine with CLR-1, 1st MLG, hugs his loved one at a homecoming aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 2.

1st MLG Marines return from deployment

Story and photos by
Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – More than 75 Marines with 7th Engineer Support Battalion and Combat Logistics Battalion 1, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, arrived at a homecoming aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 2, after completing their 5-month deployment to Helmand Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Friends and families of these devil dogs couldn't help but start screaming as a formation of Marines approached from behind a building.

Marines blended in with each other with their camouflage uniforms, but it didn't take long for their friends and families to spot them from the chaos of the night.

"I am very happy and excited to be home, especially to see my wife

waiting here for me," said Sgt. Fernando Horta, motor transport operator, Company A, 7th ESB, 1st MLG. "All I can think of right now is to make up for the time I've lost with my wife, spending time with my family and enjoy some of my wife's homemade meals."

Horta, 26, from West New York, N.J., was really excited to see his wife and couldn't wait to jump in the car and go home for the "delicious meal" that his wife had prepared.

As the service members reunited with their friends and families, everyone scattered and the lot got emptier by the second. For some Marines, it was a familiar feeling and seemed like they never left. They got in their vehicles and took off with their loved ones. But for a few, they stayed back for a little longer to take in the moment that they reunited with their loved ones. It's a moment that they'd remember for the rest of their lives.



A wife helps out her Marine with his bags during a homecoming as he arrived to Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 2, after completing his deployment to Helmand Province, Afghanistan, with Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Illinois Corpsman proves his worth in Garmsir

Story and photo by
Cpl. Bryan Nygaard
Staff Writer

GARMSIR, Afghanistan – During the late afternoon hours of Jan. 30, Marines with Bridge Platoon, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), were working hard to take apart a medium girder bridge in the rural district of Garmsir, Helmand province. During the disassembly, part of the bridge inadvertently gave way and landed on a Marine's leg, sending him to the ground, writhing in pain.

"Doc! Doc! Doc! Doc, get up here now!"

Sprinting on to the scene with his medical bag on his back was the corpsman for Bridge Platoon, Petty Officer Third Class Michael Soto. Though he didn't know exactly what was going on, he ran to where

Marines were gathering around a body lying on the ground. Soto knelt down next to the injured Marine and began to determine the extent to which his leg was damaged. His hands trembled slightly as he used his scissors to cut the Marine's pants so the injury could be exposed.

"I told myself just to relax a little bit," said Soto. "I was shaking a little. Not because I was scared. I was just kind of hyped up like, 'Yeah! Yeah!' Like this is my time. I get to finally do something. It was exciting in a way."

Once he determined the Marine had suffered a closed fracture, Soto grabbed some splints out of his medical bag. After setting the Marine's leg, giving him some medicine to dull the pain and taking his vitals, Soto began joking with his patient.

"Oh man, now you're going to be on light duty for the rest of the de-

ployment," chuckled Soto. "You're going to be our new clerk."

During this time, the commander of Bridge Platoon had coordinated a medical evacuation. Less than 30 minutes later, a Black Hawk helicopter landed in a field next to the bridge site. The injured Marine was placed on a litter and carried by his fellow Marines toward the air ambulance with Soto out in front leading the way.

"That was almost a textbook medevac," said Staff Sgt. Brian Glory, the staff non-commissioned officer in charge of Bridge Platoon and a veteran of two deployments to Iraq. "The way Doc Soto took care of everything and really controlled the site. He handled his business. He did his job extremely well."

The 21-year-old Soto has come a long way in his three years since

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Petty Officer Third Class Michael Soto, the corpsman for Bridge Platoon, Alpha Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, poses for a photo in the district of Garmsir, Helmand province, Jan. 30

New Jersey Marine supports troops in Afghanistan

Story and photo by
Cpl. Michele Watson
Staff Writer

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Some Marines may remember the stately man walking tall through their high school hallways; an array of colorful medals and ribbons on his chest highlighting his successes; a white belt around his waist held by a distinctive gold buckle; a blood-red stripe down his

perfectly pressed blue pants; and black shoes so shiny they could see their reflection.

For Lance Cpl. Derrick A. Simms this sight was the beginning of an experience that only the few and the proud can claim.

"A recruiter came up to me in the Bronx wearing his blues and I was sold," said Simms, 22, a Neptune Township, N.J. native.

Following high school, Simms at-

tended college on a partial basketball scholarship. Without a full scholarship he looked to the military as an alternative means to gain an education, as well as an opportunity to see the world. Two and a half years after shipping off to Marine Corps Recruit Training, Simms wakes daily to the brisk cold of an Afghan winter.

Since September 2011, Simms has been supporting coalition forces working as a warehouse supply clerk with Marine Air-Ground Task Force Support Battalion 11.2, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), in Afghanistan.

"The Marine Corps is built around supply," said Simms, who works at the Supply Management Unit lot in Camp Leatherneck. "The warfighter needs gear and we're the ones they come to for whatever it is they need."

The Supply Management Unit is the largest supply point in Regional Command Southwest, covering all of Helmand and Nimroz provinces in Afghanistan. The lot holds more than 20,000 line items of supply and supports Marines and sailors conducting operations outside the wire.

Simms said the deployment has strengthened his relationships with the troops he works alongside daily.

"You spend 24 hours together; you eat together; you work together; you live together," said Simms. "It really brings us closer."

Experiencing Afghanistan has brought Simms a newfound appreciation for the simple things many take for granted. Simms said it's shown him a different culture and made him more grateful for what he has in the states.

Despite the number of troops deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan over the past decade, the support of those back home can still be seen through letters from elementary school children and care packages from citizens who have no relation to the military.

"I'm thankful for the American people who support the troops," said Simms. "It's a relief to know that strangers are thinking of us and praying for us. It's motivational and gives me a reason to keep going every day."

With just a couple months left in Afghanistan, Simms is anxious to get home to his 13-month-old daughter. He said he understands the importance of his role here, but is also excited to see his friends and family. To his mother, Simms says to "keep the faith."



Lance Cpl. Derrick A. Simms, a warehouse clerk with Marine Air-Ground Task Force, Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), is currently deployed to Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan.



GIVE HIM ONE!

CPL. ANDY NGUYEN

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
Staff Writer

A Marine with Maintenance Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, was recently named Marine of the Year for I Marine Expeditionary Force

Cpl. Andy Nguyen, telephone systems and personal computer repairman, was chosen out of several other Marines to represent I MEF as one of the best for 2011.

Nguyen, a Westfield, Ind., native, joined the Marine Corps shortly after graduating high school. Originally, he didn't know what he was going to do, nor did joining the military ever cross his mind. But in Sept., 2009, he stepped on the yellow footprints at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif., to join the elite fighting force.



Courtesy photo

Cpl. Andy Nguyen joined the Marine Corps shortly after graduating high school. Nguyen stated how happy he was to be named Marine of the Year and that his mentors placed him on the board to compete for it.

“One of the main reasons why I joined is because I liked the structure,” said Nguyen. “I also knew that I could support my wife better if I had something more stable.”

After his decision to leave home for the Marine Corps, his family had different thoughts than his.

“They were very hesitant at first,” said Nguyen. “But once they realized that I was pretty much dead set on it, they accepted it more and they have no problem with it now. They’re happy that I’m doing what I’m doing.”

A normal day for the 20-year-old is working on circuit cards for radios, as well as training for a future deployment. Nguyen will be going on his first deployment this spring.

“I look forward to doing it,” said Nguyen.

A lot goes into becoming Marine of the Year. Marines are tested on different subjects relating to the Marine Corps, from drill manuals to their uniforms. The individual event scores are added into a composite score to decide the competition.

Nguyen stated how happy he was to be named Marine of the Year and for the fact his mentors placed him on the board to compete for it.

Nguyen named a lot of people throughout his career who helped him get to this point.

“One of my drill instructors, Sgt. Lopez who is out in Twentynine Palms right now helped me a lot,” said Nguyen. “He is a motivator and he gave me a lot of good information I needed since I picked up. Also Sgt. Smith, he was with me from the school house to the fleet and he pretty much showed me the way.”

Nguyen uses what he learned



Courtesy photo

Cpl. Andy Nguyen, telephone systems and personal computer repairman, Maintenance Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, poses with his wife Michelle. Nguyen, 20, from Westfield, Ind., was recently named Marine of the Year for I Marine Expeditionary Force. Nguyen still attributed his success to his wife.

from his mentors and applies it to himself and to the Marines who are under his charge.

Nguyen’s wife, Michelle, is also involved with the unit as the assistant Family Readiness Officer. He helps his wife with whatever she needs during his free time.

“I like helping out my wife,” said Nguyen. “If she ever needs help with setting up parties, or

volunteer stuff, I like helping her out with that.”

Even though his hard work and dedication helped get him here, Nguyen still attributed his success to his wife.

“I would like to thank my wife,” said Nguyen. “Without my wife, I wouldn’t be able to do this. She is pretty much the main reason why I am where I am right now.”

Leap of faith

Military policemen enhance water survival skills

Story and photos by
Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Splash... “Next two, ready? Jump!”

Approximately 50 military policemen with Military Police Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, were freefalling into the Las Pulgas pool here, Feb. 7, in order to qualify for their basic level of combat water survival training.

The Marine Corps Combat Water Survival Training Program divides Marines into three stages – basic, intermediate and advanced swimmers. The basic and intermediate stages are completed in one day of training. For the advanced level, Marines must go through a week-long water survival course – consisting of various swims, runs, exercises, rescues and techniques.

At the basic qualification level, Marines had to strip off their gear in less than 10 seconds while in the water. Then they jumped off of a raised platform called ‘the tower’ into the water. After the tower, Marines must utilize their gear to tread water for four minutes, without touching the edge of the pool. Before they could be certified for basic level, Marines swam with their pack for 25 meters.

“It’s good training,” said Lance Cpl. Luis Contreras, military policeman, MP Co., CLR-17, 1st MLG. “Every step is based on real-life scenarios. Not only that it helps us improve our under-water skills, it also helps some Marines to overcome their fears, whether it’s the fear of heights or water.”

For those who couldn’t swim or are afraid of water, instructors worked with them individually in shallow water to teach them simple swim strokes and water survival techniques prior to qualifying.

The training might seem dangerous and difficult for some people, but it’s very safe and well-thought through, explained Contreras, 22, from Garden Grove, Calif. Instructors surrounded the pool with safety equipment and prepared for any incident that might occur.



A military policeman with Military Police Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, leaps into the pool and swims to the other end during the basic qualification level of the Marine Corps Combat Water Survival Training Program at the Las Pulgas pool aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 7.

“It’s like there’s always someone standing there and watching over you,” Contreras said. “It puts you at ease a little while you’re trying to qualify, knowing they’ll be there if anything happens.”

Once they pass the basic level of combat water survival, they were certified for the next two years. Some continued on and became certified as intermediate or advanced swimmers, which last for three years.

“As a member of an amphibious force, every Marine needs to know all the basic water survival techniques,” said Contreras. “That way, they’ll know exactly what to do to stay stealth while protecting themselves and their equipment when their skills are needed.”

Contreras was conquering his fear of heights and the program took him one step closer to accomplishing that goal.

He added, “If it can help me, I believe this training can help anyone.”



A military policeman with Military Police Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, gasps for air as he swims from one side of the pool to the other during the basic qualification level of the Marine Corps Combat Water Survival Training Program at the Las Pulgas pool aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 7.

SOTO

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joining the Navy. Growing up in Lake Villa, Ill., (a mere 17 miles away from Naval Station Great Lakes) the self-admitted partier never took anything too seriously. Now he is entrusted with rendering emergency medical treatment to Marines on the frontlines of Afghanistan.

After graduating from Grayslake North High School in 2008, where he played defensive back for the football team, Soto was looking to get out of Lake Villa. He had received acceptance letters from several different colleges including Northern Illinois University, but he had no desire to go back to school. Soto wanted to get a job and get out of the house as soon as possible.

Soto decided to join the military. Much of Soto's family has served in the armed forces. His father, Antonio, had spent 22 years in the Navy as a sonar technician. For much of Soto's childhood, his father was aboard a ship at some remote location around the world.

"I saw what the Navy did for my dad," said Soto. "The stories he'd tell me and the pictures he'd show me ... I definitely wanted to do something like that too."

At first, Soto wanted to join the Marine Corps, but his father, being a career sailor, was not going to allow that. Antonio suggested to his son that he become a Navy Corpsman, who functions as the primary medical caregiver to Marines on the

battlefield.

"You're kind of like a Marine in a way," Soto was told by his father. "You'll be treated differently because you're a sailor, but you're going to learn a bunch of medical stuff."

Soto was sold on the idea. After graduating from boot camp and going through hospital corpsman school, he got his first taste of what life is like in a Marine unit when he went through Field Medical Training at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

"A lot of guys are like, 'Oh, it wasn't that bad,' but it was pretty hard for me," said Soto. "The [hikes] and stuff... I did it all. I never want to go back again.

"I learned a lot though. It definitely opened up another side of the corpsman rating. I was thinking it was all in the hospital and then I was exposed to actual tactical care in the field on the ground. You go on field [operations] for like 5 to 7 days. You eat [Meals Ready to Eat], you sleep outside and they teach you how to take care of your feet."

Once that pillar of training was completed, Soto received orders to Camp Hansen in Okinawa, Japan. After working in a clinic at a different command, he was transferred to 9th Engineer Support Battalion.

In the months leading up to their current deployment to Afghanistan, Soto was busy training alongside the Marines and getting them medically ready. During this time, he found out that the Marines like to poke fun at each other and especially any sailors



Petty Officer Third Class Michael Soto, the corpsman for Bridge Platoon, Alpha Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, guides the litter-bearers to the landing zone during a medical evacuation of a Marine who was injured during construction of a bridge in the district of Garmsir, Helmand province, Jan. 30. Soto, a native of Lake Villa, Ill., has been with 9th ESB for the past year and is the primary caregiver to the Marines of bridge platoon as they serve on the frontlines of Afghanistan.

that are within their ranks.

"He's too soft so I try to harden him up," jokes Lance Cpl. Jesus Penagraves, a combat engineer in 9th ESB and a native of Houston. "I try to make him feel like a Marine. Thick skin – he needs it."

In order to fit in, Soto, who is naturally cheerful and outgoing, had to embrace the unique culture he was placed in.

"Everyone talks trash to each other," said Soto. "You just kind of take it. I just got used to it. It's kind of a bond. I started talking trash back. I became one of them."

Now, three months into the deployment, "Doc" Soto is just one of the guys. He has made many friends throughout the platoon, who he says help him get through every day. In addition to prescribing aspirin, patching up small cuts and pulling splinters from the fingers of Marines, Soto frequently tries to help out with the labor-intensive work his friends are engaged in when they are building bridges.

Glory often chases Soto off of the building site out of fear of him possibly getting injured.

"There are a lot of times he tries to get involved and help the Marines out because he's created that camaraderie," said Glory, a native of Tulsa, Okla. "That's just Doc Soto. But I hold him back because if he gets hurt we're kind of done."

At the time of the accident, Soto had taken a break from walking

around checking on his Marines and decided to sit down to read a few pages of "Starship Troopers." Not long after sitting down, he heard the call for help. Without hesitation, the 5-foot-7-inch, 140-pound sailor sprinted to the bridge site in only a few seconds.

First Lt. Matt Paluta, the commander of Bridge Platoon, 9th ESB, believes that Soto's actions have given the Marines peace of mind for the rest of the deployment.

"It wasn't a major injury, but [Soto] definitely proved his worth," said Paluta, a native of Cincinnati. "It's one of those things when Marines see that, they see their doc performing that well under pressure, it breeds confidence. Hey, doc's got our back – he knows his stuff. Their minds won't be distracted as much now. Every bridge build, every convoy, hey Doc Soto's around. We know he can do it."

Not only do the Marines now have confidence in Soto, but he also has more confidence in himself and his fellow Marines.

"I'm happy it happened while we weren't being shot at," said Soto. "It helped me out a lot today because I actually got to see the picture. I got to see how everything worked. The [radio operator] already knew what to do, Lieutenant [Paluta] was already talking to the command. It was just awesome how everything worked. It was so smooth. Now I know all I really have to do is just focus on my job."



Petty Officer Third Class Michael Soto (right), the corpsman for Bridge Platoon, Alpha Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion reads through a concussion evaluation guide during a convoy through Helmand province, Jan. 25.

Service Company Marines attack obstacle course

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – “Come on, get over the wall,” one Marine said to the other. Even though it was just a part of their unit physical fitness, they still pushed one another to do their best.

Thirty-five noncommissioned officers with Service Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, conducted physical training on the obstacle course here, Feb. 3.

The purpose of the NCO-only PT session was to strengthen the Marines, as well as form stronger bonds within the company’s leadership.

“The training brings us closer together as a family. That’s exactly what it does,” said Sgt. Gerardo Gonzalez, pay deck noncommissioned officer in charge, Disbursing, Service Co., CLR-17, 1st MLG. “NCOs are the backbone [of the Marine Corps], so we come out here to get stronger, to get to know each other, and it just strengthens that bond between us.”

The Marines were doing various exercises between each obstacle. The course started with the Marines doing push-ups before going through the first obstacle. Then, they immediately did squats before jumping over a log. Next, they dropped down to do mountain climbers, jumped the next log and performed burpees before and after scaling the 6-foot wall. Each Marine then jumped five more logs and performed sit-ups before rushing toward the end of the o-course to climb the rope. When they descend the rope, every Marine sprinted back to the starting line, signifying the end of circuit course.

“It was very challenging for me,” said Gonzalez, 29, from Mission, Texas. “You have to put out every time. It doesn’t matter what it is, I always tell my Marines whether you’re PTing, whether you’re in combat or you’re just sitting back here enjoying the sun on the weekend, as a Marine, you’ve got to do your best.”

After PT was completed, seven Marines volunteered to compete in a friendly competition to see who could complete the course the fastest.

As the command was given to start the competition, they were off at full speed, moving past obstacles as if they weren’t there. Gonzalez won the competition with a few seconds over three minutes.

“It makes us better and stronger as leaders,” said Gonzales. “Even though we’re with our peers. When the rest [of the Marines] see us being competitive, they want to be competitive too.”

The PT isn’t just about building strong Marines physically, it also allows them to get together and do something as a unit, learning from each other and building mental strength to become better leaders.



A noncommissioned officer with Service Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, jump a log during an NCO-only physical training session, conducted at the obstacle course on Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 3. The purpose of the NCO-only PT session was to strengthen the Marines, as well as form stronger bonds within the company’s leadership.



Cpl. Alex Cantave, training noncommissioned officer, Service Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, jumps over a noncommissioned officer only physical training session, conducted at the obstacle course on Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 3.

Master sergeant retires after 20 years of service

Story and photos by
Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Approximately 20 years ago, he stood in formation at a retirement ceremony and said to himself that it could never be him up there retiring.

Little did Master Sgt. Jacob Schanz know, 20 years has gone by and his journey with the Marine Corps is finally ending here, Feb. 3. Schanz' final billet in the Marine Corps was acting as the communication chief, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group.

"I remember standing there 20 years ago just like these young lads and watching an old guy retire," said Schanz, 39, from Verndale, Minn. "I thought to myself, this old guy is crazy, I could never stay in for that long."

After graduating high school in the spring of 1991, Schanz, 39, from Verndale, Minn., decided to enlist in the Marine Corps, joining the Delayed Entry Program later that year. He reported to Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego in March, 1992.

"At the time, I wanted to get out of Minnesota and do something bigger than myself and for my country, so I joined the Marine Corps," said Schanz.

For the first four years of his career, Schanz served as a crewman for the Crash Fire Rescue Team with 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in Okinawa, Japan, and Marine Corps Air Station Yuma. During this period, Schanz responded to two Class A mishaps of CH-46 crashes and an AV-8B Harrier crash, both resulted in no loss of life.

In February of 1996, the newly promoted Sgt. Schanz was approved for reenlistment. Schanz decided to change his career path in the Corps and then moved to Small System Data Field, where he worked for the next 16 years.

During his career, Schanz completed three deployments to Iraq and a recent one to Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He's proud of the tasks that they've accomplished and overjoyed by his Marines.

"It's been an amazing journey. I couldn't be more proud of the Marines I served with. They've shown me the true meaning of the band of brothers' concept," said Schanz. "When the rounds start flying, you'll have with you the Marines to your left and right. They'll take care of you."

After addressing his Marines, Schanz took a moment in his ceremony to thank his wife and family.

"My wife and I, we've been married



Master Sgt. Jacob Schanz, 39, from Verndale, Minn., communication chief, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group, speaks to CLR-15 Marines during his retirement ceremony aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 3.

for 18 years and she's been supporting me with every step of my career," said Schanz. "She's the reason why I was able to deploy at a moment notice without hesitation because I know she had everything in control."

Schanz said that his family is one of the leading factors that drove him toward retiring.

"They put me first for the past 18 years, so it's only fair if I put them

first now," Schanz said. "And even though I'm leaving the Corps, I'll still have all the Marine Corps traits in me wherever I go."

After Schanz retired, he plans to spend most of his time with his family and start a new career as a construction worker since it's one of his hobbies to build things. He's looking forward to swinging a hammer full-time for a construction company.

Chaplain's Corner

There are moments in life that are forever etched into our memories. Some when recalled take us back to the carefree days of childhood, others to those challenging teen years and then before we know it, we experience those memorable moments encountered as an adult, that can literally take one's breath away. A smile still comes to my face when I recall the Christmas morning when 'Butch,' a Boston Terrier puppy, came into my life and I will never forget the day my grandparents announced they were leaving the family farm in northern Illinois (i.e. leaving me) to seek good fishing in the waters of southern Texas, 1,428 miles from home; I have yet to forgive Texas for its alluring appeal!

Marriage, the birth of children, and a call to ministry are among my ever-growing list of memorable moments, but life is filled with both joy and sorrow and most of us, by the time we reach adulthood, have a faith that has grown stronger by our varied collection of these experiences.

Horatio G. Spafford, a Chicago lawyer, knew of sorrow born of loss. In 1870 his four-year-old son died from Scarlet Fever, a year later the Great Chicago Fire ravaged the windy city leaving Spafford's real estate holdings on the shores of Lake Michigan a total loss. In 1873, Spafford's wife and four daughters were on a ship bound for Europe when it was struck and sunk. Spafford

received a telegram from his wife that read, "Saved alone."

Horatio G. Spafford knew of sorrow born of loss; he knew of peace born of faith. While traveling to join his wife in Europe, he penned these words to a well-known hymn: "When peace like a river, attendeth my way; When sorrows, like sea billows, roll; Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul." February marks an anniversary for my family. It marks a time when life was changed by a drunk driver; a time when I experienced the peace of God that surpasses all understanding while waiting in a trauma center. Faith has defined my life's most meaningful memorable moments and given me the courage to embrace all that comes my way. Marines and Sailors, may you know peace born of faith and may it be well with your soul this day!



Lt. Lori L. Kleppe
Battalion Chaplain
Combat Logistics Regiment 1
1st Marine Logistics Group

1st Supply Battalion Marines showcase talents

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.

– “Are you all ready to be entertained,” the host asked the audience. “Yes,” the crowd replied.

First Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, conducted a talent show at the base theater here, Feb. 3.

Different talents were on display during the two-hour long showcase. Marines sang, danced, told jokes and played musical instruments.

Before the start of the show, Lt. Col. Michael Murchison, battalion commander of 1st Supply Bn., spoke with the competitors, fellow Marines and sailors, families and friends who attended.

“It takes a lot of courage to come out in front of your peers and show your talents,” said Murchison. “I wish them all luck and enjoy the show.”

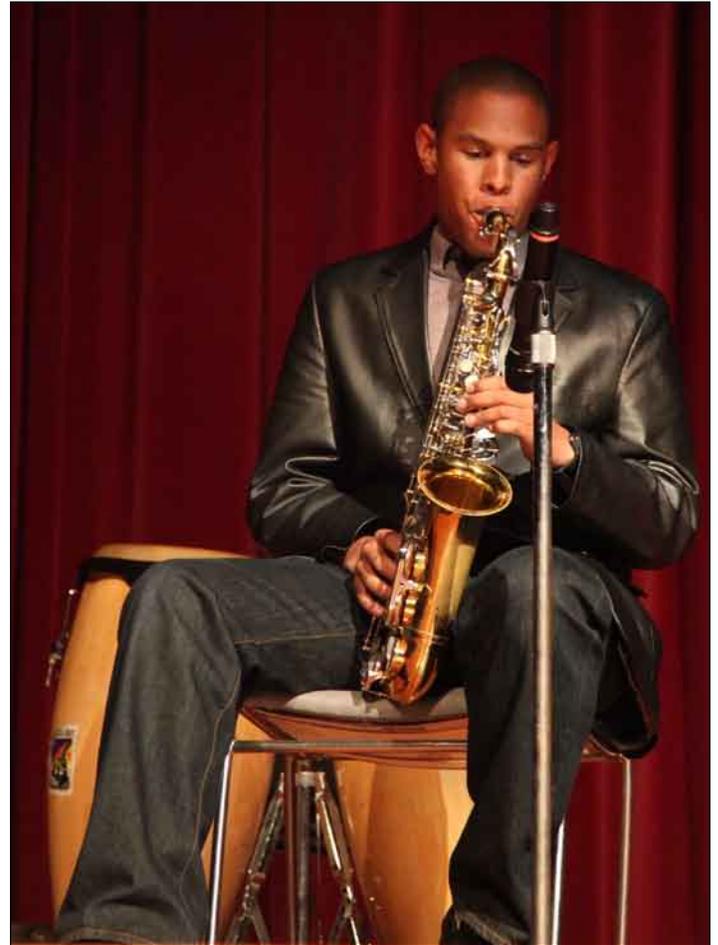
Every participant gave their best performance, wowing the crowd, but the best, according to the judging panel, was Lance Cpl. Jonathan Pyle for his drum solo. Pyle, an ammunition technician with Ammunition Supply Point, 1st Supply Bn., CLR-1,

1st MLG, performed three different versions of the Marine Corps Hymn, along with a few other drum solos afterward. Pyle’s performance even had the crowd join in by clapping their hands and tapping their feet. Type of performance isn’t anything new for Pyle since he’s been playing the drums for 14 years, he said.

“I’m happy I was chosen as the winner,” said Pyle, 25, from Waynesboro, Pa. “I wasn’t focused on winning. I just went out and played like it was any other time.”

Pyle wasn’t the only musician to win. The second and third place winners were also musicians. Cpl. Deante M. Rodolph, warehouse noncommissioned officer, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Supply Bn., CLR-1, 1st MLG, and Cpl. Raymond Reed, ammunition technician, ASP, 1st Supply Bn., CLR-1, 1st MLG, played the bongos and saxophone respectfully. Each winner received a brand new luggage set.

At the end of the show, every contestant graced the stage one last time. Sgt. Maj. Carrie Belle, battalion sergeant major, 1st Supply Bn., thanked everyone for coming out and supporting the Marines.



Cpl. Raymond Reed, ammunition technician, Ammunition Supply Point, 1st Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, plays the saxophone during the battalion talent show at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 3. Reed placed third with his performance.



Lance Cpl. Jonathan Pyle, ammunition technician, Ammunition Supply Point, 1st Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, performs a drum solo during the battalion talent show at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 3. Pyle placed first with his performance.

Fun in the Sun

Photos by Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
Unit function raises morale, keeps Marines motivated



Marines from Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, play volleyball during a unit function aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 3.



During the event aimed at boosting morale, Marines relaxed, barbequed hamburgers and hot dogs, played sports and conducted professional military education classes during the function.



1st Lt. Fermin Sanchez, S-3, Headquarters Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, cheers on his team at a volleyball game during a unit function aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 3.