



Lance Cpl. Adam R. Tornatore, motor vehicle operator, Alpha Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), helps an Afghan driver change a damaged tire on his truck at Forward Operating Base Now Zad, April 23.

CLB-4 expands patrols, covers new ground

Story and photos by
Cpl. Mark Stroud
 Staff Writer

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Marines with Alpha Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), conducted a combat logistics patrol along

Route Red-West for the first time and provided tactical logistics support to Forward Operating Base Now Zad, April 21-26.

The CLB-4 patrol delivered 235 tons of supplies and 5,000-gallons of fuel during the operation and retrograded 155 tons of supplies and equipment on their return trip.

“Taking a new route during a [combat logistics patrol] is a challenge because we have to learn the atmospherics along the route,” said 2nd Lt. Charlise Brooks, platoon commander, 2nd Platoon, Alpha Co., CLB-4.

Alpha Co. worked with the battlespace owners, 2nd Battalion,

5th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6, and the CLB-4 intelligence section to help prepare themselves for the route and overcome any challenges, said Staff Sgt. Luis R. MartinezBido, platoon sergeant, 2nd Plt., Alpha Co., CLB-4.

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For instant morale – just add water

Story and photos by
Sgt. Michele Watson
Staff Writer

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WHITEHOUSE, Afghanistan – After a 12-hour foot patrol in the baking heat of the Afghan desert, a shower to wash away the grime and the grit could be the one oasis the Marines and sailors here look forward to upon completing their arduous task.

When Marines from Support Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) first arrived at Forward Operating Base Whitehouse, the oasis was only a mirage.

Within a few weeks, a team of three Marines turned a forgotten luxury into a reality and organized the construction of shower and laundry facilities for service members at the base.

“When we got here there was nothing,” said Cpl. Tammy La Pierre, the water point non-commissioned officer-in-charge at FOB Whitehouse. “It was basically for the morale of the Marines here with [1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment] to provide laundry and showers.”

Nicknamed “Water Dog,” La Pierre was the only water purification specialist at the FOB and had a big mission to fulfill. To help with the task, two Marines from Support Co. joined the “Water Dog” team and received on-the-job training.

Lance Cpl. Bobby Branch, an electrician, used his skills to provide power to the structures after they were built.

“To get the showers up and running, I ran wires from the generator to the power distributor,” said Branch.

The final member of the team, Lance Cpl. Koby Jensen, helped set up the lights for the facilities and the generator. Jensen, a basic



After retrieving water from the Helmand River in Afghanistan, the water point team from Support Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) transfers water from the trucks to a water bladder to await purification at Forward Operating Base Whitehouse.

electrical equipment engineer systems technician with 9th ESB, also learned the job of a water purification specialist.

With the facilities built, the generator in place and the tactical water purification system prepared, the last item left to get was the water. A few short miles from the FOB stretches the vast Helmand River.

“I do river runs and collect water from the river using a 125 Pump and Dolphin Strainer,” said Jensen, 21, a native of Vernal, Utah.

Jensen often joins Motor Transport Marines with 1st Bn., 8th Marines on some of their convoys to visit the river and pump 15 to 20 thousand gallons of water to bring back to FOB Whitehouse. A tactical water purification system is used to purify the water pulled from the Helmand River.

“The system uses reverse osmosis to purify the water,” said Jensen. “I can purify about 1,000 gallons of water per hour.”

Using a series of pumps, the water goes through the purification process and ends up in a large

bladder behind the facilities. From there, the Marines can use the potable water for the chow hall, the washing machines and the 12-stall shower tent.

“These Marines out here work hard going out on patrols every day,” said La Pierre, 20, a Death Valley, Calif., native. “They are so thankful to be able to come in every day and get their laundry done.”

Though the water point team is a small group and isolated from their parent battalion, Branch said being separated has helped them grow as Marines.

“I like being at the FOB because it gives us more responsibility,” said Branch. “It’s also nice being on our own and having the luxury to run our own show.”

The 3-member team from 9th ESB will continue to support Marines and sailors at FOB Whitehouse for the duration of their deployment.

“Whether it’s day or night, there is always one of us here to help out anyone who needs the showers and laundry,” said La Pierre. “We’re here to help every Marine.”

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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GIVE HIM ONE!

LANCE CPL. THOMAS BERANEK

Story by
Sgt. Michele Watson
Staff Writer

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WHITEHOUSE, Afghanistan - As a landing support specialist with Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), and the team leader for the Helicopter Support Team at the FOB, Lance Cpl. Thomas Beranek and the Marines under his charge live next to the landing zone where aircraft frequently come in.

"We were sitting in the tent, and we heard shots being fired," said Beranek, 20, a Marshall, Texas native.

The group of Marines quickly put their gear on and began to exit the tent as bullets started punching holes through the tent walls.

"We were up on the berm engaging the enemy, and we heard that someone got shot," Beranek said. "As I was getting accountability, I realized it was one of my Marines."

Prior to deployment, Marines receive a class on combat life saving, learning basic medical care that can save lives in a firefight. Remembering the course, Beranek took action.

"Rounds were hitting the ground all around us, so we had to move him," Beranek recalled. "I laid him down on the ground and put his leg up on a chair to raise the wound above his heart. We yelled for a corpsman, and applied a tourniquet to stop the bleeding."

Luckily, there were no fatalities during the attack; Beranek's Marine was sent home for surgery recovery.

"Being responsible for people out here opens your eyes," said Beranek. "It just goes to show that every Marine is a rifleman."

During the firefight, one of the rounds that hit the tent went through an American flag that hung in the back. Beranek and Lance Cpl. Jacob Walter, an Apple River, Illinois native and a member of the Helicopter Support Team, took the flag to the FOB's Administration and Logistics



Photo by Sgt. Albert Carls

Lance Cpl. Thomas Beranek, landing support specialist, CLB-4, 1st MLG (Forward), leads the HST at FOB Whitehouse, Afghanistan. After building churches, homes and schools in Mexico, and rebuilding homes after Hurricane Katrina, Beranek said volunteering in the service was just another way to help make the world a better place.

Operation Center.

"The next day, Walter and I took it down and had the flag flown for him," said Beranek.

Growing up in a small Texas town, Beranek was a regular kid. He made good grades in school, excelled at sports, helped out around his family's farm, and at age 12, Beranek began a life of helping people around the world.

"Every summer, we would spend two weeks in Mexico building schools and churches," he said.

As part of his church's youth ministry, Beranek would lend a helping hand with humanitarian missions.

"We went to Mississippi to help rebuild homes when Hurricane Katrina hit, and after the great flood in Tennessee in 2009, we went to help in any way we could," said Beranek.

Beranek volunteered at homeless shelters and worked with the Special Olympics. In school he was involved in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, National Honor Society, and Future Farmers of America.

With a 3.765 grade point average and a star athlete on the track team, Beranek was offered multiple academic and athletic full-ride scholarships to numerous universities across the country.

Instead of going off to college after graduating from Marshall High School in 2010, Beranek decided to serve his country by becoming a Marine.

"I think volunteering in the service is just another way to help make the world a better place," he said. "The Marine Corps sounded like more of a challenge, and I've never been one to take the easy route."

After a few months of recruit training and a few more at his military occupational school, Beranek arrived at his first duty station.

"Being in Okinawa was a culture shock," said Beranek. "There are language barriers and everything is different, but there is a stronger camaraderie between the Marines because it's a small island."

Shortly after arriving in Japan, Beranek's unit was informed they

would be deploying to Afghanistan.

"I was just a kid when America first went to war in Afghanistan," said Beranek. "I was that little kid who would send care packages and letters to the troops."

Despite the rigors of combat, Beranek still continues the mission every day. The team of Marines, known as "Red Patchers" for the patches they wear to identify themselves as landing support specialists, create a welcoming atmosphere for incoming personnel.

"We have a sign that says 'Welcome to Red Patch Country' because this is our place," said Beranek. "It's what we make of it. We're the first Marines that people see when they arrive and the last ones they see when they leave here."

After this deployment, Beranek looks forward to going back home to visit.

"I miss Texas," said Beranek. "I miss the small town life and I miss my roots, but now I have a story to tell my children and grandchildren."

HST

Landing support Marines conduct night operation to accomplish mission across Helmand River

Story and photos by Sgt. Michel Watson
Staff Writer

PATROL BASE SHEHEBAN, Afghanistan – The calming shade of blue makes the water enticing under the intense Afghan sun, but the currents are relentless. When the Helmand River is too deep to ford while delivering supplies, the helicopter support team is called in.

As part of the helicopter support team at Forward Operating Base Whitehouse, Lance Cpls. Thomas Beranek and Jacob Walter, landing support specialists, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), had a mission to accomplish.

With Walter remaining at the FOB to re-



Lance Cpl. Thomas Beranek, landing support specialist, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), and Sgt. John Strickland, embarkation chief, Headquarters and Support Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 6, prepare a generator for helicopter retrieval at Patrol Base Sheheban, May 5. In the dark of the night, the Marines used chem lights and the light of the moon to prepare a sling load for the 1,300-pound generator.

ceive the backload, Beranek set out to Patrol Base Sheheban in support of Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 6. Because of the river, combat logistics patrols are sometimes an ineffective means of transportation.

“The motor transport section can’t cross the Helmand River,” said Beranek. “1/8 has a lot of little patrol bases throughout the area but the trucks can’t travel across the river.”

Upon arriving at the river bank, Beranek heaved his 200-pound pack full of the equipment needed for the HST onto his back and boarded a ferry with the rest of the Marines due to cross the river. Once across, the group patrolled on foot up a hill to PB Sheheban.

The purpose of the HST is to deliver gear and equipment to locations that combat logistics patrols cannot get to or to transport gear more expediently throughout the battle space.

“My mission is to support forward deployed units with ‘beans, bullets and bandages,’” said Walter.

Many of the HSTs the landing support Marines conduct are resupply efforts that send items like gear, food and mail to units at isolated locations. Occasionally, a patrol base will have trucks or equipment that must be returned to the FOB.

“Our job is important because we are getting [ground units] the supplies they need to continue the fight,” said Beranek, 20, a Marshall, Texas, native. “We also support some of their retrograde missions.”

At PB Sheheban, a 1,300 pound generator needed to be returned to FOB Whitehouse. As the drawdown of American troops continues throughout Afghanistan, forces are shifting throughout Helmand Province. This requires the return of the equipment that is no longer in use.

As dusk settled in, Beranek prepared a sling load for the generator and set up a tactical landing zone using chem lights in a nearby field. After dropping off two loads for the Marines and sailors at PB Sheheban, CH-53D helicopters hovered over the load and Beranek hooked up the generator for takeoff.

During the foot patrol, Beranek said he was able to see how much his resupply efforts affected the Marines and sailors at the forward edge of the battlespace.

“It made me feel a lot better about my job to



Cpl. Joshua Leary, an infantryman with Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 6, supports a Helicopter Support Team during a night operation at Patrol Base Sheheban, May 5.

see how much it impacted the guys out there,” said Beranek.

Whichever unit sends gear from FOB Whitehouse, whether it’s an infantry unit, the chow hall or a combat logistics battalion, will palletize the items to send and the HST takes over for aerial transportation.

“I use a [Millennia Military Vehicle] to pick up the loads and stage them at the landing zone,” said Cpl. Christopher Gregory, heavy equipment operator, Bravo Company, CLB-4, 1st MLG (Fwd). “On the build day, I get the nets and place them on the helo pad, and using the MMV I grab the different loads and put them on top of the nets so the LS Marines can build the net load.”

The net has a cable attached to each corner and after the load is placed on it, the landing support Marines weave the cables through the net and secure them to a D-ring on top of the load.

“When the helicopter lifts the load, the [cables] cinch down and the load tightens up,” said Walter, 21, an Apple River, Ill., native.

Not all items can be transported with the net load however, and for those special cases, a sling load is used to move larger items.

“We use the sling load to lift vehicles and any equipment that can’t fit into the net,” said Walter. “The loads can weigh 2,500 pounds all the way to 12,000.”

In a nearby field at PB Sheheban, the receiving loads were dropped and the generator was air lifted away. The Marines loaded up a truck with the food and water that was dropped and returned to the safety of the patrol base.

“We just pray to God everyday that nothing is going to happen,” said Beranek. “You go day-by-day and you just have to hit it head on.”

EXPANSION

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“We talked to the units who are familiar with the route to learn what to expect,” said Martinez-Bido. “We also looked at any significant insurgent activity that has taken place along the route to see what was happening in the area.”

The CLB-4 patrol also provided support to Forward Operating Base Edinburgh, Combat Outpost Eredvi and Forward Operating Base Shir Ghazay, a mission that the Alpha Co. Marines have become proficient at, said MartinezBido.

“The Marines have made very dramatic progress since [the first FOB Edinburgh combat logistics patrol],” said MartinezBido. “They



A rough-terrain container handler off-loads a shipping container from an Alpha Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), Logistics Vehicle System Replacement at Forward Operating Base Edinburgh, April 22. The shipping container was delivered to the FOB during a six-day combat logistics patrol.

know what is required of them, and they come out here and get it done.”

The convoy was also an opportunity for CLB-4 Marines to work with Afghan National Security Forces.

Afghan National Police assisted the combat logistics patrol by providing security at a series of checkpoints along the roadways, as well as patrolling the area near Forward Operating Base Now Zad, said Brooks.

Preparation for the new route and security operations by the ANP all played into making this mission a success.

“We met the timeline for the mission, avoided any major maintenance issues and continued to support the battlespace owners,” said Brooks.

CLB-13 FRO goes above and beyond

Story by 2nd Lt. Savannah Moyer
Public Affairs Officer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Part of mission accomplishment is taking care of Marines and their families; Jacqueline Marie Maxwell is dedicated to completing that mission.

“The minute you need something she’s there,” said Alex Augusta, wife of a Marine in Combat Logistics Battalion 13, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group. “I called her when my husband was deployed, and I was giving birth to my daughter. As soon as I got into the hospital and they got me settled, [my husband] called me.”

Jackie, as her friends call her, is also the wife of a Marine and has been held in high esteem amongst her unit ever since she stepped in as CLB-13’s family readiness officer two years ago.

“I can’t say enough good things about her,” said Maj. Rene Trevino, executive officer, CLB-13. “She’s really engaged in all aspects of family readiness. The hours she puts in are equivalent to the command staff, the commanding officer, myself and the first sergeant.”

Jackie says one of her priorities as a FRO is to sit down with each Marine and sailor, get to know them on a personal level and make sure they are aware of what she can

do for them. In fact, convincing Marines that she really does have something to offer them has been one of her greatest challenges, yet it has also been her most enjoyable opportunity.

“My most rewarding experience was helping a Marine who didn’t quite know why I was [at the unit] or what I could do for him. During a deployment, his spouse ended up having pregnancy difficulties, and we were unable to bring the Marine back due to what the mission was,” explained Maxwell. “However, we were able to get him on the [advanced party] and bring him home to his wife as soon as possible ... after he greeted his wife and successfully-born baby when he arrived off the bus at the homecoming, he came up to me and said ‘Jackie, thank you so much for what you do.’”

Another priority for Jackie is ensuring that every Marine and sailor is taken care of, regardless of whether they are single or married. She believes that “everyone has a family. Whoever matters to you, matters to me.”

“She definitely focuses on the single Marines as well, making sure they are absolutely included,” says Kristen Pollard, wife of a CLB-13 Marine.

“Whether they have family they are married into, a Marine Corps family they are sworn into or ex-

tended family they are born into, they should know that they all have a tight-knit family here at CLB-13,” said Maxwell. “When [our Marines and sailors] return from deployment, my volunteers and I put together their barracks rooms. Everyone has beds made with pillow cases decorated in bright colors and cartoons, homemade welcome-home signs posted

on their walls, and welcome-home bags complete with toiletry essentials all waiting for their return.”

“Jackie just genuinely cares about her Marines. There are not a lot of people I’ve met like her that are so attentive about the Marines’ concerns,” says Staff Sgt. Fatima Herrera, S-1 Chief for CLB-13. “She goes above and beyond what I think a FRO should do.”



Photo by Cpl. Khoa Pelczar

Jacqueline Marie Maxwell, family readiness officer for Combat Logistics Battalion 13, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st MLG hosts a Cinco de Mayo party at Del Mar Beach, Camp Pendleton, Calif., May 3.

Marine welder keeps trailers operable

Story and photos by
Sgt. John Jackson
Press Chief

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan— Adapt and overcome is a common phrase in the Marine Corps, and Cpl. Sean Castillo, a welder with Maintenance Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion (-) Reinforced, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), is embodying those words everyday in Afghanistan and saving the Marine Corps millions of dollars while doing so.

Castillo, 23, a native of Yuma, Ariz., is the son of a retired Marine and the brother of an Army Ranger. He joined the Marine Corps to serve his country and do his part. He became a welder because he loves the trade.

“I had a job prior to joining the Marine Corps as a welder,” Castillo said. “So I think that made it easier for me to excel in this job.”

Every since he first became a Marine, Castillo has stood out as a welder. He graduated at the top of his class during military occupational specialty school and received a meritorious promotion to the rank of lance corporal.

Last year, Castillo deployed to Helmand Province, Afghanistan, and was responsible for replacing suspension systems on M1 870 trailers. The M1 870 trailer is the Marine Corps’ biggest hauler. These trailers can carry up to 80,000 pounds of gear, equipment, supplies and even heavy armored vehicles throughout the battle space.

“On my last deployment, I was in charge of changing out the suspensions on the [M1 870] trailer,”

Castillo said. “The terrain in Afghanistan is particularly brutal. I ran thousands of welds last deployment.”

Castillo is once again at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, and once again working on the M1 870 trailer. While the suspension systems for the trailers currently in Afghanistan have been replaced with more effective ones, another maintenance issue for these trailers is the welds. When hauling up to 40 tons of equipment over hundreds of miles of rough Afghan terrain, welds begin to crack and leave the trailer inoperable.

When Castillo and his fellow Marines in the metal shop at Maintenance Co. receive trailers with cracked welds, they do not consider it a combat loss. Instead, he and his Marines find ways to fix the broken trailer and get it back to the deployed units. The welders and machinists work hand in hand to accomplish the mission.

“Some things we do are pretty elaborate,” Castillo said. “When [machinists and welders] collaborate, it makes for a pretty professional product.”

When trailers with cracked welds arrive at the metal shop, the Marines do not cover up the problem by just adding an additional weld. The welders take the time to grind out the previous weld and replace it with a new one that is capable of supporting 110,000 pounds per square inch. Additionally, the Marines put three times as many welds on the troubled areas.

“Instead of repairing the cracks, we undo the weld and ensure it’s

done right,” Castillo said. “It only takes us about 12 hours of labor time.

“These trailers are the Marine Corps’ work horse. It’s important to have them up and running, and that’s what we came here to do.”

Since arriving in Afghanistan in late March, Castillo and his section

have repaired 10 M1 870 trailers. Sending these trailers back to the U.S. to be fixed would cost the Marine Corps approximately \$60,000 a piece. By fixing the trailers in Afghanistan, the metal shop is not only saving millions of dollars, but keeping mission essential equipment in the fight.



(Above) Cpl. Sean Castillo, a welder with Maintenance Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion (-) Reinforced, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), puts a new weld on a section of an M1 870 trailer at the Intermediate Maintenance Lot on Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, April 27. The new weld is capable of supporting 110,000 pounds per square inch.

(Left) Cpl. Sean Castillo grinds away an old, cracked weld on an M1 870 trailer at the Intermediate Maintenance Lot on Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, April 27. Castillo grinds out previous welds rather than welding over them to ensure the new ones can withstand Afghanistan’s rough terrain.



'Good Guys' give back to Wounded Warriors

Story and photo by Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
Staff Writer

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – Weekends at the Morgan Run Club and Resort are usually crowded; but this time, the club was packed for a different reason and attracted different kinds of customers – wounded warriors and veterans.

Marines and sailors stationed around San Diego County were invited to the Morgan Run Club and Resort to participate in the 13th Annual Good Guys of Morgan Run Fundraiser, May 8. Twenty-six participants were chosen to receive grants from The Good Guys of Morgan Run.

Good Guys of Morgan Run is a non-profit organization created to raise funds to provide financial support to Marines wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, in recognition of their duty and sacrifice. One hundred percent of the money donated to The Good Guys of Morgan Run is distributed to wounded Marines in the form of individual grants of \$5,000, emergency funds and gasoline cards.

"The Good Guys are absolutely phenomenal," said Gunnery Sgt. Eric Olson, explosive

ordnance disposal technician, 1st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group. "They've continued to help out Marines over the past few years, and I've known quite a few recipients of their grants that were able to take care of their personal financial situation because of The Good Guys' generosity."

Since its establishment, the organization has raised \$2,000,000 to distribute to the wounded warriors. Olson, a recipient of a grant, said he was glad to be part of the program and to be present at the event.

"This is a great experience," he said. "We get to meet with the people in our local community and get to see that they're still supporting us, especially the guys that were wounded in action. It's just awesome to feel appreciated."

Olson expressed his gratitude for the chance to be involved and to meet so many great people at the event.

"I had the privilege to sit next to a guy that was in Iwo Jima. It's just phenomenal to be able to share stories with them and know that

we all have a common bond. It's great to get together and learn about each other's experience," said Olson.

Twenty-six Marines went home with a 'thicker' wallet; but most importantly, all participants left the event with a memory that will last a lifetime.



A sponsor of The Good Guys of Morgan Run shakes hands with a recipient of a grant during their 13th annual fundraiser at the Morgan Run Club and Resort in San Diego, May 5. Twenty-six participants were chosen to receive grants from The Good Guys of Morgan Run.

7th ESB improves patrolling route for border patrols

Story and photo by Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
Staff Writer

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – "It's crazy knowing that the only thing separating our country and theirs is an old, rusted fence," said a Marine engineer, who was working just a few feet from the Mexican border.

Marines with 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, conducted a road construction project along the border to help improve national security and prevent foreign trespassers.

The project is funded by Joint Task Force North, an operational planning headquarters with no assigned forces, intended to create a new and improved route for border patrols to guard the border.

JTF North is a Department of Defense organization tasked to support the nation's federal law enforcement agencies in the identification and interdiction of suspected transnational threats within and along the approaches to the continental United States.

"We're building roads to support the

border patrols," said Cpl. Daniel Martinez, heavy equipment operator, 7th ESB, 1st MLG. "The terrain out here is pretty rough, so we're connecting roads and making it easier for the men out here to protect our border."

The mission of 7th ESB is to create a half-mile road going into a hill to connect the eastside and westside roads, explained Martinez. Prior to the project, border patrols had to go around the hill to get to the other side. Once completed, border patrols will be able to travel their route



Marines with 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, build a road along the Mexican border in San Diego, April 23, in support of a Joint Task Force North operation to help improve national security and prevent foreign trespassers.

along the border more efficiently.

"We're actually moving faster than we thought we would," said Martinez. "Everything is moving along pretty well."

The Marines worked fast and stayed ahead of schedule. However, that wasn't their main focus, said Martinez. Every day, they went over operational risk management to identify all possible hazards and to come up with a workaround to ensure the Marines' safety.

"We're working with some pretty rough and dangerous terrain up here

so the most important thing that we look for is the safety of every Marine," said Martinez.

After a week of familiarizing themselves with new equipment, guidelines and regulations, the Marines went to work and made great progress, Martinez said.

"The Marines are doing a great job," said Warrant Officer Jami D. Larson, engineer equipment officer, 7th ESB, 1st MLG. "For the skill level that the Marines are at, this is a very advanced side cut – going into a hill. They surpassed my expectations within the first three days of work."

"The Marines come together a lot better when they are working in this type of environment," added Martinez. "This project is very different from their everyday job back on base. But they enjoy it much more because it gives them something new and challenging to do."

This task gave Marines an opportunity to work on a big project and learn new things about their job, said Martinez. It provided Marines the training they need to prepare for any future mission.

Photos from around 1st MLG



Photo by Cpl. Mark Stroud

Policemen with the Afghan National Police patrol the road near an ANP checkpoint as Alpha Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) vehicles pass by in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, April 23. ANP soldiers work with Regimental Combat Team 6 Marines to provide security on the roadways.



Photo by Sgt. Michele Watson

Lance Cpl. Koby Jensen, a water point team member with Support Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), runs the tactical water purification system at Forward Operating Base Whitehouse, Afghanistan, April 28.



Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Monique LaRouche

Navy Lt. Bruce Matchin, (right), a physician at the Combined Aid Station at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, and Petty Officer 3rd Class Jasmine Shaw, a corpsman at the CAS, prepare to stitch up a laceration on a Marine's eyebrow. The CAS provides care from minor procedures to X-rays. Additionally, the staff runs a sick call, a laboratory and a pharmacy.



Photo by Cpl. Khoa Pelczar

Family members of the newly-promoted Master Gunnery Sgt. Mario J. Nunez, 46, from Washington, utilities chief, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, pin on his rank at a promotion ceremony aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., May 1. "It's been my dream ever since I came to this country from the Dominican Republic," said Nunez. "I was destined to be a United States Marine."