



1st Battalion, 1st Marines

RIGHT OF LINE FIRST AFOOT

NEWSLETTER

January 2011

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER

Greetings Family and Friends of BLT I/1,

I hope everyone had a restful and enjoyable holiday break with their family and friends. It is tough to believe that 2011 is here already, but I know the entire BLT is ready and eager for what promises to be a very busy and memorable year.

The main training highlight for December was the completion of our Certification Exercise with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit. The Marines executed a host of different missions while being evaluated by other Marines from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. Despite the terrible weather and challenging environmental conditions that were present throughout much of the exercise, the Marines from BLT I/1 performed superbly and were certified as fully mission capable.

Just prior to the holiday leave block, the BLT held its annual Holiday Party at the South Mesa Club on Camp Pendleton. Over 1200 Marines and their families attended and a great time was had by all. The dinner was outstanding and every child (as well as many of the Marines and their spouses) in attendance went home with some lovely gifts. We cannot express how grateful we are to all of the generous people who helped support this event, particularly those from the Balboa Yacht Club and the Newport Beach Community.

Most of the Marines were able to take three full weeks of leave during the holidays in order to rest and recuperate from the nearly non-stop training they have engaged in over the past year. There is no rest for the weary, however. January will be another very busy month for the BLT as it continues training for possible missions it may be tasked to execute in the coming months. I couldn't be prouder of all the Marines who serve in the "First of the First", and I am certain that they will add another glorious chapter to the Battalion's storied history in 2011.

I look forward to writing to everyone again next month. As a reminder, please continue to monitor our unit Facebook Page for the latest updates on training and upcoming events. Also, do not hesitate to contact our Family Readiness Officer, Mr. Rick Andersen, if you ever have a question, require assistance, or need information on the BLT.

Semper Fidelis,

LtCol Craig R. Wonson



LtCol Craig R. Wonson

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First Battalion, First Marines Facebook Page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Oceanside-CA/1st-Battalion-1st-Marines-FIRST-OF-THE-FIRST/11208242257039>

First Battalion, First Marines Website:

<http://www.i-mef.usmc.mil/external/1stmardiv/1stmarregt/1-1/>



BLT SGTMAJOR



Happy New Year to the Marines, families and friends of I/I. I hope you all had a great Christmas and New Year's holiday. During the holidays we had numerous Marines take a battle buddy and experience a home cooked meal with a family in the local area who were proud to host Marines in their homes. I appreciate all the positive feedback I received from families and friends that were overjoyed to have the experience of hosting well mannered, grateful Marines from I/I. Thank you for being upstanding ambassadors of the battalion and upholding the virtues expected of U.S. Marines.

Renee and I spoke to many grateful families at the Christmas party and met numerous folks who donated gifts to this outstanding event. The block leave period was well deserved and afforded Marines to celebrate the holiday season, watch some football, and take a break with family and loved ones.

Thankfully there were minimal problems during the entire holiday season and this is a direct reflection of the leadership found throughout I/I. We will continue to be accountable to one another as warriors both at work and on liberty so that we can transition from Camp Horno to wherever our destination may be as we set sail next month.

As the SgtMaj I want to make sure we set our families' up for success in preparation for the upcoming deployment by making sure we take care of administrative needs. From powers of attorney, to wills, to storage we must make sure we are constantly thinking of needs that arise as our departure date nears. We look forward to seeing you all on the 31st of January for our last pre-deployment brief. From both Renee and I please stay safe these last couple of weeks and take care of one another while spending as much time with family before we move forward with the rest of the 13th MEU.

Semper Fidelis,

SgtMaj Jonathan Henry



ALPHA COMPANY NEWS

Dear Families and Friends of Alpha Company “Team Mech”,

I hope you all had a relaxing Christmas and New Years and got to spend some much deserved time with your Marine/Sailor. The opportunity for your Marine/Sailor to take leave was well deserved after three at-sea training periods in the past three months. Although this training was extremely beneficial to our company, I know the families back home make sacrifices for us each time we leave. We truly appreciate the support you give us.

December was a significant month for our company in terms of our Marine Expedition Unit (MEU) training. During October and November, we learned about life on ship and began conducting mechanized raids. This means that we loaded up on AAVs, “swam” to the shore, conducted a raid on an objective, and then went back to the ship aboard our AAVs. During December, however, the company had to step it up another level as we participated in our Certification Exercise (CERTX). During CERTX, the company again conducted a mechanized raid. This time we did so while evaluators followed the company and assessed our performance. As expected, Alpha Company performed well and was officially certified to conduct MEU operations. This is a testament to the hard work each individual Marine and Sailor has put in over the past few months. Congratulations to each one of them.

In addition to the training we have done up until this point, the company will continue to prepare our Marines for our upcoming deployment. This will include some field training over the coming weeks. Additionally, we will be taking care of administrative predeployment requirements such as medical, dental, wills, and Power of Attorney. If you have questions about any of these issues, now is the time to address them with your Marine/Sailor. To further prepare families for deployment, there will be a Predeployment Brief on 31 January at the Base Theater. Please make it a priority to attend this brief. Presenters will cover a variety of topics to help ensure you are set up for success while your Marine/Sailor is deployed. Additionally, this will be an excellent time to have any of your remaining questions answered by the Battalion staff. Again, the earlier you bring up issues and ask questions the sooner we can ensure you are ready for the deployment.

Thank you to those family members that attended the Battalion Holiday Party. I hope you enjoyed yourselves. To those of you that have children, I especially hope they enjoyed the evening. The Battalion enjoys putting on such events and truly appreciates it when we are able to get such a large family turnout as we did.

Congratulations to the following Marines and their families on their promotion:

LCpl Porath Cpl Rogers

Congratulations to the following Marines on earning the Good Conduct Medal:

LCpl Akers Cpl Roberts

Semper Fidelis,

Capt. Lucas Balke



BRAVO COMPANY NEWS



Dear Families and Friends of Bravo Company,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! December encompassed our most important training evolution as the Battalion Landing Team (BLT) for the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). Our Certification Exercise (CERTEX) involved a number of different missions for Bravo Company. As with previous at sea periods, the company launched ashore first with Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) 13 and provided security for forces ashore and subsequent follow on forces. Shortly after establishing security ashore, the MEU called upon Bravo Company to provide security for multiple Humanitarian Assistance Operation (HAO) sites in the training scenario.

These scripted situations embedded in the CERTEX scenario forced Bravo Company to be very flexible in the execution of its mission. Role players provided friction for your Marine and Sailor, and the first seven days ashore were forged with unpredictable harmony and chaos in the same situation.

Not long after completing (4) successful HA operations, Bravo Company was tasked with conducting a Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO). This NEO was unique in that we had to load up our vehicles and equipment on the Landing Craft Utility (LCU), and re-embark to the USS Comstock for an eight-hour transit north to Port Hueneme, CA. Upon landing on the site, Bravo Company set security for the evacuees and allowed for the safe processing of all personnel. We were ashore for approximately 3.5 hours, and then re-embarked aboard the LCU for transit to the USS Comstock. Our partners on the Navy side rolled out the red carpet for the evacuees, and they provided a nice touch to the scenario.

With time against us, the company steamed south to deliver the evacuees to the Airport of Departure (APOD) aboard Camp Pendleton, CA. Once there, the evacuees were safely delivered by helicopter to the airfield without incident. Once again, your Marine or Sailor acquitted himself honorably during CERTEX. I look forward to the execution of our training going forward!

Congratulations to the following Marines who were promoted during the month of December:

Staff Sergeant	James W. Harris
Sergeant	Jonathan P. Hermann
Lance Corporal	Daniel W. Gatlin

Congratulations to the following Marines who were meritoriously promoted during the month of December:

Corporal	Ryan M. Torrez
Lance Corporal	Jordan D. Vicars

In January, Bravo Company will transition back into what we do best: Attack! While the MEU missions are very important, our skills as infantrymen have atrophied over the last (4) months and we must get back to our roots. We will be shooting live rounds and attacking into the hills of Camp Pendleton. As we draw closer to deploying, please take the time to ensure that all of your family matters are in place. The last thing I want to do as a Commander is deploy alongside your Marine or Sailor when he has not completed the proper Power of Attorney, Will, etc. These documents are essential for our families, and they provide the legality and reassurance that our families will be taken care of in a time of need.

I would like to thank everyone for the outstanding support you give your Marine or Sailor, and I extend my deepest gratitude for the important role you play in his life. Please continue to visit the Battalion's Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/1st-Battalion-1st-Marines-FIRST-OF-THE-FIRST/111208242257039> and website <http://www.i-mef.usmc.mil/external/1stmardiv/1stmarregt/1-1/> for updates on training and the upcoming deployment.

Semper Fidelis,

Capt. David Godwin



CHARLIE COMPANY NEWS



Dear Families and Friends of Chosen Company,

I hope everyone had an enjoyable leave period. The holiday season is often exciting and trying, with many people travelling for much of the time. I hope that you and your Marines and Sailors got plenty of time together and were able to catch up on some rest and relaxation.

December was a busy month for your warriors, as we wrapped up the pre-deployment training for the 13th MEU. Chosen Company participated in our certification exercise (CERTX) where we received a passing score for our ability to conduct a long-range helicopterborne raid from the ship to the shore and back again. Your Marines' hard work and dedication paid off as they flew more than 200 miles from the sea to conduct a mission in the desert of Arizona, demonstrating their professionalism and capabilities. You should be very proud! Chosen Company also participated in two simulated non-combatant evacuation operations, taking small units into Nevada and Palm Springs and recovering civilian role players on military aircraft and back to a harbor site at Camp Pendleton. These missions, while focused on civilians, demonstrated your Marines' and Sailors' ability to perform one of the vital functions of the Marine Expeditionary Unit, which is to assist the State Department in protecting and rescuing American citizens who find themselves in a foreign country when the political or environmental climate changes unexpectedly. As with their raid missions, your Marines and Sailors performed admirably in the evacuation missions as well.

As we kick off the New Year, the Marines and Sailors of Chosen Company are making final preparation for the upcoming deployment. In a short time, we will be embarked on the USS Boxer heading west, ready to support our Nation's security from the seas. In the remaining weeks, your Marines will have a busy schedule during the week conducting last minute training and inspections. It is important to note that your Marines will still have their weekends in impeded and will still have a 72-hour liberty for the Martin Luther King Jr. weekend and a 96-hour pre-deployment liberty in the month of February. I encourage you to take advantage of this time off with your Marine or Sailor.

Chosen Company is also planning an exciting event just for you! On January 28th, we will hold a Company Family Day (most likely at San Onofre Beach.) More details will follow, but you can expect plenty of food, drinks, and fun for the whole family to enjoy. In addition, we will have a few representatives there who will have resources available for you. There will be no formal presentations, but simply information available for you and your Marine or Sailor to pick up at your leisure. I encourage you to mark your calendars for this exciting event.

Chosen Company is proud to make the following announcements for the month of December:

Promotions to LCpl

LCpl Hershberger LCpl McGarrigle LCpl Rowlands

Promotions to Sgt

Sgt Forrest

Promotions to SSgt

SSgt Magallenes SSgt Castaneda

Chosen Company welcomes the following Marines to the unit: LCpl Foote

Congratulations to LCpl Smith from HQ platoon, who was married to Leah K. Smith on the 28th of December.

As always, please let me know if there is anything Meredith or I can do for you or your family.

Semper Fidelis,

Capt. Neil Simpson



H&S COMPANY NEWS



Dear Families and Friends of Headquarters and Service Company,

I hope that every family had an outstanding Holiday leave block and was able to safely enjoy a significant period of time off with their Marine or sailor. The Marines and sailors of BLT 1/1 definitely deserved some time off after the extremely successful execution of the 13th MEU's Certification Exercise (CERTEX).

December was entirely devoted to CERTEX, which fully certified the MEU and the BLT to conduct the wide range of missions that are possible during a MEU deployment. All the missions that were rehearsed during the previous at-sea periods were executed with outside personnel conducting the evaluations. The missions conducted during CERTEX included seizing a beach landing area, a helicopter raid, a full mechanized raid, two Humanitarian Assistance Operations, and a full-scale Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation including role players at Laughlin, Palm Springs, and Port Hueneme. H&S Company supported every operation, and the Marines and sailors of BLT 1/1 accomplished every mission successfully, despite terrible weather conditions that left a vast majority of the BLT wet, cold, and muddy.

Following CERTEX, the company spent a few days conducting required maintenance, preparing for January training, and ensuring all Marines and sailors were set for a safe and enjoyable holiday leave block.

January will be a very busy month, ensuring that all pre-deployment issues are taken care of, and moving vehicles and equipment down to Navy shipping for deployment prep. We will ensure that the Marines and sailors get as much time off as possible, but we have many things to take care of to be fully prepared for the upcoming deployment.

I would like to welcome the following Marines and sailors to the company:

Cpl Ayaladelrio	Cpl McInerney	LCpl Guardardo	PFC Reed
PFC Burkett	PFC Moore	PFC Carreon	PFC Leon

Congratulations to the following Marines and sailors for their meritorious promotion:

Cpl Smith	LCpl Vanzandt
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I would like to thank each and every one of you for the outstanding support you give your Marine or sailor, and extend my deepest gratitude for the important role you play in their lives. Please continue to visit the Battalion's Facebook page and website for updates on training and the upcoming deployment.

Semper Fidelis,

Capt. James A. Richardson



WEAPONS COMPANY NEWS



Dear Families and Friends of Weapons Company,

December was a turning point for the company marking the end of one very important phase of our training and the beginning of another. In December, the company, along with the rest of the BLT and MEU conducted our certification exercise, or CERTEX. To be blunt, CERTEX is a big deal. It is the last thing a MEU does before it deploys and is the Marine Corps way of telling a Combatant Commander that the MEU is ready and capable of doing its job. The MEU and BLT passed, and as the CO of Weapons Company, I could not be happier with how our Marines and Sailors performed. After CERTEX, we all enjoyed the time off and away with our families celebrating Christmas and the new year.

January is important. Now that we are certified to deploy, we are shifting gears and preparing ourselves to be employed on the ground if we are asked. Most of the hard work is behind us, we have spent our training time wisely, but there is always time for one more training event and you can always hone an edge a little bit more, no matter how sharp it is. January's training will allow us to refine our techniques to reflect the most up to date practices in theater so we will be ready if called. All five platoons will get to the field one last time and some specialized training will occur, balanced with enough time off, of course.

As every month, several Marines were promoted, families added new babies and Marines were recognized for their efforts and achievements. Here's the good news:

The following Sailors and Marines were promoted in November (current rank shown)

HM2 Kevin E. Perry
Cpl Richard A. Nuno
Cpl Alex H. Scott
LCpl Derek A. Stewart

The following Marines added family members in November or got married:

Sgt Andrew M. and Danielle Elizabeth Meriwether were married December 4th.
LCpl James S. Monning and Maegan Brawley were married January 2nd.
LCpl Matthew K. and Tamara Tappert were married.
LCpl Vyacheslav Vorobyov and his wife welcomed Milana Vyacheslavovna Vorobyov to the family.

Semper Fidelis,

Capt. Chris Niedziocha



FOX BATTERY NEWS



Dear Fox Battery Families,

Happy New Year! I hope the holiday's treated you well and that you were able to get some well deserved rest with your Marine. The month of December proved to be challenging and rewarding for the Marines of Fox Battery. As you know, we were certified as a MEU during the certification exercise (CERTX). During this exercise, your Marines' demonstrated unparalleled flexibility as they accomplished myriad tasks both within and outside of their primary artillery skills.

Fox Battery initially received the task to conduct an amphibious landing to conduct theater support training. The Marines capably showed that their time at sea has not diminished their ability to emplace and operate the howitzer! Fox Battery then successfully provided security for Red Beach, while simultaneously serving as the Air TRAP force and providing security for the non-combatant evacuation operations going on at the air field. As I said, your Marines' were capable and flexible. They deserve your congratulations and you should be proud of them.

With the New Year, we are focusing on preparing ourselves for the deployment. The battery leadership is ensuring that the Marines are prepared, and I ask that you please ensure that you are taking the time to get your family ready. There will be a pre-deployment brief on the 31st of January. All spouses and family members are highly encouraged to attend. Also, we will have a fourth at sea period. Fox Battery will be at sea from the 6-11th of February. Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to a successful final push towards the deployment.

Semper Fidelis,

Capt. Clarence Loomis



RECON PLATOON NEWS



Dear Families and Friends of the BLT I/I Reconnaissance Platoon,

December was a worthwhile month for the Marines and Sailors of the Reconnaissance Platoon. The entire Platoon conducted reconnaissance and surveillance operations from the USS Green Bay during our final certification exercise before deploying on the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). This was followed by a well deserved 19 day pre-deployment leave block where everyone was able spend some time with family and friends.

During this last at sea period the platoon conducted amphibious reconnaissance as they swam 2.2 kilometers to establish a beach landing site for a follow-on raid force. Once it was determined that the beach landing site was suitable the platoon moved over 8 miles to an observation post where they reported on role players doing various activities. This information they gathered was sent back to the USS Green Bay and used to conduct a Company sized raid on an objective where these role players were located. Upon completion of this exercise the entire MEU was certified to deploy as a cohesive Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). The BLT Reconnaissance Platoon was one of two elements aboard the MEU recognized for exceeding all expectations in the performance of their duties during the certification exercise. A job well done...

January will be full of challenges as we prepare for the upcoming deployment. The platoon will be conducting four training packages designed to build proficiency in regards to medical, live fire and maneuver/movement, urban operations, and battle space shaping. We will operate in rural and urban environments, conduct drills with our personal weapons, and control close air support and indirect fires. It was great to see everyone in attendance at the BLT I/I Christmas Party.

Semper Fidelis,

Capt. Patrick Zuber



ENGINEER PLATOON NEWS



Dear Families and Friends of BLT 1/1 Engineer Platoon,

Welcome back from your holiday leave. It was a pleasure to see many of you at the Battalion Christmas Party last month. I hope the Christmas season was a good opportunity for you to just relax and enjoy some much needed family time. As the New Year is upon us we are heading right back into a very rigorous training schedule as we prepare for our deployment in less than two months.

In an ongoing effort to educate and train the Marines in the platoon, we recently sent Cpl Romenesko and Cpl Clarke to Urban Mobility Breachers Course at Camp Lejeune, NC. Both graduated successfully and now have returned to the platoon. Additionally, we sent Cpl Zuniga and Cpl Teran to the Martial Arts Instructors Course aboard Camp Pendleton. Cpl Zuniga graduated with the class and Cpl Teran will take the final examination on 27 Jan. The skills these Marines acquired during these courses will be brought back and shared with the platoon enhancing our overall combat readiness.

Over the course of the next few weeks, your Marines will be providing very valuable training on how to detect improvised explosive devices (IED's) to our brother's from 1/1. This will be in conjunction with three other training evolutions revolving around improvised explosive devices. This will be followed by two weeks of field exercises focusing on counter-insurgency and counter-IED training. During these exercises, the platoon will once again provide combat engineer support to the infantry companies.

The platoon staff would like to wish farewell to Cpl Christopher Gallo and welcome to Cpl Tyler Gallaher. Cpl Gallo will be returning to 1st CEB for continuing duty. His efforts and accomplishments as 2nd Squad Leader over the past 7 months have been of great benefit to his squad and the platoon. Cpl Gallaher is now serving as assistant squad leader/team leader with 2nd Squad. We would also like to congratulate LCpl Richard Torres on his recent marriage and welcome his wife, Lindsey-Marie Torres, to the Engineer family.

Congratulations to the following Marines who were promoted and received awards in January.

LCpl James Piastuch Jr., Promoted Jan 1, 2011

Cpl Christopher Gallo, Recipient of the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal

Semper Fidelis,

1stLt Kevin Julian



CHAPLAIN ' S CORNER



Happy New Year Family and Friends of 1st Battalion Landing Team I/1!

We start the New Year by welcoming RPSA Donovan Bausone to the Religious Ministry team. RPSA Bausone reported to 1st Marine Division in October 2008 and deployed with the 11th MEU in 2010. He brings valuable experience to our team and we know he will serve your Marines and Sailors well.

As the Battalion's Religious Ministry Team, our mission is to ensure that the Marines and Sailors of this Battalion are afforded every resource and opportunity to continue to build the strong spiritual, emotional, and moral foundations that they will need to successfully complete their mission and reach their highest potential, both personally and professionally. We know that none of our warriors stand alone. Each is held up and helped along by the prayer, love, and support of loved ones. We also know that deployments can be as stressful on our loved ones as it is on the service members. This month I have included a few simple tips that may help you deal with the stresses associated with deployment.

Make sure that exercise is part of your daily routine, even if it is something as simple as an afternoon walk. Exercise not only tells your brain to release all the stuff that makes your body feel good, but it also breaks routines and helps renew your perspective. Next, take the time to plan your meals ahead of time to ensure that your eating habits are healthy and balanced. The way you eat really does affect the way you feel. Set time aside for yourself, whether that is for reading a magazine, watching a movie, or having coffee with a friend. Also, remember that sleep is essential for stress management, so make sure that it is a priority. If falling asleep is an issue, you may want to practice better sleep hygiene. That may include; fixing a bedtime and an awakening time, avoiding alcohol, caffeine, and sugary foods 4-6 hours before bedtime, using comfortable bedding, and blocking out all distracting noise/light. Lastly, many people find peace comes in the context of serving others. Time away from loved ones might be a great time to discover ways to serve others in need of your time and energy.

In His service and yours,

Chaplain Charlie Owens





Family Readiness Officer (FRO) UPDATE



Dear Families and Friends of I/1,

I would like to start off by wishing everyone the very best in the year ahead. 2010 was a very busy year and 2011 will probably be even busier yet. During 2010 the Battalion was very fortunate to be supported by many generous people and organizations and the fine community of Newport Beach. I would like to express my most sincere thank-you to all our supporters. We were able to finish the year with our annual Holiday party at the South Mesa Club. It was a very enjoyable experience for all. I would also like to thank all of Family Readiness Assistants and volunteers for their support throughout the year and continued support in the future.



DSTRESS

From the everyday stressors of life to the stressors related to combat, stress can affect even the strongest Marine. The DSTRESS Line was developed by the Corps to provide professional, anonymous counseling for Marines, their families and loved ones when it's needed most. Call (1-877-476-7734) today to speak with one of your own.

From the everyday stressors of life to the stressors related to combat, stress can affect even the strongest Marine. The DSTRESS Line was developed by the Corps to provide professional, anonymous counseling for Marines, their families and loved ones when it's needed most. Call today to speak with one of your own. A Place to call for those with the courage to answer our nation's call.

- For any stress related issues including work, personal, relationship, financial and family
- Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Anonymous counseling provided by trained professionals
- Exclusively for Marines, their families and loved ones. A service provided by the Marine Corps

I hope all families are able to attend the Pre-Deployment Brief:

31 January, 6PM at the Base Theater

If you have any immediate concerns during our training cycle, you can call the Battalion Officer of the Day at 760-763-1439 or you can call me at 760-760-429-3514 (cell). You can also reach me via email at: rick.andersen@usmc.mil.

Semper Fidelis,

Rick Andersen

Important Contact Numbers

BN OOD	760-763-1439
BN Chaplain	760-763-1414
BN FRO	760-429-3514
MCFTB	760-725-9052
Marine and Family Services	760-725-3400
Military One Source	1-800-342-9647
Base Information	760-725-4111
PMO	760-725-3888/763-2077/2075
Naval Hospital	760-725-1288
JRC, Vehicle Registration	760-725-2106
Sato Travel	760-725-4396
Relocation Office	760-725-3802

