



# 1st Battalion, 1st Marines

## RIGHT OF LINE FIRST AFOOT

NEWSLETTER

March 2011

### MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER

Greetings Families and Friends of BLT I/1,

The BLT is now settled in aboard ships of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group and we are headed across the Pacific Ocean. It took about a week for us to reach Hawaii. The ships pulled into Pearl Harbor and were berthed directly across from both the USS Arizona Memorial and the USS Missouri. This provided quite an awe-inspiring backdrop during our stay in port. It reminded everyone of the many sacrifices that Marines and sailors made during World War II, and of the proud legacy we currently belong to. Most of the Marines and sailors visited Honolulu and Waikiki Beach, while some remained on base at Pearl Harbor to shop and grab a nice meal. The weather was beautiful and every Marine I spoke with had a great time ashore.

Upon departing Hawaii, we received orders to move toward the CENTCOM (Middle East) region as rapidly as possible. This news should not cause families to become alarmed. Most of you are already aware of the violence and unrest that has broken out across the Middle East and North Africa. The move was merely designed to better position our force in the region where it can quickly respond to a crisis. We currently do not have any specific tasking other than to remain vigilant and be prepared to support operations if the call comes.

People often ask me what to send to our deployed Marines. Here are a few things that I know Marines appreciate from past deployments:

- Write a letter. While e-mail is faster, there is nothing quite like receiving a hand-written note from a family member or loved one. It is also something a Marine can carry with him at all times.
- Packages. The only thing better than a letter is a package with a letter in it! There is a PX on ship, but there are some things Marines can't get there. Magazines (sports / entertainment / auto) are always very popular.
- Send photos. Getting a picture of a loved one (especially young children) or pet will always bring a smile.
- Candy that will not melt and other foods that will not spoil or crush in the mail are big hits. Do not send liquids.

Once again, your Marines are doing an outstanding job and morale is high. They are focused on whatever awaits them in the coming weeks and continue to train hard while aboard ship. They probably do not call or write as often as you would like, but I can assure you that is only due to the limited connectivity we have aboard the ship. I will strive to post at least one comment each day on our Facebook page and add photos to the site whenever possible. Keeping you informed of what your Marines are doing on deployment remains one of my top priorities.

Again, we sincerely appreciate all of your support. As a reminder, do not hesitate to contact the Family Readiness Officer or one of the Family Readiness Assistants if you have any questions, concerns, or need assistance. Thank you.

Semper Fidelis,

LtCol C. 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>



## BLT SGTMAJOR



Family and Friends of Battalion Landing Team 1/1, I want to extend our gratitude for the inspiring send off we received as we departed Camp Pendleton. So many family members came in from not only the local area but areas far away to see their Marine depart. Friends of the Battalion supported the families with breakfast and lunch foods as well as inspiring signs along with Old Glory that flew as every bus pulled away. Just as motivating were all those families we were able to see one last time as we pulled out of San Diego Harbor. The huge American Flag was a sight to see from all the ships as we headed underneath the Coronado Bridge.

A few days after we left we found our way to Hawaii where most all the Marines and Sailors experienced their first liberty port. Over the next day and a half Marines conducted themselves as professionals. The Battalion Landing Team is quite large and to be honest I was expecting quite a few incidents. I was wrong; the Marines were great and the port call went great. You hear me say it often but again the small unit leadership, the caring for their fellow Marine and abiding by set rules and regulations made Hawaii an all around great experience for all levels of leadership.

We have received numerous e-mails concerning problems encountered since we have been gone. My wife has even said that she has been able to answer questions and guide wives and girlfriends in the right direction on a number of occasions. I ask you continue to use Rick Andersen, our Family Readiness Officer (FRO), myself and my wife for anything you may need. Our admin shop has sent a financial work sheet out to wives through the FRO and we want to continue to help with any request that can make the time away from your Marine easier.

I will not be redundant as the Commanding Officer has outlined in his letter that we are moving right along and we have not officially received a specific mission. I echo his remarks that this is the hardest trained Battalion in the Marine Corps and are therefore ready for any mission that presents itself. We do not know what that may be but the Marines are continuing to train, conduct physical fitness, and attend classes that sharpen those skills acquired through intense training.

Again, thanks for all your support. Keep First Battalion in your prayers,

Semper Fidelis,

SgtMaj Jonathan Henry



## ALPHA COMPANY NEWS

Dear family and friends of Company A, “Team Mech,”



As you read this newsletter, Company A is fully underway aboard the USS Green Bay. As we left Camp Pendleton, 94 of our Marines had the opportunity to fly to the island of Oahu, Hawaii to conduct final training before going on ship. There, we were able to conduct some of our most productive training to date. Specially, we conducted a patrolling exercise at Marine Corps Training Area Bellows, conducted marksmanship training at Pu’uola Range, and had another company “Red Death Challenge.” During the patrolling exercise, the Marines spent the majority of their time patrolling through the jungle-like terrain of the training area. Your Marine/Sailor trained around the clock, conducting continuous day and night operations. At the conclusion of this strenuous exercise, we had a company formation run to the nearest beach and allowed the company to enjoy the fact that we were in Hawaii for about an hour. The Hawaiian ocean was much warmer than in Southern California.

While at Pu’uola Range, the Marines demonstrated their marksmanship abilities, to include shooting on the move. On our final day, we incorporated live-fire into our 16<sup>th</sup> Red Death Challenge. Marines began by sprinting through a course and then conducted exercises such as ammo can lifts, squats, and bear/high/low crawls. The event culminated with Marines quickly shooting ten rounds while tired from conducting the exercises. Marines who shot well were awarded for superior marksmanship in their overall score. Congratulations to the following Marines who were noted for superior marksmanship: LCpl Harris, Cpl Twibey, LCpl Diezortega, Pfc Crosier, Sgt Serpa, LCpl Coxtorres, and Sgt Abarquez. In terms of the overall competition, congratulations go to LCpl Draper for finishing third and LCpl Coxtorres for finishing second. However, there can only be one winner, and in Hawaii the winner of the 16<sup>th</sup> Red Death Challenge was LCpl Watts.

Before leaving Hawaii, Alpha Company was able to visit the USS Arizona at Pearl Harbor. Additionally, the Marines/Sailors had two days of liberty to enjoy on the island. It definitely was an enjoyable way to start off the deployment.

After boarding the USS Green Bay and departing Hawaii, the company is busy preparing for any mission we receive down the line. I understand that the Marines/Sailors have had very limited—if any—communication with families since setting sail. The Battalion is currently working to improve this by setting up an internet café. I encourage you to continue sending emails or letters to your Marine/Sailor. They will communicate as soon as able. Additionally, utilize the Family Readiness Officer, Mr. Rick Andersen, should you have any pressing concerns. Finally, continue to check the Battalion’s facebook page. I will continue to provide the Battalion with pictures of Alpha Company to post. This will help you keep abreast of what we are doing on a day-to-day basis.

Congratulations to the following Marines and their families on their recent promotions:

Sgt Haas      Cpl Johnson      Cpl Martinez      LCpl Mathis      LCpl Caballero

Semper Fidelis,

Capt. Lucas A. Balke



## BRAVO COMPANY NEWS



### Dear Families and Friends of Bravo Company,

February marked the busiest month in the company's pre-deployment training cycle. Our last month in the Continental United States (CONUS) encompassed live fire training, field training, moving out of the barracks, cleaning out the offices, tracking passports, flight manifests, and the list goes on. The Raiders began the month by executing Battalion Field Exercise VI (BN

FEX VI), which marked our return to the Infantry Immersion Trainer (IIT) and 62 Area Combat Town. The training was focused on realistic counterinsurgency (COIN) scenarios that included interaction with contracted role players. The Marines and Sailors were presented with numerous situations that they could easily find themselves in during a real world operation.

Upon completion of Battalion FEX VI, we conducted some much needed live fire training. This training focused on platoon attacks and weapons zero confirmation. For two days, the Raiders got back to our core competencies: shoot, move, and communicate. When the live fire training was complete, we continued preparation to execute our flight to Hawaii while putting the finishing touches on getting out of Camp Horno.

On 20 February, Bravo Company flew to what locals call the "Big Island" to conduct a week of live fire training at Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA). When people think of Hawaii, sandy beaches and beautiful resorts come to mind. PTA offered none of the comfort and relaxation that one typically associates with Hawaii. The terrain was treacherous with jagged lava rocks encountered on every live fire range. However, the ranges we utilized offered some of the best training the Raiders have executed during our training cycle. The company executed seven different ranges and over 30 live fire evolutions where we shot every weapons system in our arsenal. Unbelievable training for your Marines and Sailors in an unbelievable setting!

When our training at PTA concluded, the Raiders flew to Oahu to link up with fellow brethren of the 13th MEU. From 1 -3 March, Bravo Company received some well deserved liberty. I hope everyone was able to speak with his or her loved one during our stay in Hawaii. The families and friends who support the Marines and Sailors of Bravo Company mean a lot to us, and we cherish every moment we get to communicate with our loved ones back home. As usual, I would like to recognize the following Marines and Sailor for noteworthy accomplishments:

The following Marines were promoted during the month of February:

Corporal Idriz Stojkaj  
Lance Corporal Carston L. Romano

The following Marine received an award during the month of February:

Sergeant Robert A. Velic Certificate of Commendation

The following Sailor joined Bravo Company during the month of February:

Hospital Corpsman Third Class Alex A. Montemayor

March will present new challenges for the Raiders. As a deployed force in readiness, we must be able to execute myriad missions when our Nation calls. Although I do not know what the future holds for our company, I can assure you that the Marines and Sailors are prepared for any mission we may receive. In closing, I ask that you remain patient over the coming weeks and months. The communication resources we have at our disposal on ship are very limited. If you find yourself worrying about your Marine or Sailor because he has not been in contact recently, it is not his fault. We simply do not have the means to communicate like we do in Camp Horno. However, I can assure you that no news is GOOD news! Until next month, take care and Godspeed.

Semper Fidelis,

Capt. C. David Godwin



## CHARLIE COMPANY NEWS



Dear Chosen Company family and friends,

February marked the beginning of our WESTPAC deployment aboard the USS Boxer. We conducted a few weeks of final training and then set sail from San Diego as the best trained, best prepared infantry battalion in the Marine Corps. Your Marines and Sailors are prepared for any contingency, and if you have been watching the news, you know there are many

possibilities for Chosen Company to do the Nation's bidding in the months ahead.

Since embarking on ship, your Marines and Sailors have been busy conducting the Marine Corps' annual training requirements. These classes range from hazing to avoiding alcohol abuse and drug use. Your Marines and Sailors worked hard to ensure that we completed this mandatory training early in the deployment, so we can now focus fully on the work ahead of us during the deployment. We also conducted language and cultural training specific to Afghanistan, as the possibility of being asked to go there and fight is always present. As the helicopter company for the 13<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, it is our job to be prepared for every possible crisis, and Afghanistan is just one of many possibilities.

With this training complete, we pulled into port in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, located on the beautiful island of Oahu. The USS Boxer rendered honors to the USS Arizona memorial, located just a stone's throw from where the ship docked. Many of your Marines and Sailors took advantage of the opportunity to visit one of our Navy's most sacred memorials. This served as a somber reminder of the sacrifice our fellow sailors, Marines, soldiers, airmen, and coast guardsmen make in the service of our Nation, and I'm sure the memories of that experience will last a lifetime. Most of your Marines and Sailors then spent the remainder of their two days enjoying some liberty in Waikiki and the surrounding areas, eating some Hawaiian barbeque and lounging on the beach. This was also the last liberty port where our U.S.-based cell phones work, so I know many of you spoke to your Marines and Sailors free of charge on last time.

As we go forward, the future of our deployment is uncertain. The MEU Commander, Colonel Coffman, sent out an update to you just a few days ago explaining some of the adjustments of our deployment, so I won't belabor his points. Suffice to say that if you are not receiving updates from our Family Readiness Officer (Rick Andersen) then you should e-mail your Marine or Sailor and ask him to have you added to Rick's distribution list. This will ensure that you get the timeliest updates available.

I would like to make the following announcements and congratulations:

**New Join**-HN Randal. Welcome aboard!

**Promotions**-LCpl Foote and Sgt Thompson were promoted this month. Congratulations!

**Newborn**-Congratulations to Cpl and Mrs. Linda Mogilnicki, whose son Tyson (7.1lbs) was born on February 10.

With the deployment underway, and an uncertain future ahead of us, your Marines and Sailors remain committed to the service of our Nation, in 'any clime and place' as our hymn proclaims. Well trained, well led by tremendously talented NCOs, SNCOs, and Officers, your Marines and Sailors are ready for any mission. As I mentioned last month, if you have any questions about MEU deployments or just need someone to talk with, my wife Meredith is always available at

[mgsimpson@gmail.com](mailto:mgsimpson@gmail.com).

Until next month, I wish you Fair Winds and Following Seas,

Capt. Neal Simpson



## H&S COMPANY NEWS



Dear Families and Friends of H&S Company,

February was a very difficult and busy month for every Marine and sailor and their families. Final preparations for deployment, ranging from vehicle and equipment preparations to personal finances, took up the vast majority of the month. With the incredible amount of work it took to get this battalion prepared for the deployment, it was very evident that the Marines and sailors were whole-heartedly supported by their loved ones.

I wanted to send a personal thank-you to all the families that attended our going-away event at Camp Horno, or drove down to San Diego to watch the ships depart. Although extremely difficult, spending the last few remaining hours close to loved ones is very important to all of our Marines and sailors. Another thank you to all families who “adopted” Marines and sailors for those last moments at home.

Following an extremely successful embarkation, the 13<sup>th</sup> MEU sailed directly for Hawaii. Along the way, H&S Marines conducted required annual training, refreshed on daily battle rhythms, and continued to prepare for upcoming missions in Pacific and Central Commands. After a week of sailing, to begin the month of March, all personnel aboard the 13<sup>th</sup> MEU received an outstanding two-day break in beautiful Hawaii.

March will be a very busy month, as missions continue to change according to the strategic needs of the nation. Our Marines and sailors will continue to work and prepare for any contingency amidst the confusion, and we will be ready for whatever mission comes our way.

I want to welcome the following Marines and sailors into our company:

LCDR Sarmiento   MSgt Bisson   HM3 McKeown   LCpl Senn

Congratulations to the following Marines and sailors on their promotions:

SSgt Arballo   Cpl Salas (Meritorious)   Cpl Guerrero (Meritorious)  
Cpl Treichel   Cpl Guardado   LCpl Jefferson  
LCpl Robinson   Cpl Cecil   Cpl Ralowicz

Congratulations to the following Marines and sailors for their awards:

GySgt Nelson, Sgt Patterson, Sgt Brandle (Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal)  
Cpl Stanek (Certificate of Commendation)  
Cpl Wisseman (Meritorious Mast)

Thank you to all the families and friends of this incredible company. Your support is critical to the success of this deployment, and when the mission is accomplished, your Marine or sailor will return home safely and with honor.

Semper Fidelis,

Captain James Richardson



## WEAPONS COMPANY NEWS



Ahoy families! We're underway. All the hard work and sacrifices that we all (Marines, Sailors, friends and families) have made are finally paying off. I'd like to personally thank all the families for the support and loyalty you've shown your Marine or Sailor. Without the help at home, we would not have been able to accomplish what we've done

over the past year and a half.

The world is a dangerous, uncertain place. As a forward deployed unit, we are the American government's hedge against bad things that happen in far off places. In our workup, we've stressed a number of things, from conventional infantry skills to how to handle a humanitarian crisis. Flexibility and adaptability are qualities we have sought to develop. I can honestly say that your Marines and Sailors are as ready, if not more, for anything that we may encounter on deployment than anyone who has deployed in recent memory.

As all of us know from reading the newspaper and watching the news, the situation in countries like Libya, Tunisia, Bahrain and Yemen is going from bad to worse. We have not been tasked formally with anything yet, but we will be ready to answer the call to go ashore if needed in any number of capacities. Please be patient. No one knows what our near future will bring. Rely on the FRO and the Company's Family Readiness Assistants, Monica Roy and my wife Stacy. We will pass information through those chains as soon as we get it.

In happier news, Weapons Company had an unprecedented number of promotions, awards, marriages and births last month. Congratulations to all!

Promotions – current rank shown:

Sergeant Justin L. Urbanny (Meritoriously) Corporal Jordan A. Paris Corporal Levi J. Rodriguez  
Corporal Joshua J. Taylor Cpl Seth C. Toboz LCpl Charles L. Flemister, LCpl Kristopher D. Carter  
LCpl Derrick T. Corbin LCpl Aaron B. Kinder LCpl Jordan L. Rick LCpl Jacon D. Winchester  
LCpl William T. Baldwin II LCpl Aaron M. Schonlau LCpl Ethan E. Cottle LCpl Thomas G. Riddle  
LCpl Aaron C. Meissen

Awards:

Sgt Joel R. Scott – Good Conduct Medal Cpl Keenan L. Leismeister – Good Conduct Medal  
Cpl Jonathan N Cummins – Good Conduct Medal Cpl Jason F. Steel – Good Conduct Medal

Schools:

1stLt John E. Hiatt – PSS-SOF Sgt Jesse L. Burton – Scout Sniper Team Leaders Course  
Sgt Andrew M. Meriwether – Scout Sniper Team Leaders Course Sgt Joel R. Scott – PSS-SOF  
Cpl Travis N. Tickel – PSS-SOF LCpl Russell E. Patten – Scout Sniper Team Leaders Course

Marriages

LCpl Daoud and his wife Bonnie tied the knot in February – congratulations!

Births:

Sgt Burton and his wife, Karina had a baby girl, her name is Evelyn Jane  
LCpl Harbour and his wife Brandy had a baby boy, Baylen  
LCpl Allie and his wife Eunice added a son named Eli Thomas  
LCpl Bucko and his wife Rhiannon had a baby boy, Marcus

Semper Fidelis,

Capt. Chris Niedziocha



# FOX BATTERY NEWS



To the families of Fox Battery,

As you well know, we are finally deployed and heading west! I am hopeful that you took full advantage of the opportunity to come to the pier to send off your Marine or sailor. The Marines and Sailors of the Battery have worked hard to prepare for this and they leave well trained and motivated for the challenges that they face. I am as proud of them as I am sure you are.

After departing from San Diego, we were able to begin settling into the ship board lifestyle and routine. We found ourselves in some heavier seas on the first few days and some of the Marines had some challenges getting their sea legs. Our focus during the first week at sea was to build our rhythm and routine as well as conduct the Marine Corps required annual training classes. The training gave our NCOs a good chance to demonstrate their skills at public speaking and knowledge about general subjects that relate to all Marines.

While we were conducting annual training, some of our Marines were taking part in an intensive language study program. As the BLT CO briefed prior to deployment, we have to be ready for all challenges, to include an OEF deployment. To meet this challenge, some of our Marines spent the week learning Pashto and learning about the culture of Afghanistan. It was an interesting thing to walk around the berthing spaces and hear Marines talking (or attempting to talk) in Pashto. It is a good exercise for them that will ultimately make them more worldly citizens when they leave our ranks.

I hope that you were able to get in touch with your Marine or Sailor during our time in Hawaii. Many of the Marines went to visit the Arizona Memorial and it was a very moving place. 1177 Sailors and Marines died there on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941 and are still interred there. We also were able to get out to Waikiki and Hawaii lives up to its reputation for beauty. The beach was great and the water was warm. Fox Battery had Marines all over the island as part of different tours and we also had few Marines demonstrate their philanthropic nature by volunteering their time at a soup kitchen helping the needy. They represented themselves well on liberty and everyone came home safe.

Now, as we head west, we are watching the news to see where our future will lead us. I know that you have received the latest information from the MEU CO, and I want you to know that I will address any and all questions and rumors you have with your Marines. The best relationship that we can have as the Fox Battery Family (active Marines/Sailors and their family members) is to be as open as we can and discuss issues and changes early. Please forward them to your Marines!

Finally, I hope this newsletter finds you doing well and settling into your own routine at home. I know separation can be challenging, but this too shall pass. Take care and we will see you soon!

Semper Fidelis,

Capt. Clarence Loomis



## RECON PLATOON NEWS



Family and friends,

February was a busy month as we prepared and departed on the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). The sacrifices that we all (Marines, Sailors, friends and families) made are finally paying dividends as we conducted refresher training in Hawaii and embarked aboard the USS Green Bay. I'd like to thank all the families and friends for your support, patience and loyalty over the past year and a half to build such a cohesive fighting unit. The platoon is finally prepared to deploy and confront the Nation's problems as dictated by the Combatant Commanders.

After completing numerous live fire ranges, including a shoot house and dive operations in Hawaii the platoon linked up with the ships of the MEU in Hawaii. We are currently transiting to the west where we will most likely end up in the Middle East staged for contingencies. Currently the news has illustrated how volatile and uncertain of a place the world can be. In countries like Libya, Tunisia, Bahrain and Yemen governments are crumbling as things go from bad to worse. I have to stress that we have not been formally tasked with anything; however the BLT 1/1 Reconnaissance Platoon is prepared to go ashore if needed in any number of capacities. I ask for your continued patience and flexibility as rumors flare. No one knows what our near future will bring. I can honestly say that regardless of what happens your Marines and Sailors are the best prepared group of warriors I've served with over four deployments.

On a separate front, the BLT 1/1 Reconnaissance Platoon has some much needed congratulations for two Marines. At the beginning of this month Sergeant Jake Arballo was promoted to Staff Sergeant. This promotion is well deserved and long overdue. On the awards front, Sergeant Umar Sanda was recognized with a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for his superior performance over the past year as he maintained the platoon's communication capabilities.

Semper Fidelis,

Capt. Patrick Zuber



# ENGINEER PLATOON NEWS



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

Greetings from the USS Green Bay and the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group. I write to you today from somewhere in the vicinity of the International Date Line having just crossed into the Eastern Hemisphere. It was a pleasure meeting so many of you for the first time and seeing many of you again at the send off party at 1<sup>st</sup> CEB on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February. And thank you to those who made it down to Embarcadero Park on the 22<sup>nd</sup> for the MEU send off. It was good to see the family support there at both send offs for the platoon.

We have had smooth sailing thus far on the deployment. The first few days were interesting with moving berthing spaces on the ships – but that made the transit to Hawaii go that much more quickly. The Marines enjoyed a good port call in Hawaii. It was a great opportunity to get off the ship and relax for a little while; as well as make some phone calls to catch up with you all back home.

We are back on ship now, and heading in a westerly direction to answer the nations calling. As many of you may have already heard; due to all the unrest in the Middle East and North Africa we have been directed to make our way there a little more quickly than was originally planned. To be clear, we have not been ordered to do anything at this point beyond be available for any mission that may come up. As we transit, we will continue to prepare ourselves through daily shipboard training.

I ask that you please be patient with communications, as there are many more Marines on these ships than there are computers or telephones. We are trying our best to make communication as consistent as possible, but at its best it probably falls short of the regularity that we would all like. Mail from home is another issue. If you have sent something and have not received confirmation that it got here, please give it a few weeks to catch up with us. We do not receive daily mail deliveries aboard the ships. As the float goes on we should be able to establish an approximate timeline for mail receipt. Moto Mail is always a more rapid option for one way communication with your Marine.

I would like to say a special thank you to Korri Fink and her organization - Thanks For Our Freedom - for choosing our platoon to sponsor with care packages and the like. I know many of the Marines have received care packages from Thanks For Our Freedom and their sponsors already. This month LCpl Patrick Clark and his family are the “Featured Marine Family” on the Thanks For Our Freedom website.

Congratulations to Cpl Michael Whitman who was promoted to his current rank on March 1, 2011 aboard the USS Comstock.

In closing, I want to thank each one of you for making our pre-deployment work-up a success through your steadfast support and I ask for your continued support of your Marine or Sailor as we continue on our journey.

Semper Fidelis,

1st LT. Kevin Julian



## CHAPLAIN ' S CORNER



Greetings family and friends of Battalion Landing Team 1/1,

It has been an extremely hectic and emotional month for BLT 1/1, but God in His grace has us on our way. Already we have had changes to our schedule and been challenged with the multitude of issues that accompany moving so many people so far. As I walk around the ship, and speak with my Chaplain counterpart on the other ships, I am happy to report that your marines and sailors are adjusting well and focusing on the missions at hand. We were so grateful for all of you who gathered to see us off and for a quick port visit to Hawaii.

This week we kicked off our United Through Reading program. This is an opportunity for your service member to record a book reading to any of the little ones in your family. If you have not heard about this, send them a message and ask them to get down to the library and do it. As you may also have heard, there is a possibility that our deployment may be extended or that parts of the unit may be spending long periods of time on this ship. I want to remind you of the important role you play in our success. Your encouragement and strength makes all the difference in the morale of this BLT and we need you more than ever.

Just as a reminder, you can reach me at [charles.owens@green-bay.usmc.mil](mailto:charles.owens@green-bay.usmc.mil). Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of service.

Blessings,

LT Charlie Owens

BLT Chaplain





## Family Readiness Officer (FRO) UPDATE



Dear Families and Friends of I/I,

In a very short amount of time we have had a lot of things happen in the world that make our heads spin with worry and concern. The fear of the unknown and not knowing what is going to happen is often very difficult to deal with. I know it is just as hard on the Marines as it is for the families. We all must remain strong for each other.

Also over the past week we had the opportunity to take part in the Message from the Heart program provided to us by the LCpl Jonathan Collins Memorial fund. Children were able to have a Bear built for them with a special message on a voice chip from their father put into the bear. It was a very rewarding experience for both the children and their parents.

I strongly encourage everyone to participate in the United Thru Reading Program. Another excellent way to help keep the children connected with their father.



### 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

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](mailto:rick.andersen@usmc.mil).

Semper Fidelis,

Rick Andersen

## UNITED THROUGH READING® Update

On this first month away from family, a Marine feels the distance between himself and his loved ones more than ever. That's why the 13<sup>th</sup> MEU is participating in United Through Reading, which provides deployed Active Duty personnel the opportunity to read stories aloud on DVD to the special children in their lives back home. The first United Through Reading recording have



already begun! All your Marine or Sailor needs to do is go to the ship's Chaplain's office to schedule a time to make a recording. Many children's books will fit on one 30 minute DVD, and Marines are encouraged to return and make as many recordings as they like.

Marines and Sailors either select a book from the Command's children's book library or read a book they have packed with them. They are privately recorded reading the book, and then the DVD (and book if owned by the Marine) is sent home to the child who can watch and follow along with a copy of the book.

One of the best parts of this program is the opportunity for your child to view the recording over and over again. According to research, reading aloud has been shown to be the single best predictor in a child's future academic success. Encourage your Marine or Sailor to participate in United Through Reading and bring their face and voice into your home even when they can't be there. Share with your United Through Reading Homefront Coordinator Fontaine Parker ([Fontaine@HeroOnMyArm.com](mailto:Fontaine@HeroOnMyArm.com)) your family's reactions to your first DVD! I'd love to put your picture in our next newsletter!! If you have any questions or comments, please email me as well. This is an amazing program, please encourage your Marine to take advantage of it!

### Emotional Benefits

Reduces a child's anxiety and stress about parent's absence.

Opportunity for meaningful communication between parent and child.

Studies prove that the most important thing adults can do in preparing young children for success in school is to read aloud with them.

**United Through Reading®**

# Important Contact Numbers

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

