



# 1st Battalion, 1st Marines

## RIGHT OF LINE FIRST AFOOT

NEWSLETTER

October 2011

### MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER

Greetings Families and Friends of BLT I/1,

The unit is finally back after a long, seven month deployment overseas. It was amazing to see such an incredible outpouring of support upon our return to Camp Pendleton. Hundreds of family members turned out to welcome the unit home, as did many of our good friends from the Newport Beach Community. It was a wonderful sight to watch Marines reunite with their loved ones, particularly those that saw their newborn babies for the first time.

The last eighteen months have been incredibly busy. During the pre-deployment period, the unit conducted countless field training exercises at Camp Pendleton, a six-week live-fire exercise in Yuma, California, a month-long field exercise at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, California, multiple Special Operations Training Group training events, and three major amphibious training exercises in the waters off the coast of Camp Pendleton. When the unit was not training out in the field, it was working very long hours in garrison refining its mission essential skills.

The deployment proved to be even busier than the work-up period. Following some additional field sustainment training in Hawaii, the unit received orders to cancel all scheduled port visits in the Pacific and proceed directly into the Middle East. The unit immediately began preparing for a wide-range of employment scenarios, and our Marines were constantly planning and training for possible operations ashore in the region. BLT I/1 would eventually lead six strategically important theater security cooperation exercises during the deployment, and conduct bilateral engagement activities in twelve different countries throughout the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Pacific Rim. The Marines established a reputation of excellence everywhere they went, and their tireless efforts helped increase stability in some of the most volatile parts of the world.

I would like to thank everyone for the tremendous support you have given the unit over the past eighteen months. The sacrifice you have made in spending so much time apart from your Marine does not go unnoticed, and I salute you for your dedication, patience, and understanding. No one has trained longer and harder than the Marines and sailors of BLT I/1, and that is why they are the very best at what they do.

Semper Fidelis,

LtCol 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/I1208242257039>



## BLT SGTMAJOR



Families and Friends of I/1.

Our deployment came to an end over the last week and we have experienced some very happy moments as Marines were re-united with wives, children, girlfriends, friends and family. Many folks came out for the homecoming and we appreciate the help from volunteers who assisted the Family Readiness Officer in making our return a top notch event. Since being back I am very pleased we had no mishaps and Marines, as they did the entire deployment, have acted like responsible professionals and kept incidents to a minimum.

As the SgtMaj I continue to watch Marines as they assimilate back into their roles as husbands and fathers as well as our single Marines moving back into the barracks and once again getting used to life on Camp Horno. It can be a difficult time for some as they get back into the routine of garrison life and we want to make sure we look out for one another as DUI rates and suicides are topics we should not skirt around during post deployment. The health and well being of our Marines is paramount and mentoring is a big piece of success we must continue across the Battalion now that the deployment is over. As Marines arrive they will soon be on a much needed leave period and the Commanding Officer has said numerous times it is important they decompress from their time on deployment and have some quality time away from the base with family and friends while on leave.

As always I want to send out my sincere thanks to those that supported the deployment by sending things to Marines that helped keep moral high. Members of our adopted city, Newport Beach, were here to welcome us home as well and were a constant source of support while we were away and that support continues long after we arrive. Thank you, have a great time with your Marine and look after them as we transition into the holiday season and look to the future.

Semper Fidelis,

SgtMajor John Henry



# ALPHA COMPANY NEWS

Dear family and friends of Company A, “Red Death,”

As I write this newsletter, our Marines and Sailors are only a few days away from Camp Pendleton. However, by the time you receive this newsletter, your reunion with your loved one should be complete, and the long wait will finally be over. With that said, I would like to thank you for the support you gave your Marine or Sailor during the deployment. As you read in earlier newsletters during the deployment, our company had four highly successful Theater Security



Cooperation exercises with foreign countries. As much as our mission planning factored into our success, so did everything you did to support your loved one. By providing support and taking care of personal / family matters while your Marine or Sailor was deployed, you allowed him to fully concentrate on the mission, which allowed our company to surpass expectations.

During the month of September, we continued our travels toward California, making a couple of stops along the way. First, we made a port call in Darwin, Australia. The weather was great for this trip, and the Marines and Sailors got to experience many of the highlights of Australia on guided tours or through their own exploration. I'm sure a couple of you will get boomerangs or stuffed kangaroos as souvenirs.

Following our trip to Australia, we returned to ship en route to Hawaii. We pulled into Pearl Harbor, a reminder of seven months earlier in our deployment. Although we only had one overnight period in Hawaii, we had plenty of time to enjoy the beach, visit tourist attractions, or get in a round of golf. Considering that we got to visit Hawaii twice in about a six month period, I don't think we have anything to complain about.

In addition to our normal shipboard routine and port visits, the Marines and Sailors aboard the USS Green Bay also got to take part in a rare celebration. When naval vessels cross the equator, those aboard become “shellbacks” in a unique ceremony full of naval tradition. In rare circumstances, a ship will cross the equator and the international dateline at the same time. In these rare occasions, those aboard become “golden shellbacks.” Those aboard the USS Green Bay, to include Red Death Marines, are now “golden shellbacks.” I would tell you more about the secret ceremony, but you are probably a pollywog (someone who has not crossed the equator), and thus cannot know.

With the company's excellent performance over the past few months, there are numerous Marines and Sailors that deserve recognition.

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

Sgt Melo                      Cpl Lathan                      Cpl Mayoras                      Cpl Mendicelli  
Cpl Schneider

Congratulations to the following Marines on being awarded with a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal:

IstLt Mcwhorter                      SSgt Anders                      Sgt Moses                      Sgt Stertzner  
Cpl Aguilar                      Cpl Reiersgord

Congratulations to the following Marines on being awarded with a Certificate of Commendation:

SSgt Harmon                      Sgt Alamo                      Sgt Briesacher                      Sgt Haas  
Sgt Lorona                      Sgt Serpa                      Sgt Zoeller                      Cpl Alaqueinez  
Cpl Andrews                      Cpl Hattonmoran                      Cpl Johnson, B.                      Cpl Lewis  
Cpl Martinez Jr., H.                      Cpl Pottratz                      Cpl Rooney                      Cpl Wessel  
Cpl Weston                      Cpl Williams, D.                      LCpl Draper                      HM3 Gomez  
HN Houston

Congratulations to the following Marines for being awarded with a Meritorious Mast:

Cpl Stevens, L.                      LCpl Aivazian                      LCpl Coleman                      LCpl Deleon  
LCpl Watts

Congratulations to the following Marine for being named the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit Non-commissioned Officer of the Quarter:

Cpl Fredericks

Semper Fidelis,

Captain Lucas A. Balke



## BRAVO COMPANY NEWS



Dear Families and Friends of Bravo Company,

Greetings from sunny California! First and foremost, I would like to thank everyone for the outstanding homecoming the Raiders received upon our arrival to Camp Horno. It was so good to finally be reunited with our families and friends!

During September, the company started the month in one of the nicest liberty ports in Southeast Asia, Hong Kong. For nearly every Marine and Sailor in the company, this visit was a first because for many years, U.S. ships were not allowed to make port visits in light of control being transferred from Great Britain to China. The Hong Kong experience provided a great feel for the Asian culture and had some incredible sites (e.g. Bruce Lee statue, Victoria's Peak, etc) for the Raiders to see. Following the port visit, the company set sail enroute to Guam. Although we only had two days in Guam, the Marines and Sailors were able to enjoy themselves in the bastion of an American colony for the first time since the beginning of deployment. Places like Hard Rock Cafe and TGI Fridays were readily available in Tumon Bay, and so was college FOOTBALL!! After the Guam visit, we set sail once again enroute to Hawaii. Like Guam, Hawaii was a very short port visit, but a very important one to say the least. In Hawaii, the company received 13 "Tigers" who embarked on USS Comstock with their Marine or Sailor to ride the ship for the last week of deployment. Tiger Cruises have been around the Navy / Marine Corps team for a long time, and they are great for allowing family and friends to see how the Marines and Sailors have lived and trained over the previous 7 months. I'd like to personally thank each family member who was able to make the Tiger Cruise. Your presence on ship has made all of us feel a little closer to home!

Throughout September, the company continued its execution of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) Green Belt Course for every Marine and Sailor in the company who require the certification. Additionally, the company executed a brown belt and black belt course for those Marines who already possessed their green belts. We also continued with our last Marine Corps Corporals Course. This course was our fourth to date, and its instruction is of vital importance to those small unit leaders who have become non-commissioned officers (NCOs) throughout the training cycle and subsequent deployment.

Next month, the company will execute some well deserved post-deployment leave. Before that can happen, there is a lot of work to be done to ensure all of our post-deployment requirements are met. It should be a relatively painless process, and we look forward to getting your Marine or Sailor home for some rest and relaxation. As always, I would like to recognize the following outstanding Marines for noteworthy accomplishments in September:

The following Marine was promoted during the month of September:

Sergeant Ryan M. Burke

The following Marines reenlisted or received orders during the month of September:

Sergeant Ryan M. Burke reenlisted on 13 September 2011

Corporal Travis J. Romensko reenlisted on 30 August 2011

Corporal Jake D. Woodward reenlisted on 10 September 2011

Corporal Richard J. Torres reenlisted on 10 September 2011

Gunnery Sergeant Frank Hernandez will be assigned to 1st CEB as a Company 1stSgt

Sergeant Daniel Villa was approved for orders to Recruiting

Lance Corporal Spencer K. Griffith was approved for orders to 2d Battalion 7th Marines

The following Marine welcomed a new baby to the Bravo Company family:

Steve and Meredith Felty gave birth to Jackson Wayne on 19 September 2011 at Vincent Carmel Hospital in Carmel, IN. He weighed 8lbs 4oz, length 21.5in. Congratulations to the Felty family!

To visit our Battalion Facebook page, go to: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/1st-Battalion-1st-Marines-FIRST-OF-THE-FIRST/11208242257039>. Until next month, take care and Godspeed.

Semper Fidelis,

Captain David Godwin



# CHARLIE COMPANY NEWS



Dear Family and Friends,

It was a long seven months, your Marines and Sailors are finally home. September was filled entirely with our long journey home, taking through the islands of Guam and Hawaii as we made our way west. During the course of our journey, Marines continued to prepare for their futures, completing MCIs, participating in Corporal's Course, and conducting Marine Corps Martial Arts training.

Additionally, the younger Marines took advantage of opportunities to practice teaching classes and leading Marines while under the watchful eyes of their more senior mentors. Because of the rapid turnover of jobs within the company now that we are home, this practice time is critical to ensuring that the next generation of Chosen Company leaders are prepared for the duties that await them.

The end of September marks the end of deployment, but not the end of the road for Chosen Company. As we transition into the month of October, it's time now to get reacquainted with our families and friends, prepare for follow on assignments both in and out of the company, and begin looking ahead to the next work-up and deployment. As an infantry unit, we must always focus on the next mission.

As your Marines and Sailors join you for post-deployment leave, I ask that you help them transition back to life in the United States. I also ask that you remember the sacrifices they made over the last seven months and the sacrifices they will be asked to make in the future. Your Marines and Sailors contributed significantly to the world-wide fight against extremist organizations. They trained alongside allies and friends, prepared to respond to crises of epic proportions, and maintained their discipline and readiness in austere conditions. The upcoming leave is well deserved and well earned.

Semper Fidelis,

Captain Neal Simpson



## H&S COMPANY NEWS



**Dear Families and Friends of Headquarters and Service Company,**

September brought about the last month for deployment with the 13th MEU, and many fun and exciting events to help speed the time along. The 13th MEU steamed eastward throughout the month, getting nearer to California with each day. Along the way, the USS Boxer and USS Comstock conducted a Theater Security Cooperation Exercise in Hong Kong and a port visit in Guam, while the USS Green Bay conducted a Theater Security Cooperation Exercise and port visit in Darwin, Australia. Towards the end of the month, all ships re-grouped and met for a final port visit in beautiful Hawaii, finally returning to the United States of America!

The beginning of September saw all ships heading to an outstanding port visit to conduct a Theater Security Cooperation Exercise. For the USS Boxer and USS Comstock, the first port visit in Hong Kong involved several days of ship visits and static displays with U.S., Chinese, and other foreign dignitaries and military officers. Following all exercises, the Marines and Sailors were allowed to enjoy the many sights and attractions in one of China's busiest port cities. The port visit to Guam was another quick opportunity to rest and refit, as well as send a significant group home early as Advanced Party to begin setting up for our return home.

The USS Green Bay conducted her port visit in Darwin, Australia. In addition to avoiding sharks, saltwater crocodiles, and poisonous jellyfish (just kidding, we weren't even allowed to get in the water!), the Marines and Sailors did an outstanding job supporting a successful ship visit for the Australian Army, Australian Navy, and U.S. and Australian dignitaries.

Once the ships arrived in Hawaii, all three ships were able to load several hundred "Tigers", or family members, who remained on the ship for the final week of the deployment until we returned home to Camp Pendleton. After a week of events, tours, and quality time together, all Marines, Sailors, and embarked family returned safely to the long-anticipated welcome of family and friends at the end of the month.

Next month will be extremely busy for the first two weeks as we settle back into life on Camp Pendleton, and prepare for some significant upcoming inspections and turnover of equipment. The second half will be an outstanding opportunity for most Marines and Sailors to take some well-deserved leave, and rest and refit prior to beginning the next training cycle.

I would like to personally thank each and every one of you for the devotion and support you have shown our Marines and Sailors throughout this deployment!

Congratulations to the following Marines that were promoted in September (new rank is listed):

Sergeant Michael Shaver

Corporal Bobby Hurd

Cpl Antonio Jefferson

Corporal Matthew Jaskolski

Congratulations to Corporal Kyle Stephenson and his wife for the birth of their son on 27 September! Ethan Michael Stephenson was born at 6lbs, 5 ounces, and 19 inches.

Thank you for your unconditional support.

Semper Fidelis,

Captain James Richardson



# WEAPONS COMPANY NEWS

Dear Friends and Families of Weapons Company

It is good to be back in the US! I hope that everyone's return and reunion was as happy as mine was. Stacy, my wife, and I want to thank all the family that supported the company while we were on deployment. September was a memorable month for all of us filled with some work, some play and a lot of anticipation.



The Marines and sailors on the Green Bay and Boxer started the month out with a liberty port in Thailand, a unique and exotic destination if there ever was one. A beautiful country with an ancient culture, everyone took advantage of the opportunity to see the sights and enjoy the nightlife. Many souvenirs were purchased and fond memories were formed. The Green Bay went on to Australia – one of our closest allies. Darwin, situated on the “top end” of Australia, is chock full of things to do, a great bar scene and some of the most interesting wildlife on earth. The Boxer pulled into Hong Kong – a vibrant, cosmopolitan city known as one of Asia's best liberty ports. Everyone on both ships conducted themselves as professionals and upheld the company's high standards for conduct and professionalism. From there, we had brief stops in Hawaii and Guam and then back to our loved ones.

For the next few months the company will focus on ensuring the returning Marines are taken care of medically, administratively and spiritually and those of us who are leaving the team are getting the help they need and ensuring the next generation of leaders and the new crop of Marines and sailors are prepared for the next set of challenges and the next deployment.

September was a great month for promotions, awards and births. The following Marines were promoted in September (current rank is shown):

Cpl Paul Kidd, Cpl Clayton Ross, Cpl Cory Winter, Cpl Paul Woiciechowski, PFC Nathan Pontius

The following Marines were recognized for their achievements with awards this month.

Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal:

Sgt Kyle Kalkbrenner, Sgt Stewart Carboni, Cpl David Hite, HM3 Eric Harris, Cpl Trey Cholewa, Cpl Elijah McQuerry

Certificate of Commendation:

Sgt Joshua Williams, Cpl Jacob Champion, Cpl Raymond Nunez, LCpl Thomas Brownell, LCpl Steven McGuirl, LCpl Jacob Norenberg, LCpl Robert Owens, LCpl Andrew Byers, LCpl Sammy Collins, LCpl Robert Steinke, Sgt Jeremy Keller, LCpl Jesse Helsley

Meritorious Mast:

LCpl Gabe Glovatsky, LCpl Michael Dabney

The following Marines graduated from Corporal's Course:

Cpl Paul Kidd, Cpl Gabriel Sanchez, Cpl James Monnig

The following Marines added to their families this month:

Cpl Lee Grayson and his wife Jade-Marie had a baby boy, Rooks Grayson Lee.  
LCpl Mark Daoud and his wife Roseroi had a baby girl, Vivian Sophia

Semper Fidelis,

Major Chris Niedziocha



# FOX BATTERY NEWS

Dear Fox Battery Friends and Family,

The Battery is excited to be back! The final month of the deployment moved quickly as the battery prepared for disembarkation and had the opportunity to enjoy multiple liberty ports.

The final movement back to the 43 Area was flawlessly executed and is a direct testament to the hard work and dedication of the Marines and sailors of Fox Battery. Additionally, I want to thank the families who patiently waited for their Marines' return and for their understanding of the return home process. The 2d Battalion, 11<sup>th</sup> Marines Family Readiness Officer, Jack Harlan, did an outstanding job with the welcome home celebration, the refreshments and activities for the children; his assistance made it a memorable event for many.

This month we recognized a few Marines in the battery for accomplishments while on deployment. 1stLt Andrew Mineer, the new Headquarters Platoon Commander, received a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for his contribution to the training of multiple foreign militaries in theater security events throughout the Arabian Peninsula. 1stLt Matthew Rader received a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for exemplary performance as the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel Platoon Commander for the 13<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit. Their effort and duty brought great credit to Battalion Landing Team 1/1, and Fox Battery.

I would like to announce the birth of Ireland Rozelle, 8lbs 1oz on 21 September to the proud father and mother GySgt Rozelle and his wife Hilary. I am happy to report that GySgt Rozelle made it home for the birth, but has not slept since.

With the deployment behind us and the transition home I want to take this last opportunity to express how proud I am of the battery and their performance over the past seven months. Fox Battery fulfilled several roles over the deployment, filling the ranks of the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel Platoon, standing up a Non-Lethally trained squad for contingency operations, and firing as a traditional battery in Djibouti, Africa. Regardless of the task the battery completed the mission and did so in superb fashion. I implore the Marines and their families to enjoy the post deployment block leave and take this time to reflect on their accomplishments and relax. They have certainly earned every day of leave and I hope everyone gets the opportunity to decompress and spend quality time with their families. This will be the last newsletter with Battalion Landing Team 1/1, and the battery will transition to a new parent Battalion with 11<sup>th</sup> Marines. 1st Battalion, 11<sup>th</sup> Marines is excited to welcome us aboard, and we look forward to forging a strong working relationship as we prepare for the future.

Semper Fidelis,

Captain Dwyer



# RECON PLATOON NEWS



Dear Families and Friends of Recon Platoon,

Family and friends, after five theater security cooperation exercises in the Middle East with our allied counterparts and five liberty ports the Battalion Landing Team I/1, Reconnaissance Platoon is finally home. All of the hard work training foreign militaries in urban operations, limited scale raids, sniper operations, close air support, supporting arms, and ground/amphibious reconnaissance have paid enormous dividends. These training exercises that were conducted in Australia, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, and Saudi Arabia by the BLT I/1 Recon Platoon received recognition from the King of Jordan, Central Command Commander, and other flag officers and dignitaries from over seventeen different countries. We have definitely strengthened ties and bolstered their capability in the fight against terrorism. Now it is time to enjoy our families and friends as we take some well deserved time off to rest, relax, and refit.

During the upcoming months the platoon will spread to the winds as members execute orders, enter new units, prepare for upcoming deployments, or leave the Marine Corps. I truly appreciate all of your sacrifices, hard work, and war fighting spirit. This moment is bitter and sweet as I enjoyed serving the best platoon I've ever had the privilege of being a part of. Though we did not make it to Afghanistan, which was bitter, I watched this platoon develop and persevere where most would fail. Most men never get the opportunity to be a part of a unit of this caliber. I am lucky to have had this opportunity and I am truly thankful for it.

The demands of military service can be challenging not only to the individual service member but also to their family and friends. It is a true testament to the Marines (including HM3 Bunting) in this platoon how patient and understanding you have been with all the time your loved ones have spent away. I thank you for your patriotism and I thank you for your sacrifice. Over the years the sacrifices made by you have taught me the true meaning of freedom isn't free.

A congratulation is required for Sergeant Cunningham, Smargiassi, Sine and Williams on their well deserved selection to Staff Sergeant. In addition a farewell must be given to Corporal Beasley, Simile and Stewart as they move to 2<sup>nd</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion in Camp Lejuene. I give these Marines my gratitude and wish them the best of luck as they continue their Marine Corps careers.

If you have an immediate concern you can call the Battalion Family Readiness Officer, Rick Andersen. He can be reached at 760-763-3614 (office) or 760-429-3514 (cell). You can also reach Rick via email at [rick.andersen@usmc.mil](mailto:rick.andersen@usmc.mil).

Beginning on the 28th of October we will return back to our parent command, 1<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion. The 1st Reconnaissance Battalion Family Readiness Officer is LtCol Gilman's wife Mrs. Mary Ann Gilman. She can be reached at (760) 230-2516 or [MEGI222@cox.net](mailto:MEGI222@cox.net).

Semper Fidelis,

Capt. Patrick Zuber



## Family Readiness Officer (FRO)



Dear Families and Friends of I/I,

We all had the opportunity to enjoy the best part of deployment, homecoming. I really enjoyed seeing and meeting many extended family members for the first time during the dinner at Jolly Rogers or here at Camp Horno. I was very impressed with many of the friendships many of you had formed. As we look ahead I hope you enjoy some well deserved time with family and friends.

At the conclusion of leave Halloween will be upon us. As always make sure you check all the goodies that your children are able to receive and try not to eat too much.

On 01 November LtCol Wonson would like to have a town hall meeting to discuss the accomplishments of the Battalion while on deployment. At this time he would also like to introduce the incoming Commanding Officer LtCol Targos. LtCol Wonson will relinquish command to LtCol Targos on 04 November 2011.

LtCol Targos may provide some insight on what to expect on the road ahead as the unit prepares for its next deployment.

Location: San Onofre Community Center

Date: 01 November 2011

Time: 6PM

Daycare will not be provided. The target audience is spouses, however husbands are welcome to attend. If Parents or extended family members are in the area you are also invited. The San Onofre Community Center is located off of the I-5, Basiline exit close to San Onofre. It is adjacent the Sonic Burger about 200 feet after coming thru the gate.

Hope to see you there,

If you have any immediate concerns during our leave period, you can call the Battalion Officer of the Day at 760-763-1439 or you can call the Chaplain at 269-208-0397 (cell). You can also reach the Chaplain via email at: [robert.peters@usmc.mil](mailto:robert.peters@usmc.mil)

Semper Fidelis,

Rick Andersen

# 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>

