



II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward)



FAMILY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2013



COMMANDER'S COMMENTS



Maj. Gen. W. Lee Miller



Family and Friends of II MEF (Forward),

First off, Happy Mothers Day to those of you with kids. You deserve our appreciation all the more during these long months of deployment. I was glad to hear many of you had a great time during Jane Wayne Day and that so many of you are sticking together as friends throughout our time away.

The summer here is warming up as we move through our third month of operations, both in temperature and tempo. The weather is getting hot, dry and windy and reminds me a bit of being back home in Texas. You'll probably hear from your loved ones or the media headlines that fighting season here has kicked off. Our Afghan National Security Force counterparts are bearing the brunt of the enemy's attacks

and they are holding up well. This will be a vital summer for them as they take the lead on operations for the first time with us here to back them up if needed, but I'm confident in their abilities. Some of the local communities are starting to show their frustration at the number of civilians killed by Taliban bombs and they have a growing respect for the Afghan Army and police forces. If they can come together and say "enough is enough," the ANSF should be able to give the people the space and time they need to get their local governance up and running well into the future. We'll keep working toward that.

Since our transfer of authority, we have had our share of injured and our Coalition colleagues have experienced some combat losses and injuries as well. Please pause a moment to remember the families of our Coalition fallen and injured. No matter which country they come from they have proud families at home struggling to work through their loss. Your thoughts and prayers are certainly welcome.

W. Lee Miller,
Regional Command Southwest Commanding General

FAMILY NEWSLETTER MAY 2013

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II Marine Expeditionary Force (Fwd)

Commander
Maj. Gen. W. Lee Miller

Sergeant Major
Sgt. Maj. Paul A. Berry

Command Master Chief
Master Chief Petty Officer
Kelly A. McNulty

Chaplain
Cmdr. Patrick W. Smith

Family Readiness Officer
Michael E. Cline





SERGEANT MAJOR

Sgt. Maj. Paul Berry



Family and Friends of II MEF (Forward),

Hello from Afghanistan and happy Mothers Day. Thanks to all you moms out there doing the hard work of raising a family while so many dads are deployed. I want to thank all of the fabulous volunteers in II MEF (FWD). As this deployment progresses it is obvious your selfless sacrifice is making a huge difference. While it is hard to thank each and every volunteer we can say "Thank You" every chance we get.

As we get into the summer months, take advantage of the kids being out of school. Contact our FRO and get the details on the great events he has planned. Come on out and meet new friends or catch up with some old friends.

The Marines and Sailors of II MEF (FWD) are nothing short of amazing. When I travel the area with Maj. Gen. Miller and Command Master Chief McNulty we are constantly impressed with their level of dedication and professionalism. Your support back home ensures our success. Every member of II MEF (FWD) serves and sacrifices. Thank you and Semper Fidelis.



COMMAND MASTER CHIEF

Master Chief Petty Officer Kelly McNulty

II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) staff, friends and family,

Greetings Navy and Marine Corps team! The month of May brings so many celebrations: Mother's Day, Military Appreciation Month, Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day and Military Spouse's Day. So all of us need to take a bow, but I especially want to recognize the military moms and spouses! They have one of the toughest jobs in the military, no doubt in my mind, but over the years you have gone from "the silent ranks" to informed, empowered individuals who are now getting credit for their strength and sacrifice. I'd like to thank all military moms and spouses for their selfless support and contributions to all service members, especially those assigned to II MEF FWD! We salute and thank you for all the support and a job well done!

Recently we enjoyed a visit from the Navy, Army and Air Force surgeon's general and their senior enlisted leaders. It was truly a pleasure and honor to meet them as they toured our medical facility and met our incredible medical team of physicians, nurses, administrators, corpsmen and medics across the three services.

We are nearing the halfway mark for some of those currently deployed and leaving in July. My word of advice - finish strong! Whether you are turning over your job to another Sailor or Marine, or an Afghan partner, do your best to set them up for success. Take care of yourself and your shipmates. Maintain your physical fitness and eat properly. Set new personal or professional goals. This is a great opportunity to improve yourself on multiple levels. Always remember what you do matters. You are making a difference to defend the freedoms we hold dear. We are all very proud of you!



HOORAH

CMDCM(FMF) Kelly McNulty

P.S. This month also brings congratulations and celebration for our II MEF (FWD) Sailors of the Quarter, 2nd Quarter Fiscal Year 2013:

Senior Sailor of the Quarter (E6 only) – Petty Officer 1st Class Nathaniel Booher, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing

Junior Sailor of the Quarter (E4-E5) – Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Ferguson, Regimental Combat Team 7

Blue Jacket of the Quarter (E1-E3) – Hospitalman Derrick Bender, Combat Logistics Regiment 2

FAMILY FRUSTRATIONS

A recent study at Creighton University found that time together, frequency of sex, and money problems were the top three causes of arguments in marriage. Other marital struggles included expectations about household tasks, communication, and dealing with parents and in laws.

A friend of mine talked to me about a fight he had with his wife over the amount of money she spent on clothes for his daughter. It was about \$300 and he couldn't figure out why she spent so much. His wife replied that it was the start of school and their daughter needed new outfits. My friend stated that he never got new clothes for school, and his wife responded with the fact she did and why didn't he want the best for his daughter? The conversation escalated to argument with my friend stating that as he grew up, his family wasn't made of money. His wife responded by saying "why do you always act like my family was rich!"

Think about this; whether it's obvious or not, your family of origin plays a big part in your married life. What's "normal" to you may seem unusual to your spouse. Your family background often determines how you discipline your children, celebrate the holidays, spend money, and view the role of husband and wife. It affects almost all aspects of your life.

Maybe there was favoritism in your family or Alcoholism/Addiction or maybe some other dysfunction. The good news is that you don't have to allow bad family patterns to influence your marriage now. Don't give in to a fatalistic or victim mindset. If what you are doing and experiencing isn't working for you, then change it. As a chaplain I encourage you to ask God to help you deal with past hurts and seek counseling if needed.

With God's help you can embrace the good and overcome the negative things from your family background.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Cmdr. Patrick Smith



SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS

IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU SPA

May 10 @ RUSSELL BUILDING #40, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Come and enjoy a relaxing evening and learn practical tips and techniques to melt tension away. This is a MCFTB Event, so CHILD CARE IS FREE. Call MCFTB at (910) 451-0176 to reserve free childcare.

II MEF FWD BEACH BASH

June 8 @ Onslow Beach SNCO Gazebo, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Come on out and enjoy some fun in the sun. Lunch will be provided. Families can enjoy basketball, volleyball or participate in the Sand Castle Competition. Prizes will be awarded. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Please ensure you bring your own chairs, towels, umbrellas, sunscreen, and personal beach equipment.

STROLLER WARRIORS

Stroller Warriors is open to everyone. Come out and enjoy the outdoors and companionship of fellow Military Spouses while getting an awesome workout! There is no need for child care, as the children go for a ride also! Information can be found on both II MEF FWD and II MHG E-MARINE Sites. We are fortunate to have Mrs. Baas as a Point of Contact: baas.ohio@gmail.com. The Stroller Warrior Website is <http://www.strollerwarriors.com>, and the Stroller Warrior Staff can be contacted at: strollerwarrior@gmail.com.

PLAYGROUP

The II MEF FWD Combined Playgroup was a success! These Playgroups will go monthly due to the interest of this awesome event. Mrs. Almand has done a wonderful job with this, and is the Point of Contact for events. Please contact via E-Mail: ivana.almand08@gmail.com, and she will inform you of the next scheduled Playgroup!

FAMILY READINESS OFFICER

by Michael Cilne

II MEF FWD FAMILIES,

As we get closer to the return of our Marines and Sailors of II MEF FWD, II MHG FWD, and SFAATs, I ask that you not only take into consideration the accomplishments and success of our service members overseas, but also your commitment and success in taking care of the home front. Our Marines and Sailors could not be where they are today without the support of their families.

This past month I have received a multitude of calls and e-mails from Deployed Spouses and Parents on two vital subjects: Communication and Administration.

COMMUNICATION

The Family Readiness Officer communicates through the use of Unit Personal Family Readiness Authorization Forms, Marine On Line, E-MARINE, Phone Calls, and e-mails. These delivery methods are not all inclusive; they are the majority of communicative devices used by the Family Readiness Officer.

When the Military Sponsor checks into a command, he/she fills out the Unit Personal Family Readiness Authorization Forms (NAVMC 11654) and is responsible to ensure that all information is correct and valid. This includes the Designated Contacts listed such as Spouses, Parents, or whomever the Sponsor considers their families. This information is used to make contact with Family Members for upcoming Unit Events, Local Events, Deployment Information, as well as Resources.

If you are not receiving E-MARINE Notifications, e-mails, or other correspondence, please contact me by phone or e-mail. My contact information is listed on the II MEF FWD and II MHG E-MARINE Sites, as well as the II MEF command website. If you change your e-mail or physical address during your Sponsor's Deployment, please notify me. That is the only way I know to update your information.

The majority of issues I have are the Sponsor has given an incorrect e-mail for their Family Member, or the E-Mail was changed during the duration of the deployment. Please consider also, that a change in e-mail can affect your ability to receive E-MARINE Announcements. This is due to the subscription process where you are prompted to provide for your own personal login/password, and you list your e-mail.

When I was moving locations from the MEF Headquarters Building (H-1) to II MHG (H-24) I had two (2) e-mails addresses and four (4) Phone Numbers. Please take the time and verify that you have my valid contact information.

ADMINISTRATION

If you are in need of administrative paperwork, such as Deployment Letters, Space A Travel, Identification Cards, and general documents, I can help. Some administrative documents may require the Family Member to present a Power Of Attorney (POA), Marriage License, or other supporting documents. Ensure you know where your personal supporting documents are, such as: Marriage/Divorce Papers, Birth Certificates, Social Security Cards, Passport/Visa, Power of Attorney, and financial and banking statements.

There have been several requests for Space A Travel, which requires Personal Identifying Information on each individual family member who is flying, as well as Sponsor information. Deployment Letters may require to be addressed, to ensure a second visit isn't needed. I have been routing several "In-State Tuition" requests that are in several different formats. To preclude a Family Member having to come back on multiple visits, communicate clearly what is needed in the format required, and include any other supporting documentation that comes from the Administrative Branch.

If the document requires a Commanding Officer signature, it will be routed accordingly. Turnaround time for signatures varies, so please be patient.

E-MARINE CORNER

There has been some concern on how to get into the E-MARINE SITE to look at the Photo Gallery. Please do not get confused when you look at the Mini-Photo Gallery on the individual pages on the sites, such as Deployment Central (II MEF FWD or II MHG FWD), or for the SFAATs, the Advisor Team Central Page.

To see all Photos within the Unit E-MARINE Site do the following:

- (1) Go to your web browser and type in: <http://www.emarine.org>
- (2) Login with Username and Password.
- (3) Pick applicable Unit E-MARINE Site.
- (4) Above the Unit Banner, look for the OPSEC Bar, directly to your RIGHT you will see the UNIT RESOURCES TAB.
- (5) Click on the UNIT RESOURCES Dropdown Tab.
- (6) Find PHOTO GALLERY and click on it.
- (7) Once on the PHOTO GALLERY Download Page, click on the RESPECTIVE TITLE of the pictures. These Photo Galleries Folders can hold up to 50 pictures each, but some of folders will be mini photo galleries, which can hold only 20. Take the time and enjoy!!!

There are new outlets developed for Child Care Information. These outlets can be found in the II MEF FWD E-MARINE Site, under "PARENTS" and the II MHG E-MARINE Site, under "SPOUSES" and "ADVISOR TEAM CENTRAL". The resources listed are from the Onslow County Partnership for Children, Base Child Care Development Centers, and Off-Base Child Care Facilities, Sitter City, and the II MEF FWD Combined Playgroup.

If you are looking for affordable Infant Care, Special Needs, or other Child Care, take the time and look over these outlets.

VOLUNTEERS

I want to personally thank each and every Volunteer who has made past II MEF FWD Unit Events so extraordinary, such as the II MEF FWD Christmas Party, II MHG Christmas Party, II MEF FWD Combined Ice Cream Social, and the II MEF FWD Combined Jane/John Wayne Training Day. Each of these events has been highly successful, and more families of the components of II MEF FWD, II MHG FWD, and SFAATs are making it happen! As the Family Readiness Program blossoms, we are rapidly losing some of our brethren Family Readiness Assistants as their Military Sponsors return with their units, and we are always looking to our Military Spouses and Parents to be part of this wonderful and highly important support branch of the Family Readiness Program.

I am focused on maintaining a quality service for our Deployed Marines and Sailors as well as their Families. In order to reach this goal, I am looking for additional Family Readiness Assistants to be part of the team! The vision is to have at least two (2) Family Readiness Assistants per Security Force Assistant Advisor Team, and multiple Family Readiness Assistants for II MEF FWD and II MHG FWD. We have fully trained Family Readiness Assistants who have completed the Family Readiness Assistant, Operational Security, and Personal Identifying Information Courses, and I will set up training for anyone else who is interested in joining the team! Please contact me if interested, for any help is greatly appreciated!

Any questions or concerns, please contact me.

Commercial Phone: (910) 450-5939

Blackberry Mobile: (910) 546-7996

E-Mail: michael.e.cline1@usmc.mil



TOP: 1st Lt. Roger Hyde searches the area during a joint patrol. The U.S. Marine-led PAT team was visiting an Afghan post and find out how the patrol works.
RIGHT: 1st Lt. Elisha Woieski is looking through binoculars during a joint patrol through the area. The U.S. Marine-led PAT team was visiting a small Afghan Uniformed Police Post with other Marines with the U.S. Marine-led PAT team along the Afghan border.

THE GREEN ZONE

by Sgt. Bobby J. Yarbrough

Standing on the roof of Afghan Uniformed Police Outpost Mamanzi, 1st Lt. William McPherson asked the outpost commander where insurgents in the area lived.

Kneeling behind a mounted Soviet machinegun, the AUP policeman smiled and opened his arms wide, motioning with both hands to the other side of the Helmand River.

The policeman pointed to a small, abandoned compound across the river and told McPherson they have received fire from there in the past. McPherson, who is a member of the U.S. Marine-led Kajaki Police Advisor Team, asked if they had been fired upon from any other locations.

The policeman shook his head and admitted besides the sporadic fire from the compound, the area had been quiet and many of the locals were enjoying the peace. The attitude of the policeman was lighthearted, but as the two men sat down to drink a cup of tea, he reminded McPherson that insurgents are still a threat to the security in Kajaki.

As the policeman talked with McPherson about the upcoming fighting season, he looked in the distance towards the river and said, "I cannot read and I cannot write, but I can fight. And soon the [insurgents] will know it."



and an Afghan Uniformed Police officer use binoculars to a U.S. Marine-led Police Advisor Team visit March 30. The JP posts near Kajaki to talk with the policemen at each they were doing. enski patrols alongside the Afghan Uniform Police during the bazaar near Outpost Mamuriyet April 1. Mamuriyet is a police outpost on Route 611 near Kajaki. Woienski and U.S. Marine-led Kajaki Police Advisor Team patrolled the UP to check on the local community.



Transition in Kajaki

Like many of the outposts in Kajaki District, Mamanzi sits wedged between Route 611 and the Green Zone, a stretch of fertile, cultivated ground along the Helmand River Valley. For years, the Green Zone provided refuge for insurgents who mounted daily attacks against coalition troops; however, the landscape of the area has drastically changed.

During the past year, Afghan National Security Forces have established a permanent footprint in the region. The Afghan National Army, Afghan Uniformed Police and Afghan Local Police have built numerous outposts and bases inside and along the Green Zone. These posts have provided increased security for the local community.

Each day, the security forces patrol through local bazaars and farmlands, establish vehicle checkpoints along the roads and routinely hold security shuras, or meetings, with village elders to discuss security concerns.

The increased stability within the district is unmistakable and has provided the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) with the opportunity to complete state-building measures by improving local infrastructure. The Afghan government is currently working on a road improvement project along Route 611, which will pave the road from Sangin to the Kajaki Dam.

According to Haji Faizullah, the Deputy Chief of Police for Kajaki, the road represents a new age in Afghanistan.

"This road represents a new stage of our lives in this part of Helmand province," said Faizullah. "Two years ago, you couldn't even travel this road for fear of being killed. Now people can go from their homes, to the bazaar, and back again without any worries."

Coalition Forces in Kajaki

Recent successes in Kajaki have allowed coalition forces to transition from a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy to an increased focus on security force assistance.

With less than two years until coalition forces are scheduled to withdraw from Afghanistan, advisor teams remain fully engaged with their ANSF counterparts to ensure the security transition out of Afghanistan goes smoothly.

"The ANSF know how to fight. There is no question about that," said Marine Brig. Gen. George W. Smith, Jr., Deputy Commander, Security Force Assistance, Regional Command (Southwest). "The role of our advisor teams now is to train the trainers and help the Afghans develop those capabilities and functional systems they need to sustain long term success."

The U.S. Marine-led Kajaki Police Advisor Team is one of two Marine advisor units serving within the district. The mission of the advisor team is mainly to develop the Afghan's law enforcement capabilities by training and mentoring the local Afghan Uniformed Police.

With the local judicial system taking root and the recent transition of security at the Lashkar Gah detention facility, it is vital for the police to learn basic skills including crime scene investigation and evidence collection.

"The process of evidence collection leads to the actual detention and conviction of criminals in court," said Buck McCluskey, a law enforcement professional with the Kajaki PAT team. "The Afghans must continue to build their investigative capabilities for long term success within the criminal justice system."

Although the PAT interacts with the policemen daily, they do not supervise or direct the actions of

**"The ANSF know how to fight. There is no question about that."
Brig. Gen. G. W. Smith, Jr.**

the AUP. They only observe police activities and mentor the leaders within the organization. The PAT also supports the unit by identifying organizational shortfalls and developing a detailed curriculum to improve the competency, knowledge, skills and abilities of each police officer.

Recently, the advisors recognized the AUP didn't have their own organic capability to reduce improvised explosive devices (IEDs), so the PAT developed an Explosive Hazards Reduction Course to teach the Afghans how to detect and remove IEDs. Already 17 policemen completed the two-week course.

According to Maj. Burke Eltringham, officer in charge of the PAT, the aim of his team is to teach the police the skills they will need to sustain themselves once coalition forces leave.

"The Afghans have already assumed lead security responsibility within the region," said Eltringham. "As we move forward with advisors and coalition forces stepping into the background, any type of sustainable professional policing capacity is all the more important. By continuing to teach them, we are ensuring a secure future for the people in Afghanistan."



TOP: Members of the Afghan Uniform Police catalogue mock improvised explosive devices during an evidence collection class at Forward Operating Base Zeebrugge April 14. The class was organized by the U.S. Marine-led Police Advisor Team to improve the competency, knowledge, skills and abilities of each police officer. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Maj. Burke Eltringham talks with Afghan Uniform Police Sgt. Lala Jan, the training chief, at the AUP Headquarters March 31. Eltringham is the officer in charge of the U.S. Marine-led Kajaki Police Advisor Team, which is responsible for advising the AUP. **BOTTOM LEFT:** 1st Lt. Sean Conway talks with road surveyors near Afghan Uniform Police Outpost Torioba, March 30. The surveyors were surveying for an ongoing road construction project on Route 611, the main road connecting Sangin with Kajaki. Conway is a member of the U.S. Marine-led Kajaki Police Advisor Team, the unit responsible for advising the Afghan Uniform Police.



CONTROLLED DETONATION

by Sgt. Bobby J. Yarbrough



An Afghan Uniform Police officer cimps the end of a timed detonator during a controlled detonation at Forward Operating Base Zeebrugge March 28. The controlled detonation was part of the Explosives Hazards Removal Course, a two-week course designed to teach Afghan National Security Force personnel how to detect and remove improvised explosive devices. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** An Afghan Uniform Police officer pulls the pin on a timed detonator.





Seventeen members of the Afghan National Security Forces graduated the Explosive Hazards Reduction Course at Forward Operating Base Zeebrugge here, April 4.

The graduation ceremony was held in conjunction with a local security shura, or meeting, at the Kajaki District Center. Local leaders from the Afghan National Army, Afghan Uniform Police and Afghan National Civil Order of Police were in attendance.

Nine soldiers with the ANA and eight policemen with the AUP attended the two-week EHRC course, where they learned how to detect and remove improvised explosive devices.

During the course, students received advanced training in detecting and disposing of IEDs, accident investigation techniques and evidence collection. The students also trained hands-on with Composite C-4, or plastic explosives, and learned how to detonate unexploded ordnance using controlled detonations.

According to Maj. Burke Eltringham, the officer in charge of the U.S. Marine-led Police Advisor Team, the course was held because improvised devices arbitrarily kill civilians and soldiers alike.

In Kajaki District, IEDs remain the greatest threat to the Afghan population, police and military. Last week alone, the Afghan Uniform Police discovered three homemade explosives inside an abandoned compound near Outpost Qazi Kheyl. The ANA also discovered an emplaced IED near an entrance to one of their bases.

"By having this course, it provides the Afghan Security Forces with their own organic capability to reduce security threats in the area," said Eltringham.

Capt. Haji Faizullah, Kajaki District police chief, agrees with Eltringham. He said policemen who graduate from the course will become instrumental to both the AUP and the community.

"Many of these police officers will move to outposts where improvised explosive devices are a reality," said Faizullah. "Their technical knowledge of removing [the devices] will be of great assistance."

According to Eltringham, sustainment will be important to the growth and longevity of the Afghan National Security Forces.

"Improvised explosive devices are cheap and their impact has devastating effect on the community," said Eltringham. When coalition forces leave Afghanistan, the [ANSF's] ability to reduce this threat is a key part of ensuring a secure future for the people here, he said.



