

Japan bound



Marines with Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear defense, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, pose for a photo at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Mar 17, before leaving for humanitarian assistance in support of Operation Tomodachi, after a devastating earthquake and tsunami struck Japan, March 11.

Story and photos by
Cpl. Shannon E McMillan
 1st MLG

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Marines with Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group were dispatched to provide humanitarian assistance to mainland Japan, March 18, in support of Operation Tomodachi, after a devastating earthquake and tsunami struck Japan, March 11.

Specialists with Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear defense will be conducting survey missions to monitor radiation coming from the nuclear plant severely damaged in the disaster.

It's important to maintain the welfare of the service members who are as-

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1st MLG competes in 2011 Western Division Matches

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
 1st MLG

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – More than 200 shooters - several from 1st Marine Logistics Group - competed in the 2011 Western Division Matches here, March 7-18.

The WDM is part of the
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Cpl. Jason Blevins, 24, from Sacramento, Calif., light armor vehicle mechanic, Combat Logistics Battalion 11, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, shoots his target in the prone position during the 2011 Western Division Matches at Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 15. More than 200 participants competed in the event.

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Competition-in-Arms Program and is one of four held throughout the Marine Corps.

For some, including a Combat Logistics Battalion 11 Marine, this was a brand-new experience.

"This is my first time coming out to a competitive shooting match, and I enjoy it," said Sgt. Gergely Kossuth, motor transport mechanic, CLB-11, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st MLG. "It's a great experience; the days are long because we have to cover everything, but it's worth it."

Competitors fired rifles and pistols in both team and individual categories. To test each shooter's ability, the distance between the shooters and their targets are as far as 500 yards. Although that distance is no new task for Marines who are required to qualify at the distance on the rifle range yearly, other factors played into the competition making this course less familiar.

The competition uses smaller targets than the regular course of fire qualifica-



Cpl. Jason Blevins, 24, from Sacramento, Calif., light armor vehicle mechanic, Combat Logistics Battalion 11, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, reloads his rifle during the 2011 Western Division Matches at Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 15. The top 10 percent of the competitors received medals and were selected to compete at the Marine Corps Matches at Camp Lejeune, N.C., in April.

tion, explained Cpl. Jason Blevins, light armor vehicle mechanic, CLB-11, CLR-17, 1st MLG. At 500 yards, competitors fired at the smaller 'able targets' instead of the larger 'B modified,' the target they are used to at the qualification course.

"This is more challeng-

ing than I expected," said Blevins, 24, from Sacramento, Calif. "I'm pretty good on [the qualifying] range, but compared to the other competitors, I'm just okay."

Still, the fundamentals taught to Marines as early as boot camp are still applied here such as the importance

(Left) Sgt. Gergely Kossuth, 27, from Spokane, Wash., motor transport mechanic, Combat Logistics Battalion 11, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, checks his target during the rapid-fire portion of the 2011 Western Division Matches at Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 15. The match is a 2-week competition designed to sharpen the marksmanship skills of all shooters participating. More than 200 participants competed in the event.



of wind adjustments.

"Wind was a huge factor when shooting at 500 yards," said Blevins. "We had to adjust our rifles and shooting habits accordingly. The wind was so strong that a tiny mistake in adjustment can cause anyone to miss their target completely."

Upon completion of the match, the top 10 percent of the competitors received medals and were also selected to compete at the Marine Corps Matches at Camp Lejeune, N.C., in April.

The awards ceremony for the event was held at the base theatre on the final day of the competition. Three 1st MLG Marines were recognized for their superior marksmanship.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Allen M. Young, officer-in-charge of Initial Issue Provisioning, 1st Supply Battalion, CLR-15, 1st MLG, took third place in the individual pistol category. Young, 39, from Mount Carmel, Ill., was previously a distinguished shooter and competed in this year's competition to keep his skills sharp.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Gary Reed, 41, from Wheeling, W.Va., was awarded a bronze medal in the individual pistol category. Reed is a Chemical, Biological Radiological and Nuclear defense officer with CLR-17, 1st MLG.

Lance Cpl. Justin Shafor, heavy equipment mechanic, 1st Maintenance Battalion, CLR-15, 1st MLG, was awarded a bronze medal in the individual rifle category.

"I'm glad that I was able to come out and learn from all these great shooters," said Kossuth, 27, from Spokane, Wash. "There were a lot of good shooters competing in the event. It was a close competition."

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sisting the natural disaster survivors, explained Gunnery Sgt. Darrin M. Minderman, CBRN defense chief, G-3, CLR-17, 1st MLG.

"This is a once-in-a-life-time opportunity to do what we are trained to do in a real life situation," said Minderman, 34, a native of Timpson, Texas.

To prevent exposure to any type of radiation, CBRN defense specialists are expected to continuously monitor and survey populated areas and inspect military aviation assets that assist in humanitarian aid drops.

After aircrafts drop off essential supplies to disaster relief operations in mainland Japan, it is CBRN's responsibility to assess the aircraft for contamination. When contaminate is present, it is their responsibility to de-contaminate the aircraft along with protecting any fixed-logistics sites, fueling stations and anywhere populated with essential personnel, explained Minderman.

"I think this will be an eye opener for a lot of the junior Marines," said Sgt. Hunter R. Berryhill, CBRN defense non-commissioned officer, G-3, CLR-17, 1st MLG. "It shows them who the Marine Corps is and what we stand for."

The quick response demonstrates the true Marine mindset of receiving the call and traveling halfway across the world in 48 hours, he explained.

"Once we were told we were going, my Marines dropped everything and started getting ready to go to Japan," said Berryhill, 26, a native of Tallahassee, Fla. "It truly showed their dedication and loyalty to this



Lance Cpl. Jayan A. Thibodeaux, a Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear defense specialist with G-3, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, packs his backpack with personal items at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 17, before leaving for Japan to assist in humanitarian efforts. Thibodeaux, 21, a native of Opelousas La., and Marines in his unit will be conducting survey missions to monitor radiation coming from the nuclear plant severely damaged in the disaster.

uniform."

Half of these guys are 20 or younger, but they are acting extremely mature and look forward to doing their part in supporting our allies, he explained.

"This goes back to why I joined

the Marine Corps," said Lance Cpl. Travis B. Armstrong, CBRN defense specialist, 22, native of Warrensburg, Mo., "to go overseas and help others."

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A Marine with Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, directs a helicopter during a vertical-replenishment mission at Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 16. Landing Support Company assisted sailors from Navy Munitions Command Seal Beach to replenish an aircraft carrier with more than 300 loads of different ammunition. The purpose of a VERTREP is to resupply carriers without ship-to-ship connection.

**Story and photo by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
1st MLG**

**MARINE CORPS BASE
CAMP PENDLETON,
Calif.** – Marines with Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group assisted sailors with Navy Munitions Command Seal Beach during the vertical replenishment here, March 16.

A vertical replenishment is the transfer of essential cargo – usually weapons and ammunitions – from supply ships to the flight deck of an aircraft carrier by

helicopter.

“VIRTREPs usually work with one or multiple helicopters lifting loads from one ship and taking it to the other,” said Navy Lt. Marcus Wilkens, officer-in-charge of the service members from Navy Munitions Command Seal Beach during the resupply. “This particular one, we are offloading ammunition from the supply ship and resupplying the [aircraft carrier].”

During the VIRTREP, the service members replenished the ship with more than 300 loads of different ammu-

nition ranging from small rounds to fighter plane missiles. The loads are carefully placed in position and manually released by a helicopter crewman who observes to ensure the load is safely placed on the deck.

“Resupplying ships with vertical replenishment is faster, but it is also more dangerous than ship-to-ship connection,” said Wilkens. “Weather can affect the way helicopters take off, or winds can make loads sway causing potential risks to the crew.”

Fog also affects

VIRTREPs because of limited visibility, which was a factor in this particular mission.

“We’ve been out here for a few days now,” Sgt. Zechariah Crum, landing support specialist, LS Company, CLR-17, 1st MLG. “It’s been real foggy so the helicopters can’t fly out to the ships to bring out the loads.”

Despite the poor weather, the mission continued without any other obstacles due to the expertise of the 1st MLG’s landing support Marines.

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Sgt. Ryan M. James with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265, Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force, based out of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma on Okinawa, Japan, and Japan Self-Defense Force service members unload bottled food for Japanese citizens affected by the earthquake and tsunami from the back of a CH-46E Sea Knight, March 20. The Japan Self-Defense Force is leading the relief effort; U.S. Marines are supporting their efforts with available assets and equipment.

Photo by Lance Cpl. Ethan Johnson

Photos from around the Corps



Photo by Cpl. Shannon McMillan



Photo by Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin

(Above) Marines with Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, connect a load to a helicopter during a vertical replenishment mission at Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 16. (Left) Sgt. Franco Loza III, food service specialist, Food Service Company, CLR-17, 1st MLC, receives the Leadership Award for 2010 from CLR-17's executive officer, Lt. Col. Boyd Miller, on behalf of the Navy Marine Corps Association here, March 22.