

# THE BLUE DIAMOND

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April 22, 2011

## 1st MARDIV welcomes new Sgt. Maj.



Maj. Gen. Michael Regner, commanding general, 1st Marine Division, stands beside Sgt. Maj. Michael Kufchak the new sergeant major of 1st Marine Division, during the post and relief ceremony, April 22. Kufchak relieved Sgt. Maj. Micheal Barrett, who will relieve the current sergeant major of the Marine Corps, Sgt. Maj. Carlton W. Kent, during a post and relief ceremony in Washington, D.C., June 8.

### Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Glen Santy

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – 1st Marine Division bid farewell to the next sergeant major of the Marine Corps, and welcomed its new senior enlisted leader during a post and relief ceremony here April 22.

Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett passed the responsibility as senior enlisted advisor of the 1st Marine Division to Sgt. Maj. Michael Kufchak. Barrett was selected April 11 by Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James Amos, as the next sergeant major of the Marine Corps, and will assume that posi-

tion from the current Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Carlton Kent during a post and relief ceremony in Washington, D.C., June 8.

Kufchak, who began his Marine Corps career in 1982, is coming from 7th Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif. Kufchak returned from a yearlong deployment to Helmand province, Afghanistan, in October 2010, where he served as the sergeant major of Regimental Combat Team 7.

Barrett, who spent a good portion of his 30-year career with 1st Marine Division elements, praised the Marines and the legacy of

which he was a part.

“1st Marine Division represents 25,000 Marines and I’m going to miss you,” said Barrett. “It’s just that simple.”

Barrett had the opportunity to witness the bravery and dedication of the Marines and sailors of 1st Marine Division in Helmand province. Barrett served as the sergeant major of Regional Command Southwest from April 2010 through April 2011.

“I wanted to talk about the quality and

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## POST

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character of the Marines of 1st Marine Division,” said Barrett. “They are selfless and they are fearless, they are spot on and they are sharp, and that’s what you’re getting.”

Kufchak’s career of leading and preparing Marines for combat spans nearly three decades. His combat leadership experience includes tours as the first sergeant for Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004; battalion sergeant major for 3/5 in support of OIF in 2007; and as the sergeant major of Regimental Combat Team 7 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from October 2009 through October 2010.

“Today marks another milestone in the history and lineage of 1st Marine Division,” said Kufchak. “It’s a tremendous honor and a tremendous privilege.”

Kufchak’s personal awards include the Bronze Star with Combat Distinguishing Device, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with three gold stars, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with three gold stars and Combat Action Ribbon.

“I don’t have to explain how humbled I am to be here,” Kufchak said.



Maj. Gen. Michael Regner, commanding general, 1st Marine Division, passes the noncommissioned officer sword to Sgt. Maj. Michael Kufchak, 1st Marine Division sergeant major, who relieved Sgt. Maj. Michael Barrett during the post and relief ceremony, April 22. Barrett will relieve the current sergeant major of the Marine Corps, Sgt. Maj. Carlton W. Kent, during a post and relief ceremony in Washington, D.C., June 8.



Sgt. Maj. Michael Kufchak, the newly appointed sergeant major of 1st Marine Division, salutes during morning colors at the 1st Marine Division post and relief ceremony, April 22. Kufchak, who began his Marine Corps career in 1982, is coming from 7th Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif. Kufchak returned from a yearlong deployment in Helmand province, Afghanistan, in October 2010, where he served as the sergeant major of Regimental Combat Team 7.



Sgt. Maj. Micheal Barrett, salutes during the 1st Marine Division post and relief ceremony, April 22. Barrett will relieve the current sergeant major of the Marine Corps, Sgt. Maj. Carlton W. Kent, during a post and relief ceremony in Washington, D.C., June 8.



# Welcome home, 3/5 Marines and sailors

Story and photos by  
Lance Cpl. Alfred Lopez

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Marines and sailors with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, were welcomed home by their family and friends at the 62 Area parade deck, April 11.

Approximately 150 Marines and sailors returned home after a seven-month deployment. The 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines supported International Security Assistance Force efforts in the Sangin District of Helmand province, Afghanistan.

The battalion assumed command of the Sangin battle space from 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment in October 2010. They conducted operations to interdict drug and insurgent activity during Operation Golden Shillelagh in March 2011. The battalion also assisted in civil affairs activities to include mosque refurbishments and medical assistance projects.

"I miss seeing the smile my daughters have when they're with their dad," said Sgt. Estela Sagredo, a personnel clerk with I MEF. "They're daddy's girls, and that's the one thing I'm happiest about, knowing that their lives are whole again."

Sagredo and her daughters Isabella and Eva, welcomed home Master Sgt. Ismael Sagredo, an infantry unit leader with ETT team, 3/5.

"He'll be spending a lot of time catching up on the last seven months he missed with his daughters," Sagredo said.

While other families spent time reuniting with their loved ones, some Marines and sailors came home and saw their children for the first



Lt. Cmdr. Richard Langton, the assistant battalion surgeon of 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, enjoys a moment with his daughter, Olivia, and wife, Stacy, after coming home at the 62 Area Parade deck, April 11. About 150 Marines of 3/5 returned home to the arms of their loved ones after a seven-month deployment in Afghanistan from October 2010 to April 2011. Langton, from Claremont, Calif., saw Olivia for the first time, because she was born one month into his deployment.

time.

Lt. Cmdr. Richard Langton, assistant battalion surgeon with 3/5, was one month into his deployment when his daughter Olivia was born.

"It feels wonderful. It's better than I expected to feel, seeing my wife and my newborn daughter here," said Langton, who is from Claremont, Calif. "It's my first time seeing my daughter and we're just enjoying getting to know our family again."

As the excitement wound down, Marines

and sailors grabbed their gear and headed with family and friends to the comforts of home.

"I'm glad we're all back," said Cpl. Guillermo Ramirez, a 25-year-old assaultman with 3/5. "It's been a while since I've seen my son and my wife, so I'm really, really happy."

Ramirez, from McCall, Texas, was welcomed home by his wife Zuhey and son Eliel. The family is expecting another child, and will make a trip to Disneyland once Ramirez has settled at home.

Isabella Sagredo, daughter of Master Sgt. Ismael Sagredo, an infantry unit leader with embedded training team, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, holds a sign as she waits for her dad at the 62 Area parade deck, April 11. About 150 Marines of 3/5 returned home to the arms of their loved ones after a seven-month deployment in Afghanistan. Sagredo was welcomed home by his wife, Sgt. Estela Sagredo, a personnel clerk with I Marine Expeditionary Force, and their daughters Isabella and Eva.



Master Sgt. Ismael Sagredo, an infantry unit leader with Hotel Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, kisses his daughter Isabella at the 62 Area Parade deck, April 11. About 150 Marines of 3/5 returned home to the arms of their loved ones after a seven-month deployment in Afghanistan. Sagredo was welcomed home by his wife, Sgt. Estela Sagredo, a personnel clerk with I Marine Expeditionary Force, and their daughters Isabella and Eva.





## Lance corporal's leadership stems from hard work, discipline



Lance Cpl. Zach R. Mullin, a team leader in E Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and native of Clio, Mich., communicates through an interpreter with a local Afghan, April 15. Mullin knows enough of their language to give basic commands and courtesies.

*Story and photos by Cpl. Adam Leyendecker*

PATROL BASE WOLFPACK, Afghanistan – ‘Fire and forget’ in military jargon refers to a weapon that doesn’t require further guidance to reach the intended target after launch.

Capt. Christopher L. Buck, commanding officer for E Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and native of Perry, Mich., refers to one of his Marines as a ‘fire-and-forget weapon’.

Buck described Lance Cpl. Zach R. Mullin, a team leader in 1st Platoon, E Company, and native of Clio, Mich., as a Marine who understands the commander’s intent.

“You tell him what to do and he’s gone,” said Buck. “He’s one of those guy’s you hope stay in.”

Even at this early stage in his Marine Corps’ career, Mullin has earned the trust of the Marines around him.

“His maturity and his leadership is well above his present rank,” said Buck. “He is one

of the best team leaders in the company.”

Mullin, who attended Clio Area High School, helped develop pattern analysis for E Company’s area of operation during their deployment. He was also effective in gathering intelligence because of his ability to successfully communicate with Afghans, sometimes without the help of an interpreter.

“He made the local Afghan communities feel comfortable with the Marines, which resulted in him gathering important intelligence from the areas of operation,” said Staff Sgt. Daniel R. Cushman, platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon, E Company, and native of Madison, Wis.

Despite his success, Mullin gives credit to the hardworking Marines who surround him.

Mullin cited a time when Lance Cpl. Nicholas W. Sainz, an assistant team leader in 1st Platoon and native of La Habra, Calif., showed the platoon’s constant vigilance when he spotted an observer before the insurgents were able to execute an attack.

Mullin said after E Company’s mission is complete in Afghanistan he will go home to his wife, Madison.

“The hardest part about being deployed is being away from her,” said Mullin. “If I could find a way to bring her in my main pack, I could do this for years.”



Lance Cpl. Zach R. Mullin, a team leader in E Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and fellow team member Lance Cpl. Steven Martinez, from Santa Barbara, Calif., prepare to enter a building in southern Helmand province, April 16.



# 1st LAR Marines ACT for one of their own



Marines and sailors with Company A, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, line up at the starting line with racing chips attached to their sneakers before the Autism Care and Treatment Today! For Military Families 5K/10K Run and ONEHOPE Family Festival at Fiesta Island in San Diego, April 2. The company came out to support Staff Sgt. Sean Tashma's family during the event. Tashma's 5-year-old son, Jacob, is afflicted by autism, a developmental disorder that affects social and communication skills. The event was the first major fundraising event for ACT Today! and was held to raise funds, increase awareness, and provide help for military families that cannot afford the treatments and services their children require.

*Photos by Lance Cpl. Alfred Lopez*

Staff Sgt. Sean Tashma, a platoon sergeant with Company A, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, along with wife Elizabeth and his two sons, Jacob and Justin pose for a photo during the Autism Care and Treatment Today! For Military Families 5K/10K Run and ONEHOPE Family Festival at Fiesta Island in San Diego, April 2. Company A came out to support Tashma's family during the event. Tashma's 5-year-old son, Jacob, is afflicted by autism, a developmental disorder that affects social skills and communication skills. The event was the first major fundraising event for ACT Today! and was held to raise funds, increase awareness, and provide help for military families that cannot afford the treatments and services their children require.



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Lance Cpl. Zachary Fuller and Lance Cpl. Joel Fender, light armored vehicle crewmen with Company A, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, attach racing chips to their sneakers before the Autism Care and Treatment Today! For Military Families 5K/10K Run and ONEHOPE Family Festival at Fiesta Island in San Diego, April 2. The company came out to support Staff Sgt. Sean Tashma's family during the event. Tashma's 5-year-old son, Jacob, is afflicted by autism, a developmental disorder that affects social skills and communication skills. The event was the first major fundraising event for ACT Today! and was held to raise funds, increase awareness, and provide help for military families that cannot afford the treatments and services their children require.



## 2/4 Marines reinforce skills during battalion field exercise



Lance Cpl. Scott A. Lusk, a 21-year-old machine-gunner with Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, provides suppressive fire during a battalion field exercise at Range 800, April 14. Marines and sailors reinforced skills such as casualty response, company assault on enemy objectives and individual weapon skills during the exercise. Lusk is from Mitchellville, Iowa.

Officer 3rd Class Hussein Fattahy, a 23-year-old corpsman with Fox Co., 2/4.

During the exercise, Marines and sailors also became acquainted with the Marine Corps Experimental Forward Operating Base program. Marines learned to use a Solar Portable Alternative Communication Energy System to charge batteries for radios and other electronics.

"Prior to this evolution we worked with the individual skills of the Marines, then we worked up to fire teams, squads and platoons," said Cutsinger. "Now we're culminating with company sized elements. This reinforces communication between the units, as well as building unit cohesion."

The battalion will continue the exercise next week, moving to the next phase of their pre-deployment training. The battalion is slated to deploy to Afghanistan for the first time this fall.

*Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Alfred Lopez*

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Marines and sailors of 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, honed individual and unit skills, during a week-long battalion field exercise at Range 800, April 14.

"The exercise we're conducting this week is the battalion field exercise, basically focusing on offense," said 2nd Lt. Thomas F. Cutsinger, a platoon commander with Fox Company, 2/4. "As we progress through the exercise, we're also going to focus on company size defense and patrols."

The battalion began sharpening basic in-

dividual skills such as casualty response and weapon skills with the M240 Bravo machine gun and AT4 light anti-armor rocket launcher, said Cutsinger.

Warriors of 2/4 learned a new casualty response method called, P.M.A.R.C.H.P., which stands for patient movement, massive hemorrhaging, airway management, respiration, circulation, head and hypothermia, pain management and patient evacuation.

It is important for Marines and sailors to constantly practice casualty response skills because they are constantly being updated. New techniques created for casualty response in Afghanistan are always being added, said Petty



Lance Cpl. Scott A. Lusk, a 21-year-old machine-gunner with Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, provides suppressive fire during a battalion field exercise at Range 800, April 14. Marines and sailors reinforced skills such as casualty response, company assault on enemy objectives and individual weapon skills during the exercise. Lusk is from Mitchellville, Iowa.

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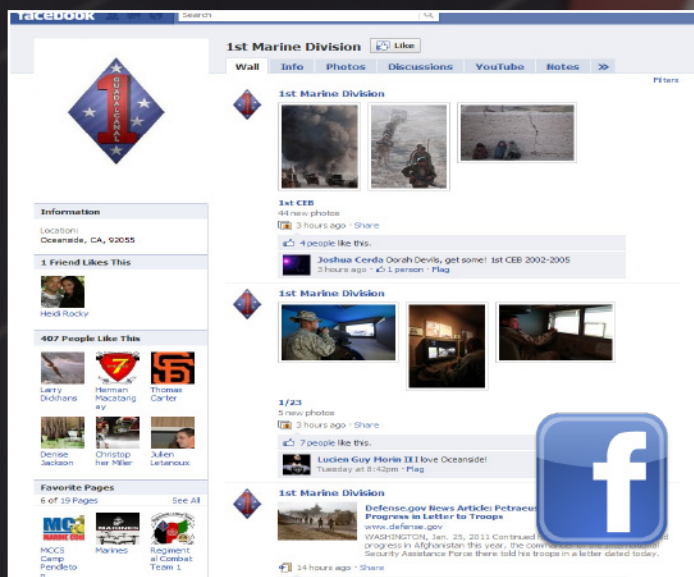
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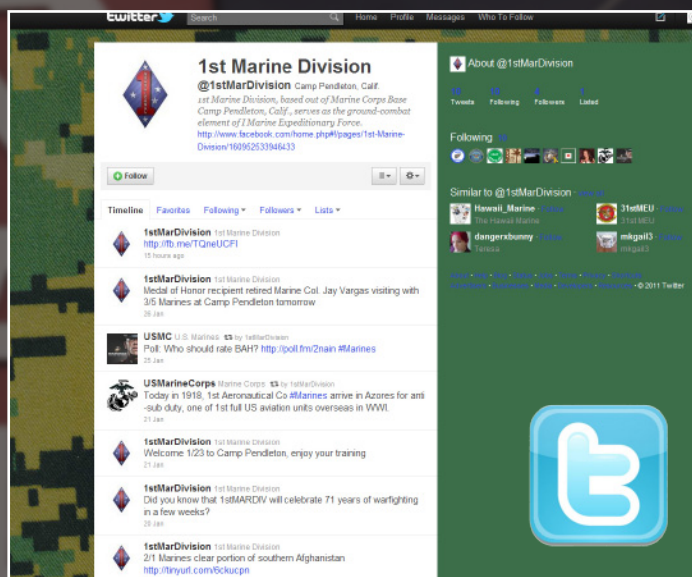
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