

Marines heed locals' call, provide long term bridge solution



Marines from Bridge Platoon, Alpha Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) show the progress of a bridge replacement project to members of the 1st MLG (Fwd) staff near the town of Shir Ghazay, Feb. 29.

Story and photos by
2nd Lt. Tyler Morrison
Public Affairs Officer

SHIR GHAZAY, Afghanistan – Combat Engineers with Bridge Platoon, Alpha Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) completed construction on a non-standard bridge that will provide a long term solution for local traffic in the area here, Mar.6.

A previous Marine unit had built a non-standard bridge, a custom built structure, in the local bazaar to ease travel constraints in the area. Though the design was appropriate for the summer months, the harsh Afghan winter took its toll on the bridge, explained Capt. Ryan Heider, Alpha company commander, 9th ESB.

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CLB-1 motor transport provides supplies to multiple FOBs

Story and photos by
Cpl. Michele Watson
Staff Writer

CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan – Marines with Motor Transport Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) made good use of their extra day this leap year providing needed supplies to patrol bases in southern Helmand province, Afghanistan, Feb. 29.

Along with food and mail, the Marines dropped off 27,000 gallons of water to members of 3rd

Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5.

CLB-1 is stationed at Camp Dwyer and supports the majority of the patrol bases south of Camp Leatherneck. Almost every day, Motor Transport Company conducts combat logistics patrols that take supplies to forward operating bases and pick up containers of unused gear.

“In the beginning, it was all about boosting these guys up and getting them what they need to

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Lance Cpl. Tristan McBlane(left), motor transport operator and Sgt. Harold Lambert, line noncommissioned officer, Motor Transport Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), unload a truck full of mail at Patrol Base Dehli, Afghanistan, Feb. 29.

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fight,” said Staff Sgt. Aldo Herrera, motor transport chief, 3rd Platoon, Motor Transport Company, CLB-1, 1st MLG (Fwd). “Now it’s about getting them out of here and getting everyone home.”

For the infantry units on the smaller bases, combat logistics patrols have greatly improved their quality of life.

Cpl. Ian Cabanillas, an infantryman with India Company, 3rd Bn., 3rd Marines, was used to austere living conditions but now lives in a tent with a wood floor. The tents have heating and air conditioning.

“Logistical support has put a roof over my head and a floor under my feet,” said Cabanillas. “Without them, I’d still be living in a mud hut.”

Though food and water are basic necessities, CLB-1 also pro-

vides the FOBs with some luxuries as well.

“I think logistical support is great,” said Lance Cpl. Blake Turner, an infantryman with India Company, 3rd Bn., 3rd Marines. “If it weren’t for them, I wouldn’t be drinking this Dr. Pepper.”

A soda may not seem like the high-life, but for some ground units living on small, isolated FOBs for extended periods, it’s the little things in life that matter.

Mail is another source of morale for the patrol bases. An entire truck load was delivered to PB Dehli, and the motor transport Marines offloaded the supplies.

During offloading and on loading, Marines remain vigilant with safety precautions.

“Every single lot we visit, the sergeants supervise to ensure we’re performing our duties correctly and safely,” said Lance Cpl. Tristan McBlane, motor transport operator, Motor Trans-

port Company, CLB-1.

After dropping off the supplies, the company picked up containers in preparation for the retrograde of equipment such as unused gear, vehicles, generators and tents.

The retrograde is a proactive effort by CLB-1, and it speeds up the process of getting unused gear back to the U.S. As the troop numbers begin to shrink, the early actions of CLB-1 will prevent the buildup of excess gear. This will prepare the Marine Corps for future missions in other environments.

The group visited three patrol bases, dropping off mail, food and water, and picked up 16 truckloads of retrograde items, which will eventually be shipped out of Afghanistan. The Marines accomplished their mission in a single day.

“These guys work well together,” said Herrera. “They get their job done and run very efficiently. I’m proud of them.”



Lance Cpl. Tristan McBlane, a motor transport operator with Motor Transport Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), prepares to unload a truck full of mail at Patrol Base Dehli, Afghanistan, Feb. 29.

HAPPENINGS

Tuition Assistance Class

Every Wednesday at 11:30 a.m., Joint Education Center offers College 101 class to inform service members about different college offers, on and off base, as well as provide information about tuition assistance and how to use it. For more information, call the JEC at (760) 725-6660.

Motorcycle Safety Courses

An advanced riders course will be held weekly, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. A basic rider’s course will be held weekly Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Both courses will take place at Bldg. 200071. For more information, call Kevin Frantum at (760) 725-2897.

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BRIDGE

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The culvert that was installed underneath the structure was not large enough to allow the water from the rainy season to flow through it, and the local Afghans began to worry about the bridge's safety.

That's when 9th ESB took action, explained Capt. Alexandra Gerbracht, Engineer Officer, 1st MLG (Fwd).

"The locals in Shir Ghazay were concerned about the bridge, and it's in response to their concerns that 9th ESB is taking on this mission. In all of the bridges in Helmand province, this one is not the biggest or most significant. But anything we can do to

show our commitment to the Afghan people and move closer to achieving our goals in the counterinsurgency mission is crucial," Gerbracht said.

The Marines got to work by removing the previous bridge and replacing it with a temporary, expeditionary bridge known as a medium girder bridge. This allowed the traffic in the bazaar to flow unimpeded during the day while the Marines went to work on refashioning the new non-standard bridge away from the bustle of the town.

Once night fell, the real work began as the Marines used heavy equipment to move the medium girder bridge out of the way and remove the packed soil and the culvert system from beneath the old structure. With the soil and culvert

removed, rainwater from heavy winter storms will flow unimpeded, maintaining the new bridge's structural integrity.

1st Lt. Matthew Paluta, Bridge platoon commander, Alpha Co., 9th ESB explained that each new mission assigned to Bridge Plt. is different than the last.

"Every bridge is a unique challenge for the Marines, but they are always up for it.

A non-standard bridge is just that, non-standard, and there is no set way to do it. But the outstanding work of the Marines gets it done," said Paluta.

According to Paluta, Sgt. Joseph Redman, squad leader, Bridge Plt., Alpha Co., 9th ESB, is one of those Marines who meets unique challenges every day. During this

project, he worked with a seemingly endless reserve of energy by coordinating the work of the combat engineers and the movement of heavy equipment.

Staff Sgt. Richard Glory, platoon sergeant, Bridge Plt., Alpha Co., 9th ESB, agreed that without the work of Marines like Redman, the new bridge project would soon falter.

"The Marines are what put us on the map. They're combat engineers through and through. The leadership at the noncommissioned officer level is outstanding."

In the span of a few days, bridge platoon gave a new bridge to the people of Shir Ghazay that will continue to ease the flow of traffic in the bazaar for years after coalition forces have left.



A Marine from Bridge Platoon, Alpha Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) directs the work of a heavy equipment operator near the town of Shir Ghazay during a bridge replacement project, Feb. 29.

CLR-17 Marines, sailors raise cultural awareness

Story by
Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Every country has its own culture and customs. To fully understand the intent and the goal of their mission in an upcoming deployment, Marines usually learn about history, culture and the customs of their destinations prior to departing the United States.

Marines and sailors with Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine

Logistics Group, participated in a cultural class here, March 8, to get to know the customs and courtesy of the people of United Arab Emirates as part of their pre-deployment training before heading there for the 2012 Native Fury Exercise.

The class was about teaching service members the basic customs of UAE so they would be able to familiarize and adapt to the culture to complete the mission, while being professional and respectful.

Vern Liebl, instructor and former intelligence specialist for the Ma-

rine Corps, shared his knowledge of the Islamic culture with the service members. During his time serving with the Corps, Liebl has had multiple deployments to both Iraq and Afghanistan. He also has two degrees in Islamic studies and its culture, so he had a lot of information to share with the Marines and sailors.

Liebl encouraged Marines and sailors to pay attention to the class and ask question as he explained everything to them. A simple hand gesture to most Americans could possibly be an insult to the people of the UAE and

might jeopardize the mission. Liebl said the troops need to be careful of everything they do to avoid misunderstandings and so they wouldn't put themselves and the mission at risk.

"It's one thing to learn the culture to be more courteous and more understanding of the people. But the most important thing about learning different cultures is to be able to accomplish the mission," Liebl said. "Knowing their culture puts us in control of any situation by being able to recognize any threats and any possible outcomes."

Motorcycling the right way

1st Supply Battalion Marines learn motorcycle safety with Semper Ride

Story and photos by
Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Stateside safety has been one of the main focuses of many Marine Corps units in recent years. For that reason, a Camp Pendleton unit set up a class to increase safety awareness of its personnel to prevent unnecessarily losses.

Marines with 1st Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, conducted a motorcycle safety class, supported by the Marine Corps Semper Ride Project, here, March 9, to learn more about safe-riding.

“Semper Ride is a campaign through Headquarters Marine Corps safety division on motorcycling the right way,” said Jeff Tilton, project manager, Semper Ride. “The campaign is throughout the Marine Corps so we’ve done events and classes at every Marine Corps installation to improve the Marines knowledge to become better and safer riders.”



Robert Davila, research and development/racing technician, Galfer USA, demonstrates how to perform a brake bleeding, or fluid flush, to Marines of 1st Supply Bn., CLR-1, 1st MLG, during a motorcycle safety class, supported by the Marine Corps Semper Ride Project, at Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 9.

Unlike the usual Semper Ride events which has stunt riders performing tricks and many activities for everyone to participate, this one was a smaller scale focused on informing service members the right way to ride, explained Tilton.

“They can come to our bigger events later this year, but right now we just want them to learn about mo-

torcycle riding and how to be safe on and off the road,” Tilton said.

Along with showing service members a video about how to improve their riding skill, Semper Ride invited representatives from Galfer USA and San Diego House of Motorcycle to demonstrate proper ways to maintain the motorcycles.

“It was so great to have these experts showing the Marines these

small but important details about motorcycle maintenance,” said Sgt. Justin Wagner, motorcycle club vice president, 1st Supply Bn., CLR-1, 1st MLG. “We all know Marines learn better when they see it firsthand rather than having them watching a PowerPoint.”

Tilton agreed with Wagner, who contacted Tilton to have Semper Ride participating in this training event.

“Yea, nothing beats on-the-bike training. That’s why we do advanced trainings such as the American Super Camp and Star School,” said Tilton. “These are great opportunities for riders to improve their techniques and skills on the motorcycles.”

At the end of the event, Tilton thanked the Marines for coming out and participating. He also encouraged them to come to Semper Ride future events to continue to improve their riding and maintaining skills.

“It was a very successful event and I look forward to doing more,” Tilton said.



J.J. Miller, dealer manager, Galfer USA, talks to Marines of 1st Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, about maintaining the brake system of a motorcycle during a motorcycle safety class, supported by the Marine Corps Semper Ride Project, at Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 9.

The General Kvinitadze medal

Wounded EOD Marine receives award from Georgian president

Story by
Sgt. John Jackson
Public Affairs Chief

BETHESDA, Md. — Staff Sgt. Marcus Burleson, an explosive ordnance disposal technician and team leader with 2nd EOD Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward) was awarded the General Kvinitadze medal, which is given to foreign service members who significantly contribute in the development of Republic of Georgia-foreign nation military cooperation, Feb. 3.

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili presented Burleson with the award at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, where Burleson is recovering from injuries he sustained in Helmand province, Afghanistan, while working alongside Georgian service members.

According to the award citation, Burleson received the medal for “important contribution in developing Georgia-U.S. military co-

operation, and for participation in peace-keeping operations with the Georgian Armed Forces 3rd Infantry Brigade military personnel.”

While deployed to Helmand province, Burleson provided the 31st Georgian Battalion with EOD support.

“I found and neutralized all explosive hazards encountered on the battlefield, including [improvised explosive devices], unexploded ordnance, enemy remnants of war, caches and any other explosive hazards,” said Burleson, a 31 year-old native of Odessa, Texas. “In addition, I provided support to coordinate and plan counter IED tactics.”

Burleson said working hand in hand with the Georgian service members was a positive experience.

“The Georgian soldiers are an admirable collection of hard working, motivated and mission oriented individuals,” he said.

While deployed, Burleson spent the majority of his time conducting

dismounted patrols with the Georgian forces in the Upper Sangin River Valley. When Burleson was on one of these patrols, he was severely wounded in action.

“I sustained a severe brachial plexus injury to my left shoulder, rendering my left arm paralyzed,” said Burleson. “My right arm was amputated mid forearm, and I fractured my cervical spine. The vision in my left eye is lost because of a large piece of shrapnel that lodged behind [my] eye. Several bones in my face were fractured, including my jaw, which required my mouth to be banded shut for weeks. My spleen was removed due to lacerations, and I had several pieces of [shrapnel] removed from my throat.”

In addition, many of Burleson’s teeth were damaged, and he sustained a significant amount of facial burns and lacerations as well as burns and shrapnel wounds on his shoulder. Burleson also has a traumatic brain injury.

Currently, Burleson is undergoing treatment and therapy at WRNMMC.

“I am recovering as well as possible,” he said. “I have a prosthetic arm which allows me some independence. Nerve pain is very challenging to treat, and [my doctors and I] are awaiting tests to ascertain what steps we will take with the paralyzed arm.

“The nursing staff and doctors at [Walter Reed] are dedicated and attentive; it is comforting to know that I am in the best hands possible.”

While Burleson continues to recover, he remains positive and appreciative of the things he has.

“This experience has made me incredibly grateful for my life, wife and kids,” he said. “The EOD community and Marine Corps have been compassionate and supportive during my hospitalization, and I am excited to continue healing alongside some of the bravest, strongest people I have ever met.”

New CLR-1 sergeant major sets standards for junior Marines

Story and photo by
Cpl. Jennifer Pirante
1 MEF Public Affairs

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — Since he assumed his post as sergeant major of Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, here, Jan. 21, Sgt. Maj. Juan Diaz wasted no time making sure his Marines understand what he expects as it pertains to discipline, conduct, standards and morale.

To reach out to the junior Marines of General Support Motor Transport Company, CLR-1, 1st MLG, Diaz held a brief at the GSMT lot at Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 8.

His intent was to get to know, advise and mentor the junior Marines about doing the right thing at all times, making wise decisions and exhibiting a sense of military pride in their appearance, even when in civilian attire. To accomplish this, Diaz encouraged his Marines to help one another.

“I need you to look out for one



Sgt. Maj. Juan Diaz, sergeant major of Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, held a brief at Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 8, for the junior Marines of General Support Motor Transport, CLR-1, 1st MLG.

another,” Diaz said. “When someone is about to do something unwise, I need you to have the courage to ask that person, ‘Hey, what the heck are you doing?’”

Diaz also encouraged his Marines to think ahead as they carry themselves through their military career, both professionally and academically.

“We push you, we want you to go to school and invest in your future,” Diaz said. “I need you to be smart in how you do that.”

Diaz shared stories from his own life experience and emphasized most that his leadership extends beyond delegating tasks and giving orders. As a sergeant major of Ma-

rines, Diaz makes sure to uphold morale and insure his Marines understand their common bond.

“Believe me when I tell you I care about you,” Diaz said. “I care about you because we have one common thing: We’re devil dogs.”

Lance Cpl. Amy Dias, motor vehicle operator, GSMT, CLR-1, 1st MLG said Diaz seemed like a sergeant major who brings a great sense of leadership backed by a wealth of experience.

“I thought he was very motivating,” Dias said. “I’ve never had a sergeant major come out, sit with his Marines, open up to us and tell us a little bit about himself.”

As a new Marine coming to a new unit, Dias said she felt confident knowing what was expected of her and her fellow Marines. She also expressed confidence in her chain-of-command and the improvements that are still to come.

“I think he has a lot to bring to this unit,” Dias said. “He’s good to go.”



GIVE HIM ONE!

CPL. MATTHEW J. KIRBY

Story and photo by
Cpl. Michele Watson
Staff Writer

Every service member deployed to Afghanistan has a story to tell. Cpl. Matthew J. Kirby is one of few who cannot stop grinning long enough to tell his.

Despite the hardships faced while deployed to a combat zone, Kirby always has a smile on his face and is usually laughing about something.

Since he was five years old, Kirby dreamed of joining the armed forces.

"As a kid growing up, my dad always told me stories of his time served in Vietnam," said Kirby, 24, a native of Scottsdale, Ariz. "I knew I wanted to be the best of the best, so I joined the Marine Corps."

For the last five months, Kirby has served as a gunner for Motor Transport Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 1 during tactical logistics support convoys in Helmand province, Afghanistan.

"Part of the reason I joined during a time of war was to deploy to a combat zone," said Kirby. "I wanted to get different experiences most people don't have."

He has been given new job opportunities that some Marines do not get a chance to experience. Kirby's primary military occupational specialty is a crew chief for amphibious assault vehicles. However, instead of storming beaches, Kirby is now attached to a security team for CLB-1. As the gunner of his vehicle, his main job is to provide security during missions.

"Kirby takes his work seriously," said Cpl. Evan McLellan, one of Kirby's friends and co-workers. "He has high expectations for his junior Marines, and whatever task he's in charge of gets done."

Kirby sets the bar high for his Marines, but he is also willing to sacrifice his time to help them



Cpl. Matthew Kirby, 24, a Scottsdale, Ariz., native, stands in front of his vehicle at the Motor Transport Lot at Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan. Kirby is responsible for manning a .50-caliber machine gun on combat logistics patrols with his unit, 3rd Platoon, Motor Transport Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward). When he is not providing security, Kirby is known as the jokester of his platoon.

when they need it.

"There was a time when we were in [pre-deployment training], and I was really, really sick," said McLellan. "I was supposed to stand post that night, but Kirby took my watch so I could sleep."

Though Kirby takes his work seriously, he is well known for his

optimistic and cheery demeanor.

"When the morale is down, Kirby is a goofball and can put a smile on anyone's face," said McLellan.

Kirby has kept a positive attitude throughout the deployment. He says while he is glad to have had the opportunity to come to Afghanistan, he is also looking forward

to going home.

"I miss being able to sleep in and in a bed," Kirby joked. "I'm looking forward to going out with my friends and seeing my family again."

With only a month left in this deployment, Kirby has a lot to smile about.

7th ESB conducts award ceremony

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Cpl. Arielle Coleman, combat engineer, Bridge Company, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, and six other Marines with 7th ESB received Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals during an award ceremony here Feb. 23. Coleman received the award for her actions as the assistant officer of the day Oct. 20-21.

According to the citation, in the early hours of Oct. 21, the 22-year-old Gainesville, Fla. native awoke to the officer of the day being attacked. The OOD suffered lacerations caused by the attacker's homemade weapon. Coleman immediately called 911 and provided first aid to the victim. She directed first responders through the provost marshals dispatcher and directed the actions of responding barracks duty noncommissioned officer. Once medical personnel arrived, Coleman then assisted the military police with identifying the attacker.

Coleman remained humble after receiving the award from Col. James Caley, commanding officer, CLR-1.

"I didn't think I would get an award for it," said Coleman. "I re-

sponded the same way any Marine would have in that situation."

Coleman's quick reaction and initiative helped save the life of a fellow Marine.

"Any Marine would have done the same thing," said Coleman. "I'm just glad that he is okay and making a steady recovery. I want everyone to keep him in their prayers."

After Coleman received her award, six other Marines received Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals from Lt. Col. Daniel Dubbs, commanding officer of 7th ESB, for actions while deployed with 2nd MLG in Afghanistan. Those Marines were 1st Lt. Devin Delaney, Master Sgt. Jamie Harris, Master Sgt. Alonso Estradamunoz, Staff Sgt. Emmanuel Manning, Staff Sgt. Jay Nacionales and Staff Sgt. Davisson Slivers.

Delaney was awarded the medal for actions while serving as executive officer, Charlie Company, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) from May 2011 to November 2011 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Some of his accomplishments as the XO was providing direct supervision in executing the Company Commanders guidance, he ensured the timely execution, quality production and



Cpl. Arielle Coleman, combat engineer, Bridge Company, 7th ESB, CLR-1, 1st MLG, receives an award at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 23.

detailed adherence to intent which allowed the following statistics to be achieved: Conducted over 175 convoys, drove over 37,870 miles in treacherous desert terrain, emplaced 14 non-standard bridges, 8 medium girder bridges, expended 20,386 equipment hours, 92,263 man hours, emplaced 41 culverts, spread 21,448 cubic yards of gravel and 375,574 gallons of water, constructed 38,000 meters of road, and numerous survivability and sustainment structures. He also assisted in leading the 233 Marines, sailors and Jordanian Armed Forces Company as it provided mobility, survivability, general engineering and security support to units in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan.

"I felt extremely honored to have been recognized for the accomplishments of the Company," said Delaney. "The Marines are the ones who deserve the accolades, as they were the actual boots on the ground getting the mission accomplished day in and day out. I can't tell you how proud I am to have been part of Charlie Company and to have so many outstanding Marines working for us who never once produced anything less than incredible results."

At the end of the ceremony the battalion of Marines congratulated everyone who was awarded. Each one of the Marines was recognized for their professionalism while serving in the line of duty.



Marines with 7th Engineer Support Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, receive Navy and Marine Commendation Medals at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 23 for superior performances while deployed with 2nd MLG.

Combat Logistics Battalion 4 maintains physical edge

Story and photos by
Cpl. Mark Stroud
CLB-4 Public Affairs

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – The Combat Logistics Battalion 4 motor pool hums with activity throughout the day, its frenetic bustle slowing only slightly as the sun sets, and a night-crew replaces their daytime counterparts.

At any given time, vehicles undergo maintenance, supplies are loaded and unloaded, and convoys are organized for combat logistics patrols throughout Helmand province that can last days or even weeks.

Supporting Regimental Combat Team 6 operations is a 24/7 job for the Marines and sailors of CLB-4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) and can leave them with little time for anything else. However, the service members of CLB-4 are not using the high operating tempo of the deployment as an excuse to slack off in the gym.

“We are held to the Marine Corps’ standards regardless of the environment we are in or what is being thrown at us,” said Sgt. William G. Drake, security team leader, Bravo Company, CLB-4, who is on his third deployment. “If you are not working out, you are going to lose your edge, and it is going to affect the mission.”

When looking to exercise, Marines and sailors of CLB-4 choose between a centrally located gym on Camp Leatherneck or a smaller facility that is conveniently located in the CLB-4 motor pool.

The main Camp Leatherneck gym includes a full range of weight lifting equipment as well as an outdoor soccer field and volleyball court.

The smaller, CLB-4 motor pool gym features a selection of free weights and lifting benches along with a pair of grappling mats for Marine Corps Martial Arts Program training.

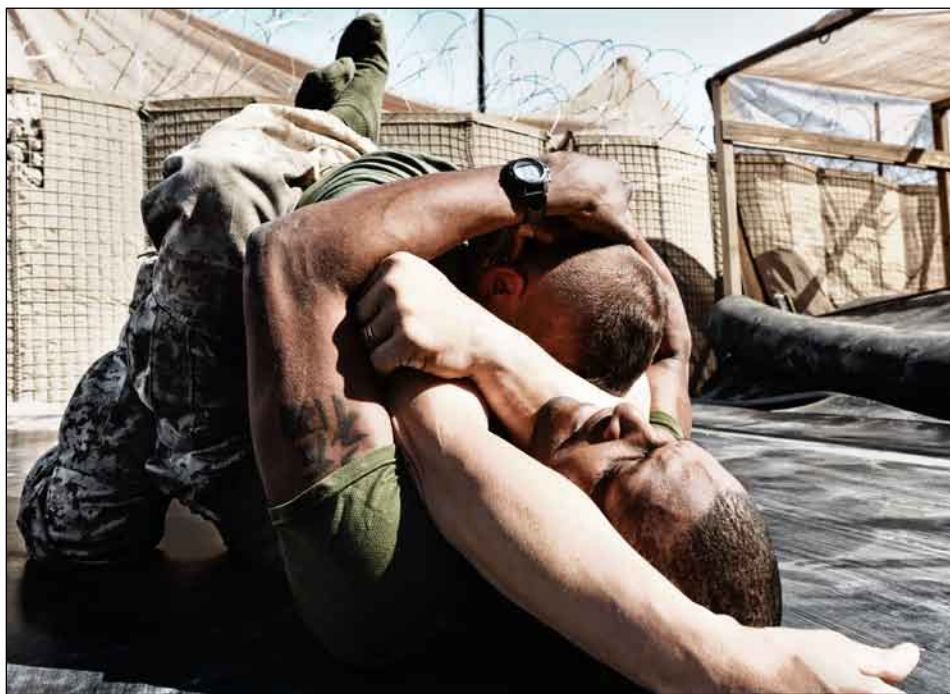
The limited facilities and physical fitness equipment force Marines and sailors to change up their training in order to get a full exercise routine, said Gunnery Sgt. Michael Rubio, unit movement control center chief, CLB-4.

“Ignorance limits your ability to work out,” said Rubio. “If you are knowledgeable about working out and have good workout partners, you can exercise every muscle group in the body with what we have on hand [at the motor pool gym].”

Service members face different fitness challenges when they are away from the gyms of Camp Leatherneck on combat logistics patrols.

“Working out on convoys is very important,” said Drake. “I’ve seen Marines bring out pieces of plywood to lay down on the ground to do push-ups or crunches on. I’ve seen Marines hang bars between two vehicles for pull-ups. You just have to be creative and use what is on-hand.”

Establishing and maintaining a workout routine in a forward deployed environment is not the only obstacle Marines and sailors face. Poor nutrition can be another hindrance to service



Sgt. Maj. Robert H. Brown Jr., (top), battalion sergeant major, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), and Gunnery Sgt. Patrick T. Barber, administration chief, CLB-4, grapple during a Marine Corps Martial Arts Program physical training session at the CLB-4 motor pool gym Feb. 25.



Staff Sgt. Cory Martin, air chief, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), pushes through a decline bench-press set during his workout at the CLB-4 motor pool gym Feb. 26.

members while in Afghanistan.

“One of the main challenges out here is eating right,” Rubio said. “We don’t always get to choose what we eat like we would back [on Okinawa].”

“During a busy day, there is a temptation to stay [in the motor pool] and eat what is around instead of walking to the chow hall,” added Rubio.

An effective physical fitness routine is not only important for maintaining combat readiness, it also plays an important role in upholding a sense of structure and boosting morale for the

Marines and sailors, Drake said.

“Working out is a big stress reliever,” said Drake. “It helps the Marines unwind, release pent up energy and build camaraderie.”

According to Rubio, the benefits of working out make it an important mission readiness tool that the Marines and sailors of CLB-4 have embraced.

“The motivation and the attitude of the Marines regarding working out has been infectious so far,” said Rubio. “There is always someone who wants to go hit the gym, and they will motivate their friends to come with them.”

Ammunition Marines create place to call home

Story and photos by
Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – One man's trash is another man's treasure. This was exactly the case for the Marines of Ammunition Company, 1st Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group.

As the Marines with 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, moved into their new barracks and abandoned their old buildings, Marines with Ammunition Co., swept in to fix up the abandon buildings and turn them into their new home.

"Working so far from our parent command, we've always been tenants at 43 Area," said Gunnery Sgt. Christopher McNally, company gunnery sergeant, Ammunition Co., 1st Supply Bn., CLR-1, 1st MLG. "This is the first time we take ownership of our own building and the Marines have made great progress so far."

The idea of moving in to this barracks and fixing it up wasn't always welcomed by the Marines of the company, explained McNally, 37, from Albany, N.Y. They were initially against it seeing how [old] most of the rooms were. However, after the working party fixed up part of the building and invited Marines back for a second view, most Marines were impressed and excited to start moving in.

"When the Marines saw how the

rooms could possibly turn out, they kept coming up to me and ask me when they could start moving in," said Cpl. Ryan Avery, project non-commissioned officer in charge, Ammunition Co., 1st Supply Bn., CLR-1, 1st MLG.

Avery, 23, from Buffalo, N.Y., said the Marines with the working party were working hard to finish the project to shoot for the target move-in date of April 2.

"I'm so impressed with how well the Marines have done," Avery said. "They're getting things done fast without rushing and making mistakes. The biggest reason, I think, is because they're enjoying this rather than just dealing with ammo all day. It's a change of pace for them."

At first, they didn't know what to do when they received the task, Avery said. But once they got in the groove of things, Marines were knocking rooms out left and right, completing multiple tasks at once.

"It's definitely a good move for us," said Pfc. Tyler Rownd, ammunition technician and a member of the Ammunition Co. working party. "Even though we didn't have a clear picture at first, we're finally getting the hang of things. Now, it's like second nature to us when it comes to what we needed to do."

Rownd, 19, from Oakland, Calif., admitted he was one of the Marines who didn't see any point of moving into this barracks. But after working on the project and seeing what it could become, he said he was more than happy to

move in soon.

"I didn't understand the intent of our command when they said we were moving into this abandoned building," said Rownd. "But after we repainted the walls and cleared all the trash, each room is actually a lot bigger than the one we're in right now. Also, in a way, we're building our own home, making it look the way we want it to look and we're doing it by ourselves. It's an honor knowing I helped created a home to all the ammo techs in our company. I can say that I helped turn this [old barracks] into something we can

proudly call a home."

As the barracks grew closer to its finishing date, Avery said that it's not the end of the project.

"It's always going to be a work in progress," he said. "We'll never stop improving it, or finding more ways to improve the barracks. It's our home now and our goal is to get it as immaculate as we can get it. We'll turn this old barracks into something as current and new as the ones building now."

The Marines planned to have a unit function prior to the move-in date to celebrate the completion of the barracks.



Marines with Ammunition Company, 1st Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, clean and organize a room in 43 Area.



Pfc. Tyler Rownd, ammunition technician, Ammunition Company, 1st Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, repaints the ceiling of a room in 43 Area.



Marines with Ammunition Company, 1st Supply Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, work to turn damaged rooms into livable space for themselves in 43 Area.

Maintenance Marines get ahead with apprenticeship program

Story and photos by
Sgt. John Jackson
Public Affairs Chief

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan—Marines with Electronic Maintenance Platoon, Maintenance Company, Marine Air-Ground Task Force Support Battalion 11.2, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) work on, trouble shoot and repair everything from computers and printers to tactical radios and calibrating machines.

Since their deployment to Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, began in September 2011, the Electronic Maintenance Platoon has serviced and fixed more than 8,000 items and has saved the Marine Corps more than \$330,000 by fixing equipment in country vice shipping it to the United States.

“We provide intermediate maintenance support,” said Chief Warrant Officer George Forbes III, the Electronic Maintenance Platoon commander. “The Marines can probably trouble shoot or fix about anything.”

Forbes said that while they have completed many repairs while forward deployed, his Marines sometimes put in extended work hours to get the mission accomplished.

The Marines in Electronic Maintenance Platoon have also found a way to turn their hard work into something that will last a lifetime. The Marines will not only return to the U.S. with their own ‘war stories,’ but they very well may return home with an apprenticeship certificate.

All of the junior Marines and non-commissioned officers in the platoon are enrolled in the United Services Military Apprenticeship

Program, giving them an opportunity to earn an apprenticeship certificate for the work they complete in a combat zone.

According to the USMAP website, the program provides active duty Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard service members the opportunity to improve their job skills and to complete their civilian apprenticeship requirements while they are on active duty.

In addition, the website states the USMAP will issue Department of Labor registered apprenticeships and Certificates of Completion once the service member has logged the appropriate number of hours.

With more than 120 trades offered by the program, most service members are eligible to participate.

“The whole purpose behind the apprenticeship program is to give these Marines the same type of credit as their civilian counterparts would receive,” said Gunnery Sgt. Samuel Paulk, electronic maintenance chief, Electronic Maintenance Platoon. “By completing this program, it will help make the Marines more competitive for promotion whether they stay in [the Marine Corps] or get out.”

“Anyone can do it as long as their job coincides with the apprenticeship,” Paulk said. “It takes all of five minutes to sign up, and then Marines are getting the same credit as they would if they were a civilian.”

According to Forbes, the maintenance Marines in his platoon are logging anywhere from 65 to 75 hours toward completion of their certificates each week in Afghanistan. Further, while some Marines



Lance Cpl. Raymond Zemcik, a test measurement and diagnostic equipment technician, Electronic Maintenance Platoon, Maintenance Company, Marine Air-Ground Task Force Support Battalion 11.2, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) works on a formula while calibrating a power meter March 2.

may not finish the apprenticeship while deployed, they are glad they signed up for the program.

“I found out about the program out here,” said Cpl. Kyle Alling, a circuit card repair technician, Electronic Maintenance Platoon. “[USMAP] is setting me up for success. Even if I can’t complete it all [in Afghanistan], this is still a good head start.”

For some of the trades offered in the apprenticeship program, service members must log 8,000 hours to earn their certificate. However, the USMAP prorates time for members joining after serving on active duty for a number of years.

“Marines who are just starting the program but who have been on active duty for a while can actually start at 50 percent complete,” Paulk said. “[USMAP] has a formula to make sure Marines don’t get cheated out of hours they have already completed.”

Whether Marines have been in the military for five months or five years, USMAP will ensure they are

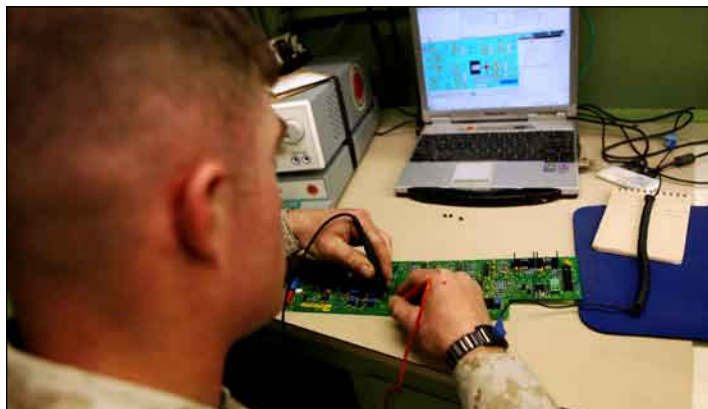
credited for the work they have already accomplished.

According to Paulk, once Marines sign up for the apprenticeship program, they are required to log their hours each week. Once a month, the Marines must have their supervisor sign off on their hours, and then semi-annually their platoon commander or commanding officer will have to verify the hours logged.

“It’s a very easy program to use,” said Lance Cpl. Raymond Zemcik, a test measurement and diagnostic equipment technician, Electronic Maintenance Platoon. “It’s a win/win – whether I stay in or decide to get out [of the Marine Corps].”

“When Marines sign up for the program it shows commitment,” Paulk said. “It shows to their leaders they want to learn all the gam-bits and understand the full spectrum of the job.”

For more information about the USMAP, visit their website at www.usmap.cnet.navy.mil.



Cpl. Kyle Alling, a circuit card repair technician, Electronic Maintenance Platoon, Maintenance Company, Marine Air-Ground Task Force Support Battalion 11.2, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) tests a circuit board for malfunctions March 2.

CLR-17 welcomes two new company commanders

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Two companies within Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, received new commanding officers here, March 9.

Landing Support Company and Headquarters Company held change of command ceremonies as the outgoing commanding officers move to the next chapter of their careers.

Capt. Todd A. Hoyt, outgoing commanding officer, LS Co., CLR-17, 1st MLG, relinquished command to Capt. Michael R. Bottenberg.

Bottenberg has been with the company for approximately two years and has served as a platoon commander and as the company's executive officer before being chosen as the new commanding officer.

"It's an honor to be chosen as the new commanding officer," said Bottenberg, from Los Gatos, Calif. "This company is the face of what the MLG does day in and day out, we do a multitude of missions, from heavy equipment to air delivery."

Hoyt commanded LS Co. for 10 months. He is serving as the assistant operations officer, as well as the logistics officer for the Retrograde, Redeployment, Reset and Reconstitution Operations Group.

Before leaving his post, Hoyt gave a few kind words to the Marines of LS Co.

"Any success I have had as the company commander was strictly because of the Marines and their hard work," said Hoyt, from Bend, Ore. "because of that we were able to accomplish a lot during my time."

Maj. Roy Miner relinquished

command of HQ Co., CLR-17, 1st MLG, to Capt. Paul Isherwood. Miner, from Pleasant Hill, Calif., will be taking over as the Operations Officer, R4 Operations Group.

Before taking off, Miner reflected on his time working with the Marines and serving as the CO.

"It was good to see the different sections coming together, working on different things to insure of the company's readiness," said Miner. "The biggest thing was the Marines I've worked with. It was refreshing to see the work ethic and professionalism within them."

Isherwood expressed how glad he was to be the new CO of HQ Co.

"I look forward to working with the Marines," said Isherwood from Pittsburg. "I hope I can accomplish the mission and fill the shoes of Maj. Miner."



Capt. Paul Isherwood, commanding officer, Headquarters Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, acknowledges the crowd during a change of command ceremony at Camp Pendleton.



Capt. Todd A. Hoyt prepares to give Capt. Michael R. Bottenberg, commanding officer, Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, the company guidon during a change of command ceremony at Camp Pendleton.



Maj. Roy Miner, outgoing commanding officer, Headquarters Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, takes the company guidon from 1st Sgt. Michael Cato, company first sergeant, during a change of command ceremony at Camp Pendleton.



Lance Cpl. Derrek Valimont and Cpl. Ronnie Dupre, members of the Combat Logistics 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) sort lot, load a 20-foot container with reusable gear during a retrograde operation at Camp Hanson, Afghanistan, March 5.

CLB-1 sort lot saves Marine Corps millions of dollars

**Story and photos by
Cpl. Michele Watson
Staff Writer**

CAMP HANSON, Afghanistan – As military operations in Afghanistan begin to shift from a combat role to an advisory role, the Marine Corps has started the process of redistributing gear throughout Afghanistan and shipping supplies back to the U.S.

Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) recently sent a team from the Camp Dwyer sort lot to Camp Hanson to conduct retrograde operations, March 4-8.

The CLB-1 sort lot at Camp Dwyer is one of two Marine Corps sort lots in Afghanistan. The Marines attached to the sort lot are responsible for the tracking and processing of redeployment, retrograde and disposition supplies from units operating south of Camp Leatherneck in Helmand province.

Since its launch in November 2011, the CLB-1 sort lot has saved the Marine Corps millions of dollars. In February alone, the sort lot recovered almost \$6 million of reusable gear according to Master Sgt. Jeremy Goodine, staff non-commissioned officer-in-charge of the CLB-1 sort lot.

“The importance of the sort

lot is to retrograde and redistribute gear throughout the Marine Corps,” said Cpl. Ronnie Dupre, an embark specialist on the sort lot team, CLB-1, 1st MLG (Fwd). “The gear we receive comes from units with surplus and overstock.”

Once the equipment arrives at the sort lot, it is inventoried, sorted, classified by type, and logged into a computer system for accountability. After being put in the system, a list of the gear is sent to the Supply Management Unit to determine if the gear can be redistributed to other units in the area or shipped back to the U.S.

“The sort lot helps save money because we don’t have to order new gear if it’s redistributed to different [forward operating bases],” said Dupre, 20, a native of Houma, La.

Usually, units with extra gear bring their supplies to the sort lot, where the Marines separate the items. Recently, a new method was introduced that saves time for both the sort lot Marines as well as the units returning gear.

Four members of the sort lot team went to Camp Hanson to support 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, Regimental



Lance Cpl. Derrek Valimont, a member of the Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) sort lot team, helps load a 20-foot container of reusable gear during a retrograde operation at Camp Hanson, Afghanistan, March 5.

Combat Team 5. The team went through multiple containers of gear and separated the items at the forward operating base during their four-day stay.

“By sorting in the field, the Marines save time by separating reusable assets with non-reusable assets,” said Staff Sgt. Rocksan Washington, sort lot operations chief, CLB-1, 1st MLG (Fwd). “I think this is a more efficient way of sorting the gear.”

Once at the site, the sort lot team began combing through multiple containers of unused items. After separating the gear and organizing it, the

team consolidated the gear into 13, 20-foot long shipping containers and returned them to Camp Dwyer.

“Being able to have the full support of [2nd Bn., 9th Marines] helped the team accomplish the mission in an expedient manner,” said Washington. “They did a phenomenal job.”

The sort lot teams have already proved their worth by the millions of dollars they have saved the Marine Corps in a few short months. The sort lot teams have a big job ahead of them and they will continue their efforts until all supplies and Marines are out of Afghanistan.

Marines field day to maintain conditions of new barracks



Photo by Cpl. Khoa Pelczar

A Marine with Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, scrubs the walk way during a field day held at Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 5.

**Story by
Lance Cpl. Jerrick Griffin
Staff Writer**

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Whether they say it or not, Marines have always wanted a better place to come home to after work. And that's exactly what they got when they moved into the new barracks here a few months ago. To keep their home looking fresh and clean, Marines and sailors put a lot of time and effort into maintaining their living quarters.

Marines and sailors with Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, conducted field day here, March 5.

Field day is a part of every Marine's life. During this period, the residents conduct a thorough cleaning of the living area in order to maintain the quality of the barracks. Some of the tasks completed during field day included sweeping, moping, dusting and making sure there wasn't trash on the ground, as well as taking care

of their personal living area.

First the Marines were divided into groups to perform the various tasks, speeding up the process of conducting field day. One group swept the barracks from top to bottom while another group walked through the area picking up trash. After they were done sweeping, they then scrubbed the walkways with water to remove any stains that may have occurred through the week. Other groups clean the community center, kitchen and wash room. After all the areas were clean the Marines were then released to clean their personal area.

Some Marines expressed how important it was to conduct field days.

"It is important to keep our living area clean and presentable," said Pfc. Caley Edwards, training clerk, S-3, CLR-17, 1st MLG. "These barracks were built so all the Marines will have a better place to live. It's up to us to keep them as close to new as possible for us and the Marines in the future."



Photo by Cpl. Khoa Pelczar

Marines with Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, sweep the outside area during a field day held at Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 5. The purpose of field day is to conduct a thorough cleaning of the living area in order to maintain the quality of the barracks.



A Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle provides security during a combat logistics patrol through Helmand March 5. The patrol supported counter insurgency operations in the area.

CLB-4 supports counterinsurgency operations with combat logistics patrol

**Story and photo by
Cpl. Marck Stroud
CLB-4 Public Affairs**

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Marines with Bravo Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), conducted a combat logistics patrol in support of counterinsurgency operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan, March 4–7.

The patrol delivered helium needed to operate the Persistent Ground Surveillance System, also known as an aerostat surveillance balloon, along with other supplies to forward operating bases manned by Regimental Combat Team 6.

“Keeping the PGSS personnel supplied with helium helps to secure the area of operations around the forward operating bases for both mounted and dismounted patrols,” said

1st Lt. Ryan L. Cornwell, platoon commander, 1st Platoon, Bravo Co., CLB-4.

Aerostat balloons float above forward operating bases providing platforms for cameras to monitor the surrounding area and remotely transmit video to decision makers on the ground.

“The blimps are the eye in the sky; an observer who never gets tired or falls asleep on post,” said 1st Lt. Clayton Anderson, intelligence officer, CLB-4.

The floating observation post, combined with other assets, provides a comprehensive surveillance solution around forward operating bases.

“When we are in a defensive position we have overlapping fields of fire,” said Anderson. “This is the same thing; the blimp is one more tool that ensures redundancy in our observation of the area.”

Highly visible surveillance tools such as blimps can do more than simply monitor security threats.

“Blimps discourage enemy activity,” said Cornwell. “The insurgents are less likely to be active when they know they are being watched.”

The visible nature of the blimps also serves as a reminder to Afghans that the Marines are committed to improving the local security situation and protecting them from extremist threats.

“We are here to ensure the daily pattern of life for the majority is not disrupted by the minority who would cause harm,” said Anderson. “The blimps are a reminder to the [Afghans] that we are not leaving them, and that we are maintaining a presence.”

The CLB-4 patrol also brought power generators, mail and food

supplies to the forward operating base. On the return trip, they back-hauled vehicles for repairs and upgrades and brought unused gear back to Camp Leatherneck in preparation for redeployment to the U.S.

“We are assisting with retrograding equipment from the base however we can,” said Cornwell. “If we can haul it back now, we don’t have to haul it back later.”

According to the patrol leader, the combat logistics patrol was completed successfully thanks to the small-unit leadership exhibited by Bravo Company’s Marines.

“I think the success of the mission is a credit to our [non-commissioned officer] leadership,” said Cornwell. “We delivered all of the supplies to the supported units and returned all Marines and gear safely.”