



The Convoy

Delivering quality information on the 1st Marine Logistics Group

Volume 4 Issue 7



CLB-1 comes home

Photo by Cpl. Khoa Pelczar

Approximately 400 Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 1, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, reunite with friends and family at Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 24, after deploying to Helmand province, Afghanistan, for seven months. **For story see page 4**

CLB-1 finishes tour, leaves Afghanistan

Story and photos by Sgt. Michele Watson
Staff Writer

CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan – Marines and sailors with Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) stood in forma-

tion eagerly awaiting the official end of their tour in Afghanistan, April 17.

CLB-1 relinquished responsibility to CLB-5, 1st MLG (Fwd) during a transfer of authority ceremony at Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan.

See CLB-1 Page 3



Brig. Gen. John Broadmeadow, commanding general, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), speaks at incoming and outgoing Marines and sailors at a transfer of authority ceremony for Combat Logistics Battalion 1 at Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, April 17.

INSIDE



CLB-13 supports MEF training exercise

Page 8

Postal Marines boost moralePage 3

Practice drill turns realityPage 7

Marine awarded Bronze Star with 'V'Page 9

Follow us on:



Marines raise money, awareness for Semper Fi Fund

Story and photos by
Cpl. Jennifer Pirante
I MEF Public Affairs

SAN DIEGO — Marines and guests gathered to raise money and awareness for the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund at the Broken Yolk Café in Oceanside, Calif., April 13.

San Diego radio station Rock 105.3FM challenged approximately 15 Marines to go up against radio show host Mike Costa in the 12-egg Ironman Challenge. The event was broadcasted live on the radio and the station's website.

The challenge was to consume a 12-egg omelette, stuffed with onions, a large side of potatoes and two fist-sized biscuits. Proceeds were donated to the fund.

The only Marine to come close to completing the challenge, with just two biscuits left on his plate, was Gunnery Sgt. Marcus Wilson, an infantry unit leader and operations chief with Infantry Training Battalion at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

"I decided to come out to support the Semper Fi Fund," Wilson said. "I'll do anything for these guys."

Wilson was injured by an improvised explosive device attack during a deployment in Iraq. The Semper Fi Fund was there to help



Lance Cpl. Garrett Goodyear (left) and Sgt. Vinh Nguyen (right), data network specialists with Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, prepare to take the 12-egg Ironman Challenge at the Broken Yolk Café in Oceanside, Calif., April 13.

Wilson and his family emotionally, mentally and financially throughout his recovery.

"I was injured in 2006 and from the very beginning they were there helping my family and getting all of my family members down to see me, which helped me psychologically," Wilson said. "They helped me any time I needed any type of assistance from vehicle modifications to home modifications to everything in between. It's a great organization."

Since 2004, the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund has stepped up to help post 9-11 injured service members and their families any way they can.

The organization, led by Karen Guenther, was founded after a group of military spouses came up with a way to ease the hardships families face when their loved ones are severely injured in combat.

"[Guenther] was a nurse at Camp Pendleton about seven or eight years ago and she saw a need," said Vanessa Donaldson, community events manager with Semper Fi Fund. "There are wives who will give up their job for a year or two to fly to be by their spouse's bedside. These are long-term relationships that are developed, so once they leave the hospital, the service member can just focus on physical therapy and recovering and not worry about bills or anything else."

The Semper Fi Fund has provided more than \$50 million to injured service members and their families.

"These guys are warriors and sometimes they just want to do it all on their own, but we are there in time of need," Donaldson said.



Gunnery Sgt. Marcus Wilson, an infantry unit leader and operations chief with Infantry Training Battalion takes the 12-egg Ironman Challenge at the Broken Yolk Café in Oceanside, Calif., April 13.

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 providing 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.

Live 1-on-1 Help Confidential Worldwide 24/7

No one has to know unless YOU want them to!

Safe Helpline offers free confidential and anonymous sexual assault support.



Click www.SafeHelpline.org

Call 877-995-5247

Text* 55-247 (INSIDE THE U.S.)

202-470-5546 (OUTSIDE THE U.S.)

*Text your location for the nearest SARC



FOLLOW US ON:



COMMANDING GENERAL

BRIG. GEN. JOHN J. BROADMEADOW

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS

1ST LT. JEREMY MCLEAN
2ND LT. TYLER MORRISON
2ND LT. SAVANNAH MOYER

PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHIEF

SGT. JOHN JACKSON

SERGEANT MAJOR

SGT. MAJ. ANTONIO VIZCARRONDO JR.

COMBAT CORRESPONDENTS

SGT. MICHELE WATSON
CPL. KHOA PELCZAR

CONTACT US: 760-763-7795 1MLG_PUBLIC_AFFAIRS@USMC.MIL

CLB-1

continued from Page 1

The ceremony is a Marine Corps tradition that formally symbolizes the continuity of command authority. As CLB-5 prepared to take over, CLB-1 worked alongside them, offering their experience to the incoming group.

During their deployment, CLB-1 conducted 270 combat logistics patrols in southern Helmand province. They provided direct support to infantry units primarily at Forward Operating Bases Payne, Geronimo and Hanson. The Marines and sailors provided food, water and gear via combat logistics patrols to the aforementioned FOBs as well as to units in other isolated areas.

CLB-1 traveled nearly 400,000 miles during their resupply and retrograde operations.

The incoming commander spoke to CLB-1 about their achievements throughout their time in Afghanistan.

“You have set the bar extremely high,” said Lt. Col. Robert Meade, commanding officer, CLB-5. “We will strive to reach that level.”

As CLB-1 transferred authority, the Commanding General of 1st MLG (Fwd), Brig. Gen. John Broadmeadow, expressed appreciation for the efforts of the unit.

“All of you from CLB-1 have done superbly and have gone beyond my expectations,” said Brig. Gen. Broadmeadow. “Marines and sailors, thank you very much for everything you’ve done.”

Brig. Gen. Broadmeadow also spoke of the changes that will come for the incoming unit.

“You have a challenging deployment ahead of you as we reshape this battlespace,” said Brig. Gen. Broadmeadow. “CLB-5 as you step into this job, I have every confidence that you are ready.”

During the ceremony, Lt. Col. Michael Stehle, commanding officer, CLB-1, also expressed his gratitude for the efforts of his Marines.

“I couldn’t be more proud of



After a successful deployment, Lt. Col. Michael Stehle (right), commanding officer, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), and Sgt. Maj. Michael Hendges, battalion sergeant major, encase the unit’s colors to signify the release of authority at Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, April 17.

you in everything that you accomplished out here,” said Stehle. “You have earned a phenomenal reputation for yourselves because

of your daily actions, your daily drive and your aggressive support to the mission. Job well done and mission accomplished.”

Postal Marines provide morale boost in Afghanistan

Story and photo by
Sgt. Michele Watson
Staff Writer

CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan – Whether it is Girl Scout cookies sent by patriotic Americans or photographs of your child’s first day at school, mail is the number one source of morale for Marines in a combat zone.

The postal office at Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, sorts an average of 300,000 pounds of incoming mail per month.

Each piece of mail is scanned via tracking number through the Automated Military Postal System before postal Marines sort it by unit. Once the mail is placed in its respective unit’s tri-wall container, the mail is available for pick-up by Combat Logistics Battalion 1. CLB-1 will then deliver the mail to its respective unit via combat logistics patrol.

Cpl. Alberto Garcia, a postal clerk with 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) said he knows firsthand how much the mail can improve a service member’s day.

“When I saw my package this morning, I started dancing because I was so happy,” said Garcia. “And that’s what we do. We boost morale



Cpl. Alberto Garcia, a postal clerk with the Camp Dwyer Post Office, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), scans a package, April 12.

and keep customers happy.”

The busiest time of the day is around lunchtime when flights come in with mail deliveries. Although summer is not here yet, the rising temperatures create new challenges for the postal Marines.

“Having to sort through thousands of pounds of mail out here in the heat is really the only downside to the job,” said Gunnery Sgt. Jamie Nelson, staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the Camp Dwyer Post Office, 1st MLG (Fwd).

Despite the climate, Garcia said he prefers to be busy.

“On the days where no flights

come in, those days just drag on,” said Garcia. “But when we’re sorting through mail, time flies.”

The ten Marines at the post office support 89 units aboard Camp Dwyer. Additionally, they support four infantry units at Forward Operating Bases Geronimo, Hanson, Dehli and Payne.

Though the group is small, the workload is a constant flow of pallets that must be sorted. The demand for letters and packages will remain high as long as there are Marines and sailors in Afghanistan.

“Having a little piece of home out here and away from everything is great for morale,” said Nelson.

In addition to sorting through mail belonging to all the Marines and sailors south of Camp Leatherneck, the post office offers services for outgoing mail. Much like a post office in America, a customer can drop off their mail and get boxes for future shipments.

However, many Marines not stationed at Camp Dwyer do not have the convenience of using the post office’s services. To meet those needs, the postal Marines go the extra mile.

When a unit puts in a request to send mail back to the U.S., postal will send a Marine out to the FOB to collect the outgoing mail. They then bring it back to Camp Dwyer where it goes through the same process as all outgoing mail at the post office.

The enclosed package is inspected to ensure no unauthorized items are sent. Mail sent from Afghanistan is then put through an X-ray scanner before it leaves the country.

For Garcia, this deployment is an opportunity to build camaraderie and strengthen relationships with the Marines he works with.

“The nice thing about being deployed is these guys you’re with become family by the time we go home,” he said.



A young girl spots her father amongst a swarm of camouflage during a homecoming event at Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 12.

Friends, family welcome CLB-1 home

Story and photos by
Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.

– A young girl presented her sign in anticipation. ‘Finally, you’re home! That took so long!’ She screamed from the top of her little lungs and jumped up and down without a care in the world. From that moment on, there was no need for long-distance calls, no need for emails, or care packages. Her daddy was right in front of her.

At that moment, she let loose a loud, squeaky noise. She rushed toward the swarm of camouflage and wrapped her arms around her father’s neck, as if she never wanted to let him go again.

“This is the greatest feeling in the world that no words can describe,” said the girl’s father, Chief Warrant Officer Eric Wojahn, maintenance officer, Combat Logistics Battalion 1,

Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group. “I’m happy and grateful to be back, and I want to spend as much time as I can with my family.”

Wojahn was one of 30 Marines with CLB-1 who arrived at the battalion’s motor pool, April 12, after spending seven months on a deployment to Helmand province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

As the troops reunited with their friends and families and headed home, they planned on doing the things they missed the most while deployed, besides being with their families.

“I want to order a large pizza and finish it by myself,” said Cpl. Raniro Cavazos, supply clerk, CLB-1. “We had pizza over there but it’s just not the same. I just want to enjoy life, be with my wife, and learn how to be normal again.”

The rest of the battalion, approximately 400 Marines, returned home on April 24.



A Marine with Combat Logistics Battalion 1, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, embraces his wife during a homecoming event at Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 12.

Communication is key to operations in Afghanistan

Story and photos by
Sgt. Michele Watson
Staff Writer

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELARAM II, Afghanistan – Communication is key to mission success in Afghanistan. From a convoy commander speaking to other vehicles over a radio, to a commanding officer receiving a situation report through an email, communication is crucial.

Members of 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) are spread out all over Helmand Province, Afghanistan, but when they find their communication gear in need of repair, the communications technicians show up to save the day regardless of the distance.

A communication contact team arrived at Forward Operating Base Delaram II to repair and replace some broken equipment for the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team, April 19.

“We supplied EOD with one of the new [Blue Force Trackers] because their old one was inoperable,” said Cpl. Maxwell Lewis, radio technician, 1st MLG (Fwd).

The BFT is the primary method for communication for EOD teams while on missions.

“It allows them to track and communicate with any of the [EOD] teams moving throughout the area of operations,” said Gunnery Sgt. Homero Garza, communication maintenance chief, 1st MLG (Fwd).

During the visit, the contact team also visited other 1st MLG (Fwd) units aboard the FOB.

“We also came here to check up on all other MLG services to ensure they have all their communications assets and support needed,” said Garza. “We’re just making sure they are 100 percent mission capable.”

The communications technicians send out teams to all areas where 1st MLG (Fwd) units operate. A survey team is sent to find what repairs are needed, and then a follow up team goes to conduct the necessary repairs.

“I go on all the initial visits to assess any shortfalls or future maintenance issues, and to prevent potential issues,” said Garza, 35, a Killeen, Texas, native. “I take a team member with me, so when the second team goes back to the site, one of the members already knows



Cpl. Maxwell Lewis, radio technician, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), checks an uninterrupted power supply during a limited technician inspection at Forward Operating Base Delaram II, Afghanistan, April 19.

their expectations. We don’t want to send a team in blind.”

For Lewis, going out on a contact team shows him the broader impact of his job and offers a different experience than working in the shop at Camp Leatherneck.

“I like being able to go out and do my job because I get to see the big picture and see how doing my job allows others to do theirs,” said Lewis, 22, a Chickamauga, Ga., native. “Being deployed is a great opportunity to get experience that I can take back to the rear and share with my junior Marines.”

Whether it is computers, satellite equipment, telephones, data networking or mobile radio assets, the communication technicians are responsible for fixing any problems that may come up for units in 1st MLG (Fwd).

Though communication Marines operate the equipment, the technicians, whose primary job is to repair the gear, must also know the role of their counterparts.

“We have to know how to operate it, so we can isolate the faults to the lowest component,” said Garza.

For the EOD team at Delaram II, their communication assets are now fully operational.

“We served our purpose out here,” said Garza. “We fixed what we needed to fix and ensured 100 percent operational readiness for the incoming EOD team.”



Gunnery Sgt. Homero Garza, communication maintenance chief, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), checks the Blue Force Tracker transceiver for a change in signal to ensure it is working properly at Forward Operating Base Delaram II, Afghanistan, April 19.



- GIVE HIM ONE -

SGT. KEVIN M. JOHNSON

Story by
2nd Lt. Savannah Moyer
Public Affairs Officer

“When they told me, it was kind of surreal,” said Sgt. Kevin M. Johnson in regard to his new title of Food Service Specialist of the year in the active duty non-commissioned officer category.

Johnson, 25, Food Service Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, attended the Lamar University-Beaumont culinary school before he joined the Marine Corps.

Regardless of his training, he credited every bit of his success to the endless love and support of his wife, Trisha, and the mentorship of his staff non-commissioned officers, particularly that of Gunnery Sgt. Robert Flores.

“He’s probably one of my most eager and talented NCOs,” said Flores. “My prime example of what a good NCO represents ... always goes the extra mile.”

This was Johnson’s second award for food service. After he was deemed the West Coast Chief of the Quarter in 2010, Headquarters Marine Corps sent Johnson to the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. There he received his Professional Chef Certification.

Nevertheless, quality cooking has been just one facet of the talent Johnson brings to the 1st MLG. His superior leadership skills have also been widely recognized by his junior Marines, peers and mentors.

“He’s a Marine’s Marine,” said Flores. “Johnson counsels and takes care of his subordinates. He’s the type that you can depend on to do the job the right way, the first time, all the time.”

Johnson, who has many experiences working in both a chow hall and a field mess, has constantly strived to improve the conditions of those around him.

“People work better when they’re happy,” said Johnson. “I try to keep morale high anyway I can by telling jokes or stories ... keeping their mind off the fact that [for example] we’ve been in the field for a month, and they’ve been working 19-hour days.”

If there’s one thing he could do for his Marines in food service, it would be to have his junior Marines see the bigger picture and realize how appreciated they are. “Someone telling a Lance Corporal ‘thank you’ for a couple of over-easy eggs really does matter,” said Johnson. “With feeding anywhere from 300 to 500 Marines a meal in the chow hall ... it’s nice to, just, be thanked.”

Johnson referred to food service as often considered a “thankless MOS” where people view it as just a meal.

“Regardless of that, our job in any situation is to provide a service, which is chow, and to try to make it to the best of our ability,” said Johnson. “It can boost morale and brighten up [a Marine’s] day. Who knows how far a piece of cake can take somebody.”

Johnson aspires to stay in the Marine Corps until retirement, potentially taking career paths to become a Master Gunnery Sergeant or Chief Warrant Officer.

Johnson has two children, Kilee and Austen, and fully appreciates the help of his wife. “If she didn’t hold down everything so well in the home front, I wouldn’t be what I am today.”

His personal mantra and advice to other Marines is to “always strive to be the best and never lose that sense of wanting to be the best ... never lose your hunger.”



Photo by Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
Sgt. Kevin M. Johnson, 25, Food Service Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, observes a piece of equipment while conducting a maintenance test at Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 25.



Photo by Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
Sgt. Kevin M. Johnson, 25, Food Service Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, conducts a maintenance test on a piece of equipment at Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 25.

Mass casualty drill becomes reality for sailors, Marines

Story and photos by
Sgt. John Jackson
Public Affairs Chief

FORWARD OPERATING BASE EDINBURGH, Afghanistan – Doctors, surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses and corpsmen began April 10 like every other Tuesday – by conducting medical drills to prepare for the worst.

The sailors and Marines of the Shock Trauma Platoon and Forward Resuscitative Surgery System, Surgical Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion (-) Reinforced, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) conduct different medical scenarios every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday to ensure the medical personnel are prepared for any patient who arrives at their facility.

The morning of April 10, the 32 sailors and four security Marines were conducting a mass casualty drill. The medical personnel and Marines walked through what would need to happen if multiple wounded patients arrived at the facility at the same time. Shortly after the service members concluded the drill and each person knew their respective role, the sailors and Marines had to put the drill to test.

“We were walking through talking about mass casualty drills and laying out where everyone would be,” said Senior Chief Terry Green, the senior enlisted leader of the STP and FRSS at FOB Edinburgh. “We discussed how we would handle a situation if we got overwhelming numbers. Shortly after that, we got seven casualties in 15 minutes. Then another four on top of that.”

Following an incident in nearby Musa Qa’lah in Helmand province, the STP and FRSS got the message that they would be receiving multiple critically wounded patients. Within seconds of the notification, the alarm bell rang, and the sailors and Marines sprang into action – turning the morning drill into reality.

“The STP is essentially equivalent to an [Emergency Room] in the U.S.,” said Petty Officer Third Class Joshua Wright, a hospital corpsman with STP FOB Edinburgh. “We are basically a level one trauma center that is designed to take anything from stomach aches to blast injuries.”

In less than an hour, 11 patients



Sailors and Marines of the Shock Trauma Platoon and Forward Resuscitative Surgery System, Surgical Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion (-) Reinforced, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) carry a patient from a medevac helicopter to the STP/FRSS at Forward Operating Base Edinburgh, Afghanistan, April 10. Within a matter of minutes, the medical personnel and security Marines received several critically wounded patients.

were brought by helicopter to the medical suite for treatment, surgery and life-saving care.

“We saw everything from amputations, penetrating trauma to the chest, head trauma and internal injuries,” Green said. “We also had fairly simple injuries where the patient was able to walk off the [helicopter].”

“As far as an emergency situation goes, we probably saw about every emergency you can think of with those 11 patients,” said Navy Lt. Nicole Lunceford, emergency medicine physician, FOB Edinburgh STP.

Approximately three hours after the STP and FRSS received the notification that they would be getting patients, the injured had been cared for and sent to other hospitals in the area for follow-on care. During those intense three hours, the medical personnel had completed blood transfusions, numerous X-Rays, three surgeries, fragment extractions and other medical procedures. Ten of the 11 casualties survived their injuries.

“In the morning we were discuss-



Surgeons with the Shock Trauma Platoon and Forward Resuscitative Surgery System, Surgical Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion (-) Reinforced, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) perform neck surgery on a critically wounded patient at the STP/FRSS on Forward Operating Base Edinburgh, Afghanistan, April 10.

ing how we would run a mass casualty situation and discussing roles,” Lunceford said. “Although you can’t really fully prepare for it, you just have to step up to the plate and do it. That’s what happened today.

Our corpsmen were amazing; the nurses were amazing; the doctors did everything they needed to do.

“It was a huge group effort, and I think we did a good job. It’s what we are here to do.”

CLB-13 supports MEF training exercise

Story and photos by
Cpl. Khoa Pelczar
Staff Writer

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – As the fog settled into the approaching sunrise, Marines kicked off their training exercise.

Landing support and motor transport Marines with Transportation Support Platoon, Combat Logistics Battalion 13, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, provided support to a Marine Expeditionary Force training exercise here, April 18.

“We’re the main support element to the training exercise via transportation and landing support,” said Sgt. Michael Hoff, embark noncommissioned officer in charge, TS Plt., CLB-13, CLR-17, 1st MLG. “We take them to and from their various training locations, as well as get accountability for gear and personnel during the operation.”

Waves after waves of Amphibious Assault Vehicles and Landing Craft Air-Cushioned hovercrafts landed at Red Beach, dispatching personnel and tactical vehicles ashore. Marines with CLB-13 controlled the traffic on the beach by directing troops and vehicles

to their designated staging areas while maintaining accountability of all gear and personnel.

“This exercise gives our Marines real-world training,” said Staff Sgt. Charles Lowe, LS chief, TS Plt., CLB-13, CLR-17, 1st MLG. “This is actually a very valuable opportunity for them to practice their roles in future deployments with the [Marine Expeditionary Unit]. It also helps build unit cohesion.”

Lowe, 27, from Harrison, Ohio, said the Marines could see firsthand what to expect during the on and off-loading process. He said these Marines were eager to learn and was impressed by their performance.

“The motivation is high,” said Lowe. “Their performance so far is outstanding. Every Marine is locked on. They know what they need to do, and they understand exactly what they need to get done.”

Hoff said he was as proud of the Marines as Lowe.

“The standard for this exercise was set very high, and the Marines went above and beyond for mission accomplishment. I couldn’t be more thrilled to work with these guys,” said Hoff, 28, from Denison, Texas.

Lowe said he is very pleased with what the team has accom-

plished so far.

“By putting LS and Motor T Marines together to form a TS

Platoon, it will help us to be very versatile on our future missions and deployments,” said Lowe.



Staff Sgt. Charles Lowe, 27, from Harrison, Ohio, landing support chief, Transportation Support Platoon, Combat Logistics Battalion 13, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, watches a Landing Craft Air-Cushioned hovercraft approach the beach during an amphibious landing exercise with I Marine Expeditionary Force at Red Beach, Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 18.



A Landing Craft Air-Cushioned hovercraft with Combat Logistics Battalion 13, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group, lands on Red Beach during an amphibious landing exercise with I Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 18.

EOD Marine awarded Bronze Star with “V”

Story and photos by
Sgt. John Jackson
Public Affairs Chief

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Two years ago, then Gunnery Sgt. Kelly Minkler arrived in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, as an explosive ordnance disposal section leader with 1st EOD Company, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward). During that deployment, Minkler was in direct support of Weapons Co., 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines.

Now Warrant Officer Minkler is once again in Afghanistan with 1st EOD Co., 1st MLG (Fwd) – this time as the company operations officer. Though Minkler is just starting his current deployment, he was recognized April 18, for his actions while in combat two years earlier.

Minkler, a native of Oakhurst, Calif., was awarded the Bronze Star with Combat Distinguishing Device for his actions Sept. 3, 2010.

According to his award citation, Minkler and his team were on a patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan when a service member noticed disturbed earth. Minkler investigated the area and identified a kite string leading to the north. Without hesitation, Minkler conducted the proper immediate actions, severing the kite string and rendering safe a command pull Improvised Explosive Device.

Furthermore, Minkler positively identified the insurgent who was planning to detonate the IED and ordered a direct fire engagement of the triggerman. After the insurgent was eliminated, he then continued to investigate the IED. The device, which consisted of an anti-disturbance switch and a 35 pound directional fragmentation charge, was a new enemy tactic never before seen in Afghanistan. Minkler’s unflinching and immediate actions along with his expert analysis of the scene prevented serious injury to the members of his patrol and helped to train and educate infantry squad leaders throughout the battle space on new enemy tactics, techniques and procedures.

“This particular means of secondary initiation was the first time we had seen this TTP,” Minkler said. “I used the components after the device was safe to train other EOD technicians and infantrymen on this new, lethal threat to help preserve the lives of my fellow Marines.”

Minkler, who is currently on his fifth combat deployment, gives credit to his EOD counterpart and the Marines of Weapons Co.

“My teammate Staff Sgt. Chad Hraha and the infantrymen of Weapons Co. did a phenomenal job [that day],” Minkler said. “They provided me the optimum setting to accomplish my mission safely. We were a team, and they treated me as one of their own.”



Lt. Gen. Thomas Waldhauser (right), the commanding general of Marine Corps Forces Central Command, congratulates Warrant Officer Kelly Minkler, operations officer, 1st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), after awarding Minkler a Bronze Star with a Combat Distinguishing Device, April 18.



A Bronze Star with Combat Distinguishing Device hangs from Warrant Officer Kelly Minkler's uniform, April 18. Minkler, the operations officer for 1st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), was awarded the medal for his actions as an explosive ordnance disposal section leader on Sept. 3, 2010.

Chaplain's Corner

I have an uncanny knack for finding loose change, always to the amazement of my family and friends. If there's a coin on the ground, I am likely to find it. Even as I was writing this article, I found 36 cents. Unless you practice biblical geometry and numerology (which I don't) and view it as a sign, the amount is not significant. Yet, I am reminded of a story told by a couple with whom I worked as a hospital chaplain. The story is of a mother who would give her son a dollar every week for 'being a great son.' Conversely, each week the son would give his mother a dime back for being a great mom. The story turns tragic when the little boy is killed in a car accident.

In time, the mother was ready to engage the task of cleaning out her son's room. As she opened a drawer which was emptied previously, she found a dime inside. The couple shared how much this story meant to them because of the violent and tragic loss of their son. They then produced a mason jar full of dimes and commented, "We have another one at home just like it." For this family, finding dimes became a way for them to uphold the memory of their son. On one occasion, his sister shared how she accidentally walked into a men's room. Before she could correct her mistake, she spotted a dime in the urinal and smiled at her brother's sense of humor at work.

Similarly, our military lives are filled with change, so to speak. Orders, deployments, PCS, LAT moves, all contribute to the reality that life is always changing. It is not uncommon for us to experience change as loss. Like the couple in the story, such loss should be grieved and expressed. When it is not, it can weigh us down.

Now when I find a coin, it serves as a memorial to Marines and Sailors with whom I have served that have made the ultimate sacrifice. I pause and reminisce on our times together, celebrating life in the midst of loss. So, the next time you find some change, embrace it as an opportunity to consider what changes you have experienced. Are you able to both celebrate and grieve them? The value we place on life's changes depends on how we redeem them. How are you spending those memories of change and loss in your own life?



Lt. Peter Dahlstrom
Battalion Chaplain
1st Medical Battalion
1st Marine Logistics Group

Toledo Marine drives across hundreds of miles in Afghanistan

Story and photo by
Sgt. Michele Watson
Staff Writer

CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan – In America, all branches of the military are voluntary, and for those who choose to join, a certain level of respect is earned. There are some who believe that the highest honor comes from serving one's country.

Lance Cpl. Ron Loehrke, a motor transport operator with Motor Transport Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), enlisted in 2010 with that belief.

As a child, Loehrke was taught to embody many of the values that the Marine Corps teaches – honor, courage, commitment, and respect.

"My grandfather was the one who first taught me about respect," said Loehrke.

Loehrke's grandfather served in the Marine Corps and was a drill instructor during World War II. The bond Loehrke shared with his grandfather helped shape who he wanted to become.

"We were very close," said Loehrke, 21, a native of Toledo, Ohio. "When he passed away I didn't have the chance to say goodbye, and that has always stayed with me."

Although he always knew he

would enlist, Loehrke chose a branch in memory of his grandfather.

"I joined the military for myself, but I joined the Marine Corps for my grandpa," he said.

Now halfway into his enlistment, Loehrke is wrapping up his first deployment. He has spent the last seven months supporting combat operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

"My main priority during this deployment has been to help out Marines," said Loehrke. "Get them their chow; get them their water, and help keep morale high. Now that it's time to go home, I feel like I've earned it."

As a motor transport operator, Loehrke is trained to drive nearly every type of tactical vehicle, from 7-ton trucks to mine-resistant ambush-protected all-terrain vehicles. He has driven hundreds of miles, from the town of Sangin in northern Helmand Province to the Pakistan border and has participated in numerous missions providing supplies to multiple patrol bases.

During his deployment, Loehrke also had the opportunity to work with the Base Defense Operations Command. As a camp guard, Loehrke spent time with members of the Afghan National Security Force.

"I got to work with the [Afghan



Lance Cpl. Ron Loehrke, a motor transport operator with Motor Transport Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), felt it was his duty as a U.S. citizen to serve his country.

National Army] a lot," said Loehrke. "I learned some of their language and a lot about their culture."

With two years left on his military contract, Loehrke already has plans for his future. He is one of the more skilled drivers in his company and hopes to continue a career in commercial driving.

"When I get out I want to go back to working for FedEx," he said. "I

enjoy driving because I like it, but also because I'm really good at it."

As CLB-1 prepares to turn over responsibilities to another unit and return home, Loehrke said he is grateful to have spent time in Afghanistan.

"Coming out here and seeing how combat operations actually work has been one of the best experiences," he said.

1st MLG participates in Padre game's opening show



Photo by Lance Cpl. Joshua Young

Marines with 1st Marine Logistics Group from Camp Pendleton, Calif., present all 50 state flags at a San Diego Padres baseball game in San Diego, April 22. The Marine Corps Band played the national Anthem while 1st MLG Marines marched around the baseball diamond, and then held their positions for the first pitch by Lt. Gen Thomas D. Waldhauser, the commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force. The Padres wore camouflage jerseys as a way of showing their support for the troops.

Passing the torch 1st EOD Company takes over operations in Afghanistan

Story and photo by
Sgt. John Jackson
Public Affairs Chief

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – While there was no official ceremony signifying the transfer of authority from one Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company to the next, the guidon outside the EOD compound on Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, now belongs to 1st EOD Co., 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward).

The Camp Pendleton based unit took over EOD responsibilities in Regional Command Southwest's area of operations from 2nd EOD Co., April 23.

While forward deployed, EOD Co.'s mission is to support the Marine Air-Ground Task Force by locating, accessing, identifying, rendering safe, neutralizing and disposing of high-yield explosives, unexploded ordnance, weapons of mass destruction and improvised explosive devices. Additionally, the EOD technicians also embed with infantry battalions and train service members on IED awareness and proper immediate action.

"EOD Marines train all members of the MAGTF on IED awareness, confirmation and actions to take

when a unit finds an IED," said Maj. James Shelstad, 1st EOD Co. commander. "The EOD technicians are at the company level of all infantry battalions and are the [subject matter experts] for planning and coordination for that commander."

Immediately after arriving in Afghanistan in early April, the 47 EOD teams of 1st EOD Co. worked alongside 2nd EOD Co. so they fully understood the current mission. The professional, no nonsense attitude of the EOD Marines helped to ensure a successful transition.

"Our turnover was focused on the EOD team leader billet," said CWO4 Jesse McGinnis, 2nd EOD Co. commander. "The most challenging role is that of the EOD team leader. EOD teams are distributed throughout Helmand Province supporting various infantry battalions. Ensuring they had sufficient time to get a full grasp of the mission at hand was paramount for long-term success."

With turnover complete, 1st EOD Co. is prepared and ready to take over the EOD responsibilities in Helmand Province.

"We are ready to be in the driver's seat," Shelstad said. "The Marines and sailors of 2nd EOD Co. have



Marines and sailors with 2nd Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), take a group photo on the EOD compound at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, April 24.

done an amazing job during their tour – both in support of the MAGTF day in and day out and in handing us a well honed machine in the company commodities. The 1st EOD Co. Marines and sailors are excited to be here and have been chomping at the bit to get down to business."

With 1st EOD Co. in control, 2nd EOD Co. is preparing to leave Afghanistan after a successful deployment. While deployed, the Camp Lejeune, N.C., based company completed more than 2,800 total responses, responded to 740 IED calls and neutralized over 1,000 IEDs. Additionally, the company turned in more than 1,500 bags of evidence for further

exploitation and trained nearly 10,000 personnel.

"I could not be more proud of the job that all of my Marines did," McGinnis said. "We were aggregated from six different [Marine Subordinate Commands] from all over the Marine Corps, and we combined to make a cohesive, effective combat unit.

"As a commander, each and every one of the Marines carried out my intent well above my expectations. I challenged them before our departure not to be perfect, but to be professional. They took that to heart and executed at every level of leadership. I am simply humbled by their accomplishments."

Warehouse clerks band together at CLB-4

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

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan — “Pretty much everything anyone has out here came through supply at one point,” said Lance Cpl. Lud G. Romain, assistant warehouse chief, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward). “We have three lance corporals in the warehouse taking care of the entire battalion.”

Once the supply warehouse meets the battalion’s needs, CLB-4 in turn provides direct, combat logistics support to Regimental Combat Team 6.

The other supply warehouse clerks, Lance Cpl. Brian A. Yanez, and Romain, began their journey together at the birthplace of many Marine Corps friendships – military occupational school.

Lance Cpl. Lagrima C. Urista, another supply warehouse clerk, joined the duo shortly afterward at their first duty station, Camp Foster, Marine Corps Base Camp Butler.

“Romain and I had already been a good team on Okinawa when we first met Urista, but when we did, we knew we had found someone who was going to be a great addition,” said Yanez.

Their group bonded by day at work and explored Okinawa by night, taking advantage of the recreational and historical sites on the island, said Urista.

Less than two-years into their careers, their service has already taken them across thousands of miles, with stops in five countries on two continents.

“We first met in Japan, but since then we have been on training exercises or deployments in [the Republic of Korea], America, Kyrgyzstan and now Afghanistan,” said Yanez.

Helmand Province, Afghanistan, is the most recent stop in the road for the supply Marines.

“I think we will look back at this deployment in 20 years as an opportunity that was given to us to rise to the challenge of taking on [non-commissioned officer] responsibilities as lance corporals,” said Yanez. “[We] have always [had] responsibilities, but this is the first time we were given this level of responsibility. It is a good feeling knowing we



Lance Cpl. Lud G. Romain (left), Lance Cpl. Lagrima C. Urista (center) and Lance Cpl. Brian A. Yanez, supply warehouse clerks with Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), take a break from supply warehouse duties at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan.

are accomplishing the mission.”

The Marines have learned to trust and rely on one another over the course of their friendship.

“It is always noticeable whenever one of us is out of the warehouse for training or convoys,” said Yanez. “We have learned to rely on each other. When we are all here everything thing runs perfectly smooth, but it becomes apparent how important each Marine is whenever one of us is gone.”

The bonds formed during training have helped the Marines accomplish their mission as a part of CLB-4, both individually and as a team. These bonds have given them experience beyond their rank.

“Each of them are capable of making their own decisions; decisions that [noncommissioned officers] would normally make,” Staff Sgt. Drew McDonald, supply warehouse chief, CLB-4. “They make a good team, and it helps them every day.”

Romain, a Newark, N.J., native, uses his natural tenacity to complete his duties as assistant warehouse chief, said Yanez.

Yanez, a Buena Park, Calif., native, is a fixture around the CLB-4 compound, spending time as the Defense Reutilization Management Office noncommissioned officer, assist-



Lance Cpl. Lud G. Romain (left), supply warehouse clerk, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, inspects a new shipment of headlamps with Gunnery Sgt. Antonio A. Thomas, Bravo Company gunnery sergeant, CLB-4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), at the CLB-4 supply warehouse on Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, April 10.

ing with base improvement projects and managing the DRMO pit, where excess or broken equipment is taken for disposal or reutilization.

The junior Marine in the warehouse, Urista, a Vernon, Texas, native, brings a positive attitude to the table, motivating her fellow Marines on even the longest days when filling her billet as roll-back clerk, said Yanez.

The trio intends to continue their friendship long after the deployment is over, carrying the bonds they forged with their fellow Marines with them for the rest of their lives, said Urista.

“We will probably try to stay in contact, but even if we don’t, we will take what we learned from each other and pass it on to the next group of Marines,” said Yanez.

"Red Patchers" support aerial travel in Helmand province

Story and photos by
Sgt. Michele Watson
Staff Writer

NOW ZAD, Afghanistan – In the Battle of Guadalcanal during World War II, infantry Marines and the shore party got mixed up after the initial landings on the beach. As gear and supplies were offloaded to support the assault, the shore party was unable to effectively direct the distribution of the cargo because they could not be distinguished in the swarm of other Marines on the beach. To mitigate the confusion, the shore party began wearing a red patch on their trousers and covers to identify themselves.

Although the core concept of their job remains the same, today's shore party Marines are known as landing support [LS] specialists, and the red patch insignia is still proudly worn. While there are no beaches to assault in Afghanistan, LS Marines stay busy conducting several other missions associated with "Red Patchers." Chief among those tasks include organizing the travel of passengers and cargo throughout Helmand Province.

"I love the term "Red Patchers," said Lance Cpl. Brent Wars, a landing support specialist with Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward). "It is the one thing that separates us from all other Marines. It's kind of a pride thing."

Wars, 20, a Groveton, Texas native, runs the Arrival/Delivery Airfield Control Group at Forward Operating Base Now Zad. Working in a noncommissioned officer's billet, Wars is responsible for the entire A/DACG's operation as well as two other landing support Marines who manage and organize every flight that comes to the FOB.

"We are all capable of accomplishing the mission at hand," said Wars. "But I am ultimately responsible for ensuring that the job gets done."

The landing zone at FOB Now Zad can support numerous types of Marine Corps aircraft including MV-22 Ospreys, CH-53E Super Sea Stallions, and UH-1 Hueys as well as some U.S. Army, civilian and British helicopters. The three Marines manage anywhere from 20 to 40 incoming and outgoing flights per week.

"Our job is to facilitate and manifest the aerial travel of 'PAX' and

cargo here at Now Zad," said Lance Cpl. Justin MacRae, landing support specialist, CLB-4, 1st MLG (Fwd).

During World War II, infantry Marines and LS Marines worked together during beach assaults by providing security and directing the distribution of supplies. This tradition continues today at Now Zad. Security for the landing zone is provided by infantrymen with 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 6, while the landing support Marines are responsible for identifying the landing zone.

When an aircraft approaches the landing zone, Wars or MacRae employ smoke grenades so the pilots can gauge the wind and determine the exact point to land.

Once the bird touches down, the "Red Patchers" speak with the aircraft's crew chief to exchange information about the arrival and departure of passengers and cargo.

An aircraft idling in a landing zone can be extremely dangerous, and it is the LS Marines' responsibility to ensure personnel are escorted safely to and from the aircraft. Passengers arriving at the landing zone are led to a safe area to await transport to the FOB. Once all arriving personnel have been moved to safety, the LS Marines escort any departing passengers to the waiting aircraft.

"Since we're the guys on the ground...we get to meet a lot of people," said MacRae, 19, a native of Las Vegas.



Lance Cpl. Justin MacRae, landing support specialist, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), uses white smoke to guide a Bell 214 helicopter to the landing zone at Forward Operating Base Now Zad, Afghanistan, April 9.

Whether it's day or night, the landing support Marines are out at the landing zone directing incoming aircraft.

"One of the coolest sites to see is the Ospreys when they land at night," said MacRae.

After the aircraft takes off, the arrivals are loaded up into trucks for a short drive to the FOB. Though the location may be a small dot on a map to some, MacRae said he loves what he does.

"I have wanted to join the Marine Corps since I was a little kid and deploying to a combat zone was another big goal that I had," said MacRae. "Being out here and seeing how my job affects people is really cool."

Wars agrees that regardless of where they do their job, this is where he wants to be.

"Ever since I joined I have wanted to deploy," said Wars. "I'm happy to be here and have the opportunity to serve my country."



Lance Cpl. Brent Wars (left) and Lance Cpl Justin MacRae (right), landing support specialists with Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), approach a Bell 214 helicopter after guiding it to the landing zone at Forward Operating Base Now Zad, April 9.

Marines stand out above peers, win MLG quarterly boards

Story and photos by
Sgt. Michele Watson
Staff Writer

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – In order to effectively complete its mission, the Marine Corps often demands uniformity from its Marines. However, excellence above one's peers is always recognized.

For those Marines who go above and beyond their expected duties, they are often given an opportunity to go before a board of senior Marines. Marines compete against their peers for recognition, a chance to compete at higher level boards and occasionally the opportunity for a meritorious promotion. To win a board, a Marine must demonstrate exemplary leadership traits and a strong work ethic that surpasses their peers.

Cpl. Chase Ivey, a motor transport mechanic with Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), won the 1st MLG (Fwd) Marine of the Quarter board and Cpl. Stephanie Zegar, a maintenance management clerk with 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st MLG (Fwd) won the 1st MLG (Fwd) Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter board. Both Marines accomplished this during their deployments to Helmand

Province, Afghanistan.

Ivey, who won the board as a lance corporal and recently was promoted to the rank of corporal, said his command had a lot to do with his success.

"This has been a great deployment for me because of my leadership," said Ivey, 20, a native of Reno, Nev. "They gave me the opportunity [to compete on the board] and pushed me to be better than everyone else."

As a junior Marine, Ivey was put in charge of all incoming and outgoing parts at the CLB-1 maintenance lot aboard Camp Dwyer.

"I enjoy my job because it allows me to see the broader spectrum of maintenance," said Ivey. "In my opinion, it's one of the most important jobs in maintenance. We support the readiness of the trucks from order to issue, and it's my job to ensure the right parts and the right quantities are brought in."

Ivey's unit is wrapping up their deployment and preparing to go home. Ivey said he looks forward to getting back to his wife and 7-month old son who was born just before Ivey left for Afghanistan.

For Zegar, her successful board was motivation to continue her hard work.

"Winning NCO of the Quarter makes me want to strive to reach

an even higher level of achievement," said Zegar, 22, a native of Sarasota, Fla. "It increases my level of accomplishment to know that the [MLG] recognizes the efforts I have put into my battalion."

Stationed in Okinawa, Japan, Zegar volunteers with the Single Marine Program when not deployed.

"I look forward to getting back to [Okinawa] and keeping Marines involved in the [Japanese] culture

and activities through the SMP to raise morale," said Zegar.

Zegar extended her contract to deploy to Afghanistan a second time with her unit.

"I feel very lucky to be in Afghanistan and to serve my country again," said Zegar. "I feel like I have more knowledge this deployment, and I am grateful to have a great team with me. I couldn't ask for anything more."



Cpl. Stephanie Zegar, maintenance management clerk, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), won the 1st MLG (Fwd) Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter board while deployed to Helmand province, Afghanistan.



Cpl. Chase Ivey, motor transport mechanic, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), won the 1st MLG (Fwd) Marine of the Quarter board while deployed to Helmand province, Afghanistan.

CLBs conduct 'left seat, right seat' operations

Story and photos by
Sgt. Michele Watson
Staff Writer

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PAYNE, Afghanistan

— The war in Afghanistan is continuous, and while units may come and go, the mission never pauses.

With only a few days left in Afghanistan, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) has spent the past few weeks working side-by-side with CLB-5, 1st MLG (Fwd) as they prepare to take over the logistic support responsibilities in southern Afghanistan. To ensure the smoothest transition possible, the two battalions have conducted "left seat, right seat" operations.

"Left seat, right seat" operations occur when a few members of an incoming unit observe an outgoing unit while they conduct a mission. "Left seat" is the term used to describe the unit that is conducting the mission while the "right seat" describes the observers. It allows the incoming unit to ask questions and understand the environment before taking over completely. This process ultimately sustains the operational tempo.

When CLB-5 first arrived in Afghanistan, key leaders took the "right seat" and went on missions with CLB-1 to get a feel for current combat operations.



Cpl. Joseph Rivera, motor transport operator, Combat Logistics Battalion 5, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), hooks a tow bar to the back of a Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle at Forward Operating Base Payne, Afghanistan, April 14.

Although CLB-1 received turnover training at the beginning of their deployment, key leaders were only able to observe one mission conducted by the unit they were replacing before they took the reins. Conducting multiple missions with their replacement before CLB-1 leaves Afghanistan gives CLB-5 further familiarity with the area of operations.

"It is absolutely imperative that the incoming unit is receptive to advice from the outgoing unit," said 1st Lt. Tyrel Campbell, 3rd Platoon commander, Charlie Company, CLB-1, who observed a recent mission to Forward Operating Base Payne, Afghanistan.

For the incoming unit, one of the best tools for a smooth changeover is

the experience of the outgoing unit.

"Even the smallest tips can make the difference between a good deployment and a great deployment," said Sgt. Jared Swofford, section leader, 3rd Plt., Charlie Company, CLB-1.

Just days before CLB-5 took over as the sole logistics provider in the region, they took the "left seat" and conducted their own mission to FOB Payne with a few Marines from CLB-1 riding along to observe.

At FOB Payne, CLB-5 provided tactical logistics support to members of 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, Regimental Combat Team 5. In addition to the regularly scheduled delivery of chow and water, CLB-5 supplied

3rd LAR Bn. with 15 Mine-Resistant, Ambush-Protected vehicles for use in future operations.

After a successful tour, CLB-1's hard work has earned them a trip home, and CLB-5 is now prepared to provide support to multiple units.

"[Infantry units] have to have the supplies to get their mission done," Swofford said.

CLBs are responsible for bringing water, food, fuel, gear and mail to FOBs throughout Helmand province, but they also help with the retrograde of excess items in Afghanistan.

"On my last deployment, my main task was to provide supplies to our area of operations," said Cpl. Raul Toledo, motor transport operator, 2nd Plt., Echo Company, CLB-5. "But now with the retrograde, I feel like my mission has a greater impact because the more gear we are able to take out of these FOBs, the faster the Marines can get out of there."

Though it is only the beginning of the deployment, CLB-5 has already proven their competency. During their "left seat, right seat" operations, the unit visited FOBs Payne, Geronimo and Dehli and will continue to provide support to all Marine units south of Camp Leatherneck.

"This group did a lot of training before coming out here, and I think we're prepared to provide the full support needed from us," said Toledo.

1st MLG recognizes volunteers



Photos by Cpl. Khoa Pelczar



Karen Broadmeadow, wife of the 1st Marine Logistics Group's commanding general, Brig. Gen. John J. Broadmeadow, hosts a luncheon at her home aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 22, to recognize volunteers in the unit and present them with a token of appreciation.

Marines continue infrastructure growth in Afghanistan

Story and photos by
Sgt. Michele Watson
Staff Writer

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Marines with Support Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), worked tirelessly toward the completion of a 12 kilometer stretch of road.

A road was already in place, but during several severe rainstorms the route was damaged and in desperate need of repair.

“After receiving approval to reconstruct the road, we had to figure out the amount of fuel, equipment and manpower needed to accomplish the mission,” said Gunnery Sergeant Joel Williams, heavy equipment chief, Heavy Equipment Platoon, Support Co., 9th ESB, 1st MLG (Fwd).

To construct a road that can withstand heavy rains, heavy equipment operators used heavy equipment for a multi-step system. The process created a smooth path similar to roads in America.

First, the Marines used a front loader to load up the dump trucks with gravel. The dump trucks then dropped the gravel onto the road. A road grader, which is used to shape the road, leveled out the surface and also made the V-ditches on the side. After the road was shaped, a water truck wet the rock and soil. Once that dried, heavy equipment operators used a compactor to pack the building materials together. This process results in a fast, convenient route of travel.

“While I am in the compactor, my job is to make sure the road is heavily compressed,” said Lance Cpl. Yanet Sierra Trejo, a heavy equipment operator with Heavy Equipment platoon, Support Co., 9th ESB, 1st MLG (Fwd). “When I am in the [front loader], I have to make sure I put enough gravel in the dump to lay out on the road.”

Although asphalt is not used to create a black top surface like highways in America, when using the adapted road, the difference is hard to notice.

“You can feel how smooth it is when you’re driving on the road,”



Gunnery Sgt. Joel Williams, heavy equipment chief, Heavy Equipment Platoon, Support Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), watches while a grader levels the gravel during road construction outside of Forward Operating Base Geronimo, March 23.

said Williams. “It’s just like driving on a road back home.”

To counter the effects of water damage, the Marines built V-ditches on both sides of the road for rain to drain into. The road was also built with a small crown.

“Instead of having a flat road, we leave a three to five percent grade crown in the road, so the water goes into the V-ditches during rainfall,” said Cpl. Joshua Reynolds, a heavy equipment operator, Heavy Equipment Platoon, Support Co., 9th ESB, 1st MLG (Fwd).

Road construction always requires the skill of heavy equipment operators, but more was required to accomplish this mission due to the threat of insurgent activity.

“Being in Afghanistan we also have to determine how much security is needed,” said Williams.

During the project, a security team was established to protect the Marines working on the road.

“Before the heavy equipment operators begin their work, we

clear the area using mine-rollers to proof the area for [improvised explosive devices],” said Cpl. Jared Hilton, security team leader, 2nd squad, Security Platoon, Support Co., 9th ESB, 1st MLG (Fwd). “Once it’s cleared, the operators can move freely.”

Multiple irrigation trenches and canals create opportunities for enemy fighters to maneuver and place improvised explosive devices, but added security diminishes the threat.

“Insurgents use the areas we can’t see, like wadis, to move around,” said Hilton. “We post security and keep eyes on all avenues of approach, so the heavy equipment operators can work through the day and focus on their task.”

With the completion of the road, military vehicles as well as local civilians have a faster and safer method of travel.

“The road will allow freedom of movement without worrying about

damaging mine-roller wheels or the vehicle itself,” said Williams.

Hilton also discussed the benefit of lessened IED threats.

“Because we add so many rocks, the road is harder, and it’s more difficult to dig holes to plant IEDs in,” said Hilton.

The Marines of Support Company worked well together, and their dedication to the mission brought safety to both military and civilian vehicles and garnered the appreciation of the locals.

“I think these Marines are some of the best I have ever worked with,” said Williams. “They have the ability to deliver and make it happen. They are all positive, so it makes for good end results.”

Hilton also said the efforts of both security and construction go hand in hand.

“We definitely work as one team,” said Hilton. “We all know each other’s jobs and responsibilities, and it helps to make the mission run smooth.”

Jane Wayne Day

Photos by Cpl. Khoa Pelczar

1st Med. Bn. raises morale with Jane Wayne Day



Spouses of Marines and sailors with 1st Medical Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, practice inserting IVs during a Jane Wayne Day aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 20.



A spouse of a sailor with 1st Medical Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, aims downrange at balloon targets during a Jane Wayne Day aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 20.

(Bottom) Linda Ekeya, wife of a corpsman with 1st Medical Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, climbs one of many obstacles her husband went through at basic training during a Jane Wayne Day at Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 20.



(Left) Spouses of Marines and sailors with 1st Medical Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, carry a mock casualty into a Shock Trauma Platoon for treatment during a Jane Wayne Day aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 20.