



**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**  
11TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT  
BOX 555361  
CAMP PENDLETON, CA 92055-5361

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5700  
S3/jak

From: Commanding Officer, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit  
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (HDH-4)  
Via: (1) Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force  
(2) Commander, Marine Forces Pacific

Subj: COMMAND CHRONOLOGY FOR PERIOD 1 JUL TO 31 DEC 2004

Ref: (a) MCO P5750.1G  
(b) MARFORPAC 5750.8F  
(c) I MEFO 5750.1G

Encl: (1) 11th MEU Command Chronology  
(2) BLT 3/1 Command Chronology  
(3) HMM-166 Command Chronology  
(4) MSSG-11 Command Chronology

1. In accordance with the references, enclosures (1) through (4) are submitted.

2. Point of contact is Capt James A. Kidd, at DSN: 302-3660-631  
kiddja@11meu.usmc.mil.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. M. Haslam', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

A. M. HASLAM



**11th MEU  
Command Chronology**

**1 Jul - 31 Dec  
2004**

11TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT  
COMMAND CHRONOLOGY  
1 JUL TO 31 DEC 04

SECTION I.....ORGANIZATIONAL DATA  
SECTION II.....NARRATIVE SUMMARY  
SECTION III.....SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF  
SIGNIFICANT EVENTS  
SECTION IV.....SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

SECTION I

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

1. Unit Designation: 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit  
(Special Operations Capable)

- a. Reporting Unit Code - 20177
- b. Table of Organization Number - 4916B

2. Period Covered and Location:

1 July 2004 - 19 July 2004: Embarked aboard USS  
BELLEAU WOOD, USS DENVER and USS COMSTOCK and deployed  
Western Pacific

20 July 2004 - 31 December 2004: Deployed to Iraq with  
Marines at Al Asad Air Base, Forward Operating Base Duke,  
Forward Operating Base Echo, Forward Operating Base Hotel,  
and Forward Operating Base Lima

3. Personnel Information:

- a. Commanding Officer Col Anthony M.  
Haslam 1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04
- b. Executive Officer LtCol Eugene N.  
Apicella 1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04
- c. Subordinate Commanders
  - Commanding Officer Battalion Landing Team 1/4  
LtCol John L. Mayer  
1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04
  - Commanding Officer HMM-166 (REIN)  
LtCol John W. Guthrie  
1 Jul 04 - 6 Sep 04
  - Commanding Officer MSSG-11  
LtCol Ted A. Ruane  
1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04
- d. Principal Staff Members
  - S-1  
Capt Kimberly A. Johnson  
1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04



S-2 Maj Michael J. Lindemann  
1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04

S-3 LtCol Gary S. Johnston  
1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04

S-4 Maj Jeff L. Jarosz  
1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04

S-6 Maj Richard D. Zyla  
1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04

e. Staff Historian Capt James A. Kidd  
1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04

f. Sergeant Major SgtMaj Willie F. Metoyer  
1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04

g. Special Staff

Staff Judge Advocate Maj Christopher B. Walters  
1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04

Headquarters Commandant MSgt Kevin Bonds  
1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04

Public Affairs Officer Capt Carrie C. Batson  
1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04

Disbursing Officer 1stLt Roger Ibarra  
1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04

4. Average Monthly Strength: Personnel chargeable and on hand

1 July - 31 December 2004:

Month	USMC		Navy		Army		Civ
	Off	Enl	Off	Enl	Off	Enl	
Jul	178	1908	9	93	0	0	1
Aug	182	1931	9	93	131	1450	1
Sep	126	1557	10	89	37	651	1
Oct	132	1576	10	90	33	531	1
Nov	131	1599	14	196	32	528	1
Dec	123	1576	14	182	33	538	1

## SECTION II

### NARRATIVE SUMMARY

#### Personnel and Administration/S-1

July began with the MEU S-1 prepared for disembarking the USS BELLEAU WOOD, USS DENVER, and USS COMSTOCK. Most of our supplies were again packed away in our PALCONS and 7-cubes; we relied heavily on our Navy counterparts, who were more than understanding and willing. Nearly all personnel were ashore by the first week of July. Two postal clerks remained on the ships to assist the Navy in sorting our mail that made it past the rerouting date. They joined the remainder of the S-1 in Kuwait just prior to our movement into Iraq. The second half of the month was spent getting the MEU S-1 settled primarily at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Duke. While the MEU S-1 was based out of FOB Duke, one administrative clerk was sent to FOB Echo for support and one postal clerk was based at the Al Asad post office. MEU postal operations and disbursing operations remained at FOB Duke as well.

With just enough time to settle into our new location, the Battle of Najaf began in August. The MEU S-1 set up 24-hour casualty reporting operations in the MEU combat operations center (COC). Casualty reporting was made easier during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) II, vice OIF I, with the Defense Casualty Information Program System (DCIPS). DCIPS is a user friendly, Microsoft Outlook compatible program which allowed faster reporting and tracking. Although the Army does not use the system, it was easily taught to 1-5 Cavalry and 2-7 Cavalry for their use while attached to the 11th MEU(SOC). MEU S-1 worked hand-in-hand with Medical tracking reported evacuation of casualties. On 11 August 2004, MEU S-1 experienced their only casualty of the deployment. LCpl Tavon Hubbard, postal clerk, died in a helicopter crash while delivering mail. His replacement joined at the end of August. The MEU S-1 had another addition; one of the augments was assigned as the S-1A. Not an administrator by trade, he learned the job quickly and adapted to the life in the MEU S-1; he was a true asset to the section.

In September, the MEU S-1 continued to track casualties and provide updated personnel casualty reports

as necessary. The first week of September we welcomed another Marine to the MEU S-1; a permanently assigned fourth postal clerk. Due to the number of personnel supported over three locations, a fourth Marine was essential for smooth postal operations. By mid-month, HMM-166 had out chopped, so our postal clerk at Al Asad finally joined us at FOB Duke.

October, November, and December were busy with assisting the Staff Judge Advocate with the claims process. One Marine was sent to the SJA full-time for data entry assistance, two Marines were sent to the SJA part-time for claims adjudication, and every Monday for claims payments, MEU S-1 sent another four and Disbursing sent two Marines. During this time, awards began coming in. Most awards processed were to recognize those personnel for their actions during the Battle of Najaf. In December, however, end of tour awards were processed. Planning and coordination also began for redeployment; primary focus was on early redeployers. Several personnel were looking towards their end of active service as well as permanent change of station orders.

Throughout this period, the MEU S-1 completed 0 sets of funded TAD orders (all emergency leave travel was submitted, prepared, and paid for by I MEF).

The 11th MEU recognized its outstanding Marines and Sailors by presenting them the following awards:

Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals: 6

Certificates of Commendation: 9

#### Intelligence/S-2

11<sup>th</sup> MEU S-2 section main body began July 2004 still aboard the USS Belleau Wood, completing transit to Kuwait. That time concluded final efforts to identify possible threats and support mission planning for the off-load and movement North. Meanwhile, Capt Sile continued advance party work for the arrival of the MEU, coordinating with TF-Dragon (1<sup>st</sup> ID Div Arty) S-2 and other units in zone. 11<sup>th</sup> MEU Human Intelligence Team (HET) completed its temporary duty at 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division and redeployed to Najaf to begin initial area familiarity and coordination

with HUMINT assets in zone. As 11<sup>th</sup> MEU prepared for offload, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Eberhardt led a mixed detachment ashore early, consisting of the Radio Reconnaissance Team (RRT) and HET Marine SSgt Bobeck. This team provided intelligence support for force protection to the offload in a combined effort with the ESG-3 NCIS Special Agent and the MARCENT Counter Intelligence Detachment Kuwait.

Following offload, transition to Camp Virginia and movement North, the S-2 section began to perform Relief in Place (RIP) with the TF-Dragon S-2 section on 21 July. Although the TF-Dragon was a numerically small intelligence section and had only occupied the AO for limited time, they provided a good intelligence turnover of target folders and general situational awareness of current enemy disposition. Since there was already a unit designated as HET-11, 11<sup>th</sup> MEU HET was designated as HET-15. I MEF G-2 Plans and CIHOC coordinated with MNCI C2X to assign Army Tactical HUMINT Teams (THT) 511 and 513 in direct support of 11<sup>th</sup> MEU. The S-2 section was reconfigured in-stride to establish the main body at FOB Duke, with detachments at FOB Hotel and at FOB Echo. The FOB Echo S-2 detachment was lead by the MEU S-2A, and initially consisted of one analyst each from MEU CE, BLT 1/4, and MSSG-11, a METOC forecaster, the Mobile Electronic Warfare Systems Support team, HET-15 Subteam 3, and THT-513. The FOB Echo S-2 section was constructed to provide MEU-level intelligence support to all tenant units aboard FOB Echo and to develop the intelligence in Diwaniyah for the MEU CE. Initial configuration of the S-2 detachment at FOB Hotel included the Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) Support Team (SST), HET Subteam 2 with THT-511. The main S-2 section was established at FOB Duke and included the S-2 and S-2 Chief with analysts, imagery and geospatial productions team, 3d Radio Bn Det Operations Control Element (OCE), RRT, and METOC Chief. Sgt Bush was assigned to assume responsibility for the FOB Duke linguists and Open Source Intelligence cell. Several Marines were also assigned to variety of collateral duties such as Camp Guard and Commanding Officer's Personal Security Detachment (PSD). The entire Ground Sensor Platoon (GSP) detachment was employed in this manner.

July concluded with the arrival of what became a revolving door of temporary augments. Although possessing broad capabilities, the MEU S-2 section lacked the all-source analytic capabilities of larger organizations such as Regimental Combat Teams. A formal effort to coordinate section augments commenced in April with the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU

Request For Forces (RFF), and finally saw partial fruition with the arrival of Capt Ayres, Sgt Altamirano and Sgt Scott from 3d MAW. MEF also provided two Marines, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Hunn and LCpl Shedden, who were assigned to the BLT S-2 section.

11<sup>th</sup> MEU transitioned from RIP into combat operations almost immediately. Muqtada Sadr's militia initially controlled several sections of Najaf including areas around the Imam Ali Shrine and Kufa Mosque, and was operating throughout the city of Najaf. These forces were actively intimidating much of the population and Iraqi security forces. On 2 August, RRT was supporting a BLT patrol that made initial contact with a group of Militia providing security in the vicinity of one of Sadr's residences, resulting in several enemy casualties. Three days later, Militia members made multiple significant harassing attacks against the Najaf Main IP station, initially leading to MEU reinforcement of the IP Station and eventually prompting offensive operations into the Najaf cemetery (Wadi al Salaam) to dislodge Militia members from the sanctuary they enjoyed there. Based on the emerging requirement for sustained combat operations, the MEU quickly swelled, increasing by two reinforced Cavalry Battalion task forces, an Air Cavalry Battalion, various Special Operations forces, and over three battalions of Iraqi forces. The transition to full combat operations and dramatic expansion of 11th MEU forces necessitated reconfiguration and augmentation of the S-2 section.

I MEF and MNC-I provided further personnel augmentation to 11<sup>th</sup> MEU, with a host of additional Marines and Soldiers arriving during August. Two soldiers from 303d MI Bn, SPC Brachtenbach and PFC Weiner who were provided by MNC-I to assist with in-flight coordination and reporting from the 24-hour Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) coverage 11<sup>th</sup> MEU received during August and early September. SSG Gardner from 303d MI Bn and SSgt Wustrack from I MEF served as COC S-2 watch Chiefs, supervising the duty analysts and UAV operators, while LCpl Coleman rounded out the intelligence analyst augments. Lt Dooley arrived from 3d MAW to provide support as a project officer for about one week. With the end of August, Capt Damon Harris arrived from I MEF and served as 11<sup>th</sup> MEU S-2 at FOB Duke from 30 August through 11 Oct.

The OCE remained attached to the Command Element at FOB Duke, where they linked national and theater level data into MEU operations and provided the three SIGINT collections teams with intelligence and logistic support.

The OCE coordinated theater-level Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) assets for effective and timely persecution/ dissemination of immediate Force Protection, and Indications and Warnings. Most noted during that time was the use of National SIGINT assets to track and identify HVT's operating in the MEU's AO. The OCE enjoyed the support of a wide array of theater assets that were used extensively, including EP-3s, GUARDRAIL, and KC-135. The OCE worked with the S-3 Fires section to coordinate electronic attack by the use of the USMC Prowler in limited amounts and attempted tactical electronic attack on one occasion with the CESAS and STARGRAZER provided by 3d Rad Bn. RRT was attached to various units for specific missions during combat operations in August. Most collection by RRT occurred while attached to TF 1-5 Cav. The team rotated through different companies providing SIGINT support while TF 1-5 Cav performed combat operations to clear Muqtada Militia from the Najaf cemetery. During this period, RRT also provided SIGINT support to BLT Reconnaissance Platoon, Force Reconnaissance Platoon, and the Maritime Special Purpose Force for a variety of reconnaissance and direct action missions. The MEWSS team temporarily detached from the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU at FOB Echo to join the fight in Najaf, where they were attached to TF 1-5 Cav. While supporting this unit, the MEWSS made significant contributions to the TF and MEU situational awareness and provided indications and warning that resulted in preventing casualties on at least one occasion. The MEWSS operated in the Najaf Old City area, south of the ring road and shrine area. Shortly after fighting commenced, the Signals Intelligence Support Team (SST) shifted from FOB Hotel to the Governor's compound and Joint Coordination Center for increased collection opportunities.

11<sup>th</sup> MEU HUMINT was similarly realigned to support combat operations during August. The Marines of HET 15 operated in support of BLT 1/4, with two members fulfilling CI/HUMINT management from FOB Duke. Although THT 513 remained based at FOB Echo, THT 511 was reassigned to FOB Hotel and was primarily in support of TF 2/7 Cav. During combat operations in August, Mobile Interrogation Team 205 was placed in DS of 11<sup>th</sup> MEU to assist with our periodically burgeoning detainee population. THT 521 and THT 526 were placed in GS-R to the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU, but only periodically provided support for integrated operations with 11<sup>th</sup> MEU subordinate and attached units. Collectively, HET 15 with two THT's in direct support produced over 120 Draft

Intelligence Information Reports during the August fighting.

One of the primary strengths of the MEU S-2 section was its small products cell, which remained busy developing high quality products supporting a range of planning and operational requests. The two-man imagery team of SSgt Bell and Sgt Ramirez produced 250 images representing over 30 distinct projects or assignments during August alone. The Topographic team of Sgt Perez and LCpl Anderson generated over 40 different topographic products during this same time frame, including city graphics of outlying towns and various studies of Najaf itself. Topographic products were frequently developed in conjunction with the supported commands to incorporate applicable annotations and maneuver graphics. As 11<sup>th</sup> MEU more than doubled in size, graphics print production runs eventually exceeded 350 prints.

With the completion of Operation Pacific Guardian on 28 August, most of the augmentation personnel returned to their parent commands within the next few weeks. The MEWSS team was returned to FOB Echo in Diwaniyah while the SST relocated from the JCC to FOB Hotel to support installation of the Prophet Hammer system and gain system familiarity. RRT initially continued operations with BLT Recon Platoon and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), before moving to the JCC on 14 Sept to backfill the SST. The RRT would remain at the JCC for two weeks before relocating to FOB Hotel to assist SST in employment of the Prophet Hammer. 3<sup>rd</sup> Rad Bn Det AOIC, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Eberhardt, also relocated to FOB Hotel to assume responsibility of the Prophet Hammer and associated element of 3d Rad Bn Det.

After tracking Sadr Lieutenant Ahmed al Shaybani for several weeks, the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU participated in a joint raid on Sadr's office on 21 September with the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Force (ICTF) and ODA 512. This operation resulted in the capture of forty-one personnel believed to be associated with the Sadr office along with several truckloads of arms and considerable amounts of materials. Six detainees were immediately evacuated, but the remaining thirty-five were screened and selectively interrogated by Mobile Interrogation Team (MIT) 501 over the course of the next two weeks. The MIT was attached to 11<sup>th</sup> MEU specifically to assist in exploitation of these detainees.

HET 15 augmented by MIT 501 continued screening and interrogation of detainees from the Sadr office raid into October. There were several significant SIGINT developments during October. Following the RIP between 1<sup>st</sup> Rad Bn and 2<sup>nd</sup> Rad Bn, the 3d RadBn detachment OIC, AOIC and

SNCOIC visited 2<sup>nd</sup> RadBn at Blue Diamond for detailed coordination of SIGINT tasking and collections. In addition, the AOIC met with the Prophet Hammer fielding team to discuss how system should be run and any tips/hints on using the system to its full potential. The Prophet Hammer system was installed and operational at FOB Hotel during mid-October. Multiple suspect targets have been identified from SIM card exploitation from Sadr office raid. S-2 section continued target development efforts, providing all-source support leading to joint 11<sup>th</sup> MEU and ODA 512 direct action against individual suspected of constructing or brokering VBIED. RRT supported the DA execution. RRT also accompanied HET during their various patrols in Najaf, using scanners and a DRT for force protection I&W. The imagery and topographic productions cell remained busy building tailored products to satisfy a variety of requirements. GSP has been continuing its Camp Guard and CO's PSD role at FOB Duke.

During November, followers of Muqtada Sadr and Mahmood al Hassani al Sarkhi began to reassert their public presence and renewed rhetoric, particularly in Diwaniyah. HET 15 Sub-team 3 at FOB Echo tightly monitored these movements. The MEWSS team continued operations in Diwaniyah, supporting HET with personnel requirements for patrol manning and linguists. These patrols allowed for targeting as well as meet sites for CFSO sources. The MEWSS team moved one linguist to the Prophet Hammer site at FOB Hotel. Two Marines were sent to 24<sup>th</sup> MEU for training on Pilot House. THT 511 was assigned to support Bravo Co, BLT 1/4, which provided external security for Abu Gharayb Internment Facility during operation Phantom Fury/Fajr. This was a very successful deployment, witnessing effective integration of intelligence and operations for high-tempo intelligence driven operations.

December brought the departure of 11<sup>th</sup> MEU Marines from FOB Echo and the opening of FOB Lima. HET Subteam 3, along with THT 513 transitioned from FOB Echo to FOB Hotel with SSgt Bobeck individually moving to FOB Duke to perform interrogations and assist the HET OIC. The MEWSS team initially moved to FOB Hotel to help support the Prophet Hammer system, but they were soon redirected to join the MEU S-2 slice for FOB Lima near Karbala. Given the nature of the operating environment, the MEWSS SST was transitioned to HMMWV mobility to allow greater access into Karbala than the LAV MEWSS would allow. Also going to FOB Lima were THT 511, SSgt Mills for METOC and section SNCOIC and senior analyst Sgt Hurst. Maj Lindemann also made



temporary move to Karbala for RIP and initial familiarization of Karbala AO. A few Marines joined the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU early redeployers, including Capt Sile for PCS, with SSgt Geinert, SSgt Walz, Sgt Ramirez, and Cpl Robertson for EAS. Through December, the section remained busy with developing the situation in Karbala, investigating the parties responsible for various recent attacks, identifying threats to the upcoming elections, and developing targeting data for the local ratlines for smuggling narcotics and foreign fighters.

### Operations/S-3

The beginning of July found the MEU embarked aboard ESG shipping transiting the Straits of Hormuz. By 5 July the ships were staged off the coast of Kuwait preparing for offload into the Kuwaiti Naval Base (KNB). From 6-11 July, the MEU offloaded all personnel and equipment utilizing LCAC, LCU, and helicopter lift for follow on movement to Camp Virginia Kuwait. Concurrently, the MEU rotated vehicles through the Osh Kosh trucking company facility in Kuwait for the application of armor plating. From 9-13 July, a leaders reconnaissance consisting of the MEU CO and primary staff moved into Iraq to visit the assigned TOAR, I MEF, 1 MARDIV, and 1<sup>st</sup> FSSG. Live fire training was conducted at the Udari Range Complex (URC) from 9-16 July and consisted of all aspects of Security and Stability Operations (SASO) from urban patrolling to live fire assault ranges. Upon completion of training at the URC, the MEU was staged and ready for movement north into the Iraqi Theater of Operations (ITO).

Ground movement into the ITO began on 16 July with the departure of the ground quartering party and ended the next day when the final convoy departed Camp Virginia. The air movement piece began on 17 July and ended 18 July when all HMM-166 assets were staged at Al Asad and the bed down site at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Duke. On 21 July, the MEU commenced a Relief In Place (RIP) with Task Force (TF) Dragon of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division (1ID). On 31 July, the Transfer of Authority (TOA) took place between TF Dragon and the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU(SOC) with the MEU assuming control of the Najaf and Qadisiyah provinces—approximately 16,000 square miles of battlespace.

At 1846, 02 Aug, in An Najaf, a BLT 1/4 motorized patrol consisting of 9 vehicles and 41 Marines operating outside Exclusion Zone was engaged by Muqtada Militia (MM)

with small arms, RPGs, and light mortars vic maternity hospital vic MA 386 407. A Quick Reaction Force (QRF) and rotary wing CAS section were launched to reinforce the patrol in contact. The patrol returned fire with small arms, heavy machine guns, and AT-4s. The MM position was neutralized with an estimated (10) EKIA. For the next four days, sporadic fighting ranging from minor skirmishes to heavy combat took place in the city of Najaf centering mainly on the Najaf cemetery north of the Imam Ali Mosque Complex (IAMC).

On 5 Aug, mm conducted a series of harassing attacks from the Najaf Cemetery on the main IP station. In response, BLT 1/4 forces counter attacked and cleared eastern 1/3D of the cemetery killing numerous MM. Intelligence reports gathered from HUMINT sources indicated that the MM Command Element in charge of "Cemetery Defense" was overrun on 5 Dec by Marine forces resulting in 130 EKIA.

On 6 Aug, BLT 1/4 forces were ordered to pull back from the cemetery and surrounding areas and by 7 Aug, BLT 1/4 completed retrograde to FOB Hotel to refit and rearm. CAAT A, CAAT B, LAR, a section of AAVs and a section of tanks remained in place to conduct a RIP with ING forces tasked to hold MSR Miami. Also on 07 Aug, TF 1-5 Cav arrived FOB Duke to reinforce the MEU for further combat operations, and the ING led an Iraqi operation to raid Sadr's house in Najaf vic MA 386 407. During this raid 4 MM were killed and 2 MM were captured.

On 8 Aug, as TF 1-5 Cav departed FOB Duke to LD into the attack to clear the remainder of the Najaf cemetery, the MEU CO attended a meeting with PM Allawi, General Casey, and Governor Zurufi to discuss in the prosecution of operations in Najaf and the desired endstate. TF 1-5 Cav encountered little to no resistance moving into the cemetery and TF 2-7 Cav closed FOB Duke adding to the combat power already present. On 9 Aug, the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU (SOC) CHOP'd to Multi-National Forces West (MNFW) with the arrival to FOB Duke of the IMEF Fwd Command Element commanded by BGEN D. J. Hejlik. On 11 Aug, the MEU CO and subordinate commanders held a planning session at FOB Hotel to finalize plans for future operations. Shortly after that planning session, the I MEF CG imposed a 24 hour moratorium on offensive operations in the 11th MEU AO to establish a window for a negotiated peace. By the end of the day on 11 Aug, EKIA was estimated at 460.

During the temporary ceasefire, elements of TF 2-7 CAV depart FOB Duke IOT occupy battle positions southwest of

Najaf vic MA 299 318. Just hours after taking up battle positions, TF 2-7 Cav reported contact vic MA 299 318 with squad sized enemy units equipped with small arms, mortars, and RPGs. TF 1-5 Cav reported similar contact vic MA 352 416. BLT 1/4 reported contact about one km to the north of the Joint Coordination Center (JCC) vic MA 383 431. On the 11 Aug, MEU forces engaged AIF in the southwest, northwest, and northeast portions of the city with enemy forces of varying size and equipment. At 2244 on 11 Aug, initial reports came in indicating that a MEU CH-53E was down approximately 27 miles south of Al Taqqadum in Al Anbar province. Further investigation revealed that the mishap was caused by improper loading of cargo and resulted in the loss of (2) Marines killed and (3) wounded. The evening of 12 Aug, BLT1/4, in support of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), conducted a raid near Sadr's house vic MA 384 406 to destroy AIF and gather information of intelligence value. BLT and members of 405<sup>th</sup> ING attacked and cleared four buildings against a platoon-sized enemy armed with small arms, sniper rifles and mortars. MM forces suffered (3) EKIA and (18) EWIA. ING forces sustained (1) EKIA and (16) FWIA. BLT Marines pressed the attack and cleared (3) additional buildings to include Sadr's house. Sadr's house was vacant, but did produce numerous documents and computer hard drives.

Early on the morning of 13 Aug, the Maritime Special Purpose Force, in support of 36 Commando and the Iraqi Counter-Terrorist Force (ICTF), conducted a Direct Action (DA) mission on the Sahlah Mosque in Kufa vic MA 414 449. BLT forces provided exterior cordon while 36 Commando and ICTF conducted interior cordon and the assault killing (3) MM and capturing (8). At 0700 that same day, the 11th MEU was directed to temporarily cease offensive operations to facilitate cease fire negotiations. Security postures heightened throughout the AO after the Najaf JCC reported Muqtada Sadr was wounded vic Imam Ali Mosque. Reports throughout the day remained inconclusive on type of wounds, status of Sadr, or events surrounding incident.

On 14 Aug, BGen Hejlik (DCG I MEF) departed FOB Duke enroute to JCC for peace negotiations. Late that afternoon, BGen Hejlik reported that cease-fire talks broke down and expect to resume combat operations when directed. On 15 Aug, both TF1-5 Cav and TF2-7 Cav were engaged numerous times by sniper, small arms, RPG, and mortar attacks. Both units returned in kind killing or wounding numerous enemy. In the early evening on 15 Aug, a TF 1-5 CAV M1A2 received accurate small arms fire and indirect

fire from the No Fire Area (NFA) vic MA 341 410. During the fire fight a MM fighter climbed onto the turret and shot the gunner and tank commander resulting in (2) FKIA. The driver, hearing the shots, backed into a structure causing the building to fall onto the tank and making it unable to move from its location. RWCAS destroyed the enemy position and the tank and fallen soldiers were later recovered.

At 1130 on 16 Aug, the Iraqi Minister of Defense, Ali Allawi, Iraqi Deputy Minister of Interior, Adnan Hadi Asadi, and MNCI CG, LtGen Metz, arrived at FOB Duke for a meeting with 11<sup>th</sup> MEU Commanders to discuss the progress of the battle and the way ahead. Later that same day, the Governor of An Najaf announced that the Provincial Council voted to oust the MM and demanded the MM forces leave An Najaf. Sporadic fighting continued with the MM using the tactic of attacking from, or retreating to the NFA, where they were aware that timely fires could not be brought to bare on them.

In the early morning on 17 Aug, MEU forces once again brought the fight to the enemy. Alpha Company BLT 1/4, attached to TF 2-7 CAV, conducted a destruction raid on a suspected enemy weapons cache in Najaf vic MA 364 402 while Charlie Company TF 2-7 CAV conducted a destruction raid on a suspected enemy stronghold vic MA 362 398. The raid force captured (17) MM and a weapons cache consisting of AK-47, RPGs and mortar rounds. TF 2-7 CAV observed enemy mortar position near the hotel district within the Old City vic MA 351 401. CAS was requested and the enemy mortar fire stopped. Later that same day, (16) Iraqi delegates arrived in An Najaf from Baghdad for meeting with Al-Sadr. As talks progressed, MCSOCOM delivered a detachment of (10) personnel to include (9) snipers, (1) FAC and a Special Forces GROM unit from Poland.

18 Aug saw every battalion in the MEU engaged at some point. TF 1-5 CAV was engaged with RPGs in the cemetery vic MA 348 416. Soldiers maneuvered to the 418 Northing and requested indirect fire at suspected enemy in the cemetery vic MA 341 412 where the target was destroyed. Alpha Company TF 2-7 CAV received heavy machine gun, small arms, and RPG fire from a building just inside the ring road vic MA 358 402. TF 2-7 CAV returned fire while conducting survivability maneuvers to evade direct enemy fire. Bravo Company BLT 1 /4 was engaged by mortar fire, and requested fire support within the RFA at mortar point of origin vic MA 350 400. Upon IMEF approval, the target was destroyed by CAS. The IP established a TCP, reinforced by ING, for all traffic approaching the ring road vic MA

410 425 in order to contain the MM in the IAMC. Also on 18 Aug, LtGen Metz arrived at FOB Duke for the IMEF/11<sup>th</sup> MEU Najaf Concept of Operations Update Brief and to confer with commanders.

Early on 19 Aug, BLT 1/4 secured (3) objectives in Kufah. Alpha Company secured objective (3), a police station in Kufa vic MA 420 442 with no resistance from enemy forces. Bravo Company took objective (1), the east side of the Kufa bridge vic MA 447 448 and received fire from BLT Objective (2), the technical college in Kufa. CAS was requested and AC-130 and RWCAS provided fire support to facilitate maneuver on objective (2). BLT Recon set up a blocking position south of Kufah on route Sapp vic MA 433 442 in direct support of raid missions in Kufah. Shortly after the establishment of the VCP a blacked out civilian vehicle approached the Marine snap VCP at a high rate of speed. After attempts failed to slow the vehicle, Marines opened fire IOT stop the vehicle. The vehicle was thoroughly searched and nothing was found of any significance. The incident resulted in (4) CKIA and (7) CWIA. The CWIA were medevaced via military aircraft. The CKIA were transported to the hospital by Marines involved in the incident. An investigation was conducted regarding the circumstances leading to this accident and the Marines were found to be operating within the ROE.

From 19-21 Aug, augmentation continued to flow into the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU AO. The Iraqi Intervention Force (IIF) closed at FOB Echo with (400+) troops from the 2nd BN. (75) IIF troops from 1<sup>st</sup> BD HQ, with (5) US Advisors, also closed FOB Duke. On 19 Aug when a MSSG convoy, while traveling east along route Jacksonville from FOB Duke to FOB Echo, was hit by an IED vic MA 405 361. The patrol reported a daisy chain of three 155mm artillery rounds with only one round detonating. No casualties or vehicle damage were reported. Another threat previously unseen in the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU AO was identified when a UAV reported a possible multiple rocket launcher being moved into the NFA by (4) MM vic MA 356 402. The UAV witnessed the weapon being employed and received PID. 11th MEU received MNC-I approval and AV8Bs engaged target, but the desired effect was not achieved. A hellfire shot from the on station UAV was then requested, permission was granted, and the target was destroyed. The final combat action of 19 Aug took place when TF 2-7 CAV received accurate RPG fire on Rte CHRISTY along the Eastern Sector. (1) Bradley was a mobility kill and (2) FWIA were sustained. The Bradley was later towed to Camp David.

Early in the morning on 20 Aug, TF 1-5 CAV received mortar fire in the cemetery vic MA 341 408. The point of origin was confirmed by Q-36 radar at MA 353 402. An AC-130 and Predator UAV had PID on enemy and the target was engaged at 0257D resulting in the destruction of (1) mortar tube. Also on 20 Aug, while working in direct support of TF 2-7 CAV, 11<sup>th</sup> MEU Force Recon Platoon was engaged by an IED in the Old City vic MA 356 395, resulting in (1) damaged HMMWV. No injuries were sustained and the vehicle was later towed back to FOB Duke. The platoon dismounted and cleared the area, which resulted in a short engagement. In the early afternoon, the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU directed the cessation of all fires in observance of Friday prayers per the request of the Najaf Governor.

Early in the morning of 21 Aug, Alpha Company (-) BLT 1/4 was the main effort in the raid on Kufah to clear BN objective RAIDER vic MA 429 436, a former IP station. In support of this raid, Bravo Company attacked by fire onto BN objective BLACKHORSE vic MA 444 451, a MM checkpoint. A Co, 2<sup>nd</sup> Plt and BLT Recon established a screen line from MA 447 439 to 435 429 to prevent a southern egress from Kufah. AC-130, in coordination with RWCAS was utilized with effective fire on target during the attack. The coordinated attack was a success with both objectives being secured, an estimated (45) EKIA and (29) detainees. Elsewhere on 21 Aug, TF 1-5 CAV was engaged vic MA 354 405 with AK-47s and spotted a suspected mortar position in close proximity to the enemy. The position was destroyed by 25mm delivered by TF 1-5. 155mm artillery was called in later to destroy a different mortar site at MA 347 404 when it was discovered by UAV.

On 22 Aug 1-5 CAV, reinforced with elements of BLT 1/4, conducted a probing attack on TF Obj C, the western portion of the parking garage vic MA 349 402. At 0119 lead trace encountered (11) IEDs vic MA 344 405 that were destroyed by the raid force. At 0129 engagement began with friendly forces engaging targets with tank main gun, 25mm, 7.62mm and Hellfire. Resistance was heavy and centered mainly around the buildings to the southwest of the parking garage. TF 1-5 CAV disengaged at 0202. An AC-130 on station covered the retrograde and prosecuted targets of opportunity on the western end of the parking garage and surrounding buildings until 0233. That same morning, Bravo Co TF 1-5 CAV received indirect fire from inside the RFA vic MA 356 402. Following approval from IMEF to engage the target, the mortar position was destroyed by an AC-130. TF 2-7 CAV located vic MA 361 402 received sniper fire from

(4) buildings to the East of the RFA. They requested and received CAS on (4) buildings located at: MA 361 402, MA 360 402 and MA 359 402, MA 359 401. AH-64s expended hellfire, 30mm and rockets resulting in destruction of the targets and an unknown number of EKIA. 22Aug closed with a Rehearsal of Combat (ROC) drill held at FOB Duke with LTGEN Metz (CG MNC-I) and LTGEN Conway (CG MNF-W). The rehearsal covered the Phase III decisive operations to include the planned assault of the Imam Ali Mosque.

Despite rumors of peace talks, the fighting continued on 23 Aug. TF 2-7 CAV received RPG and heavy MG fire from the northern end of the Old City vic MA 356 403. The MEU requested clearance to engage target with AC-130 at 0124 from IMEF. The target was approved at 0139 and AC-130 fire mission resulted in target destruction with secondary explosions. Also on 23 Aug, TF 1-5 CAV received RPG and small arms fire from from the west of the IAMC vic MA 347 399. The target was destroyed by artillery. Later in the morning, the An Najaf Governor visited with the Iraqi MOD at FOB Duke on key issues concerning the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU attack on MM within the Imam Ali Mosque Complex. Amid the talks of peace, TF 2-7 was engaged with RPGs just inside the city, south of the cemetery vic MA 360 402. The MEU CO approved a GBU-12 drop resulting in target destruction.

Combat operations continued on 24 Aug when TF 2-7 CAV, TF 1-5 CAV and BLT 1/4 crossed the LD to conduct limited objective attacks in their respective zones. They were supported by 155mm artillery, AC-130 and FW/RWCAS. TF 2-7 CAV came in contact immediately and ran numerous RWCAS missions via 227 Aviation - (6) Hellfire and several rockets helped facilitate TF 2-7 in taking several buildings in the eastern portion of the Old City vic MA 359 403. Two of the buildings produced secondary explosions. (1) platoon from Charlie Company TF 2-7 CAV entered the city from the east vic MA 357 401 and encountered no resistance. An OP was established in a building vic MA 359 400. Charlie Company Tanks set up a defensive position southeast of the Old City vic MA 361 398 oriented northwest. TF 1-5 CAV encountered resistance inside the ring road vic MA 352 405. TF 1-5 engaged the enemy with tank main gun, 25mm, and heavy machine gun fire. Following their attack, TF 1-5 moved south into the Old City vic MA 353 403 to conduct a reconnaissance by force. TF 1-5 encountered a deliberate obstacle with imbedded IEDs, sporadic RPG and small arms fire. TF 1-5 pulled back and requested support from the AC-130. The AC-130 engaged the obstacle resulting in a large secondary explosion and



the obstacle being partially reduced. The AC-130 also engaged a bus near the garage complex vic MA 350 401 resulting in secondary explosions. The BLT successfully cleared their zone with little contact. BLT tank platoon came under heavy RPG fire in the open area to the southwest of the Old City vic MA 348 398. (1) tank suffered a communications kill but was later repaired at FOB Hotel. BLT's actions resulted in MM movement south and east where 36th Commando had set up an ambush resulting in an unknown number of EKIA.

On 24 Aug, at 0150, a UH-1N employed a Bright Star laser designator for the first time in combat. The UH designated a building that housed (5-15) MM and (1) possible triple A gun. The building and enemy were destroyed when AH-1W Hellfires were utilized in conjunction with the Bright Star laser. Similar fighting continued throughout the day and into the evening. The night of 24 Aug, TF 2-7 Cav established Attack By Fire positions around the eastern side of the ring road vic MA 355 397 in order to support the pending BLT 1/4 attack south through the cemetery and into the northwest corner of the Old City. That attack began at approximately 2238 with the objective of gaining and maintaining a foothold inside the ring road vic MA 348 403. Two key buildings were seized, followed by systematic clearing of MM forces throughout the night. In support of this attack and the final assault planned for 26 Aug, several key targets were engaged by FWCAS. GBU-12s (500lbs) and GBU-31s (2000 lbs) were delivered on key buildings housing MM significantly attriting enemy forces and shaping the conditions for the final assault on the IMAM Ali Mosque. During the assault and estimated (51) EKIA were assessed with MEU forces sustaining (13) FWIA.

Sporadic fighting continued throughout the morning and into the early afternoon on 26 Aug. BLT 1/4 attacked the MM through the northwest corner of the Old City. Alpha Company BLT 1/4 attacked east and tied in by fire with TF 1-5 near the intersection of the ring road and route Nova vic MA 353 405. TF 2-7 pressed the attack from east to west and consolidated vic the 368 easting. By 1500 on 26 Aug, the Imam Ali Shrine was surrounded and plans continued to initiate the assault of MEU Obj A (Imam Ali Mosque). At 1515 on 26 Aug, MNC-I released FRAG-O 584 directing all CF to cease offensive operations in Najaf IOT allow Iraqi political and religious officials the opportunity to peaceably resolve the removal of AIF/MM from the Imam Ali Shrine. On 27 August, the Grand Ayatollah Sistani received the keys to the Imam Ali Mosque signaling the end of



hostilities. During the entire 24 days of intermittent combat in Najaf, the MEU forces suffered (9) FKIA and (94) FWIA while inflicting an estimated 1500 EKIA on the enemy. The remainder of August found MEU forces reconstituting and repositioning forces while maintaining an aggressive security patrol package. The following Marines and soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice during the Battle of Najaf:

Sgt M. Rocha, H&S Co, BLT 1/4, USMC  
Sgt Y. Reynoso, WPNS Co, BLT 1/4, USMC  
Lcpl L. Wells, Charlie Co, BLT 1/4, USMC  
Cpl R. Abad, WPNS Co, BLT 1/4, USMC  
LCpl N. Anderson, WPNS Co, BLT 1/4, USMC  
Spc M. Zapata, TF 1-5 Cav, USA  
2Lt J. Goins, TF 1-5 Cav, USA  
Sgt H. Parkerson, Bravo Co, BLT 1/4, USMC  
LCpl A. Arredondo, Alpha Co, BLT 1/4, USMC  
PFC N. Skinner, Alpha Co, BLT 1/4, USMC

In September, the MEU began reconstruction efforts in earnest within the city of Najaf. An aggressive patrolling package was utilized to identify potential CA projects while maintaining a FP posture commensurate with the cessation of hostilities. On 2 Sep, the MEU relinquished TACON of the 36<sup>th</sup> Commando and the CG 3d MAW arrived FOB Duke to address the Marines and sailors of HMM-166. On 4 September the MEU relinquished TACON of TF 1-5 Cav. On 6 September, the IIF, IP's and ING began a systematic clearing of the Old City in Najaf to rid that historic area of explosive hazards and weapons caches. TACON of TF 2-7 was relinquished on 8 Sep. That same day, the IIF conducted a raid on the offices of Muqtada al Sadr uncovering numerous weapons and explosives. CAAT-B was hit by an IED on 9 Sep resulting in no injuries to personnel and minimal damage to vehicles. On 14 Sep, the IIF attached to the MEU for the hostilities in Najaf were redeployed to their parent unit. That same day Ambassadors Jeffries and Taylor, as well as Admiral Nash paid a visit to Najaf to survey battle damage and assess the CA efforts already in progress throughout the city. The MEU MSPF, USSF ODA, and the ICTF conducted a second raid on Sadrs offices on 21 Sep netting yet more weapons and explosives, as well as anti-coalition propaganda. This raid resulted in the capture of (5) HVTs and (36) additional MM fighters. The month of September ended on a high note with the establishment of the Mobile Solatia Team and a claims

payment site located at the Government Information Center (GIC). Weekly payouts began on 27 Sep and were a huge success processing 45 cases for over \$90,000. In the span of 1 month, the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU spent \$3.5 million on over 100 CA projects in Najaf.

October began with continuing efforts to eradicate unsavory elements from within the Najaf province. On 2 Oct, a joint MSPF, ODA mission was conducted against a suspected VBIED factory to the south of Najaf. While the raid did not turn up any VBIED materials, several suspects were taken into custody. On 11 Oct, the Solatia team was back at the GIC to make payments this time servicing 539 residents and paying out over \$523,000. On 12 Oct, Prime Minister Allawi made a visit to Najaf to survey battle damage and on-going CA efforts. In mid-October, the fuel situation in Najaf had deteriorated to the point of gas lines being several miles long. To alleviate some of the pressure, the MEU launched Operation EXXON, the fueling of ISF vehicles with MEU assets and fuel. The first iteration of Operation EXXON took place on 14 Oct and the results were felt immediately. The wait for fuel decreased significantly and the decision was made to execute this plan every four days. From 14-16 the MEU Elections team traveled to Camp Fallujah for the I MEF sponsored OPT in preparation for the Iraqi National Elections to take place in Jan 05. Operation EXXON was in action again on 21 Oct servicing over 100 vehicles from the IP, ING, and DBE. The following day, a MEU wide-safety stand-down was held covering topics ranging from vehicle safety to hygiene. The third increment of Operation EXXON took place on 23 Oct dispensing 1,375 gallons of fuel to ISF vehicles. To the north, preparations for combat operations in Fallujah were in full swing. Operation PHANTOM FURY would include elements from the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU and on 24 Oct the initial MEU forces deployed for subsequent TACON ro 1 MARDIV. The MEU Force Reconnaissance platoon and the ANGLICO FCT traveled north to link up with their new parent command (RCT-1). The MEU Solatia team held another pay out session at the GIC on 25 Oct. A total of 980 claims were settled for \$576,800. That same day, LTGEN Kiszely (DCG MNF-I) paid a visit to Najaf to view CA efforts and progress. The 155 BCT PDSS arrived FOB Duke on 28 Oct for a pre-RIP conference hosted by the MEU. Counterparts were married up and a comprehensive list of RFIs was generated in preparation for the TOA scheduled for 14 Feb 05. Also on 28 Oct, Operation EXXON dispensed 1,553 gallons of fuel to

ISF vehicles. The following day Bravo 1/4 became TACON to 1 MARDIV ISO the upcoming OPF.

1 Nov marked the beginning of the registration phase of the Iraqi National Elections and the MEU began leading the way in that effort. Working within the ROE established for election preparation, the MEU election team assisted the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq in securing transportation of registration documents, printing election education materials, posting educational signs, and force protection for IECI facilities. By 4 Nov, the MEU force package ISO Operation PHANTOM FURY was in place and included Force Recon Platoon, ANGLICO FCT, Bravo 1/4 (+), 3/D 1<sup>ST</sup> Tank Bn, 1/A 1<sup>ST</sup> CEB, 3/E 2d AAV Bn, and Scout Sniper Platoon. On 5 Nov, MSSG 11 began Operation COVER UP by supplying much needed blankets to local residents in Diwaniyah. They also distributed soccer balls, hygiene kits, and limited medical assistance. The most successful Operation EXXON to date took place on 6 Nov when 2,370 gallons of fuel was distributed to awaiting ISF vehicles. Another GIC payout session was conducted 8 Nov handling 1105 cases and paying out \$583,800. On 9 Nov BGEN Medina (CG ESG-3) arrived FOB Duke to celebrate the Marine Corps Birthday with the Marines of the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU which took place 10 Nov. On 11 Nov, elements of Charlie 1/4 moved north to FOB Kalsu IOT provide security for a hasty bridge repair mission in the 24<sup>th</sup> MEU AO. On 12 Nov a CAAT B HMMWV was reportedly attacked by a possible SVBIED. The driver of the CAAT vehicle swerved to avoid the on-coming SVBIED and lost control of the HMMWV. The HMMWV struck a curb and rolled killing one Marine and wounding three others. LCpl N. Anderson was the tenth 11<sup>th</sup> MEU Marine to give his life in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The mission was an overall success and all MEU forces arrived back at FOB Hotel on 14 Nov. The next day, the MEU Condolence Team paid out \$847,400 settling 1,570 claims at the GIC. Operation EXXON had its final run on 16 Nov distributing 2,500 gallons of fuel. The operation was discontinued as the Provincial Gas Station was constructed thereby supporting ISF and Government vehicle refueling. On 19 Nov, MSSG-11, in conjunction with Polish, Bulgarian, and Iraqi doctors, conducted another Humanitarian Mission in Diwaniyah processing 315 local citizens for basic medical care. In addition to the medical services, children were given backpacks filled with school supplies, food, water, and hygiene kits. That same day, MEU forces conducted a cordon and knock IOT recover a suspected weapons cache. The mission was a success netting large numbers of various

arms and munitions. On 22 Nov, the largest and most successful pay out at the GIC took place servicing 2,502 claims and paying out \$1,128,800. The month of November ended with the MEU continuing to focus on FP, CMO efforts, and election preparation. On 30 Nov, the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU Commanding Officer declared An Najaf under Local Control- Three months since cessation of combat operations in Najaf.

December saw MEU forces continuing rebuilding efforts in Najaf and looking towards bringing stability to other provinces. On 2 Dec, MEU forces traveled north to Karbala for a leaders recon in preparation for the impending mission of taking over security for that province. The trip was a success with the commanders and staff making contact and liaison with their Polish counterparts setting the tone for the TOA scheduled to take place on 22 Dec. On 7 Dec, Ambassador Taylor arrived in the MEU AO for an operational update and to tour current and future CA projects.

On 8 Dec, LTGEN Sattler (CG IMEF) arrived at FOB Duke to speak with commanders and Marines of the MEU and to tour Najaf CA projects. That same day a security meeting was held at the Governors Compound to discuss security plans for the upcoming election. Attendees included the MEU CO, the Governor of Najaf, and the heads of the emergency response team, DBE, IPS, and ING. The meeting was a success and arrangements were made to have similar meetings weekly throughout the remainder of the election season.

On 10 Dec, the quartering party for Karbala departed FOB Duke for Camp Lima to conduct Relief in Place (RIP). 13 Dec saw the MEU Condolence Team back in action at the 12<sup>th</sup> GIC payout event. This event was very successful paying out over \$999,100 to 1948 citizens of Najaf.

On 11 Dec, the MEU Condolence Team settled 1,305 claims totaling \$798,400. Citizens were happy to receive the much needed assistance and the operation went very smooth.

On 16 Dec, the MEU Operations Officer and Air Officer departed FOB Duke to attend a 2-day RIP conference with 155 ESB. That same day, a BLT CAAT team escorted (85) IP cadets to Baghdad International Air Port for follow on transit to Jordan where they would attend the Police Academy. This was another step in the mentoring and supervision process established by the MEU aimed at leaving

Najaf with a viable and professional police force. Also on 16 Dec, the main body of the MEU forces slated to take over Karbala departed FOB Duke for their base at Camp Lima.

On 17 Dec, the MSSG conducted a HA/MEDCAP/DENCAP in Al Hyderia. Local media highlighted the MEUs continuing efforts to help the citizens in and around Najaf. (600) local citizens were present for the event. (130) citizens received medical screening and (30) received dental screening. (430) blankets and (150) soccer balls were also distributed ensuring good will in that area for some time to come.

On 19 Dec, a VBIED detonated near the market area of Najaf vic MA 358 399. Casualties sustained were (54) dead and (142) wounded. This attack marked the first significant AIF attack since 27 August. The next day, Governor Ziruffi held a press conference and indicated that (50) suspects were in custody in connection with the VBIED.

On 21 Dec, the TOA between Polish forces and MEU forces took place at Camp Lima in Karbala. The MEU began immediately initiated force protection enhancements on the camp while conducting assessments on ISF, election preparations, and CA projects. The MEU elections team began the arduous task of identifying election facilities, hardening those facilities, and identifying equipment and personnel shortages.

On Christmas Day, a VBIED detonated in the median of route Miami approximately 15 km north of route California. (1) Marine suffered minor lacerations to the face and (1) HMMWV sustained a flat tire. There were also (1)CKIA and (2)CWIA. (1) of the CWIA was an innocent victim. The other CWIA and CKIA were likely attackers who failed to move to a safe distance prior to detonation of VBIED. At the time of this submission, the investigation was ongoing.

2004 ended with the MEU firmly entrenched in Najaf and Karbala provinces, Iraq continuing to maintain peace, rebuild infrastructure, and rebuild the lives of citizens in both provinces. Not only has the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU(SOC) sent to the transfer of Local Control of An Najaf, it has initiated well over 300 CA projects totaling in excess of \$15 million.

#### Logistics and Supply/S-4

The focus of effort for the S-4 Section throughout July was the final planning and execution of the MEU offload from ESG-3 shipping and the reception, staging, onward movement and integration (RSOI) of all elements of the MEU at Camp

Virginia in Kuwait and the planning, preparation and movement into the Iraqi Theater of Operations (ITO). The offload was conducted 6-11 July 04 and consisted of 31 LCU and 45 LCAC loads. Reception and staging of the force took place at the Kuwaiti Naval Base. Onward movement from KNB to Camp Virginia was conducted concurrently with the offload, reception and staging during the period 6-12 July 04. The following is a summary of what was offloaded and moved to Camp Virginia:

- 364 Pieces of rolling stock in 22 tactical landing serials
- 1,396 Personnel via 31 busses
- 52 Pieces of equipment moved via Heavy Equipment Trailer (HET)
- 908 Pieces of cargo via tractor-trailer

Once all elements of the MEU had been offloaded and moved to Camp Virginia, the S-4 Section coordinated and oversaw the hardening of all remaining vehicles requiring add-on armor and ballistic glass. Add-on armor kits for MTRVs and HMMWVs were flown into theater by LOGCOM. Contracted workers from Oshkosh Corp under the supervision of the LOGCOM and 11th MEU maintenance officers then installed the kits. The S-4 Ammunition Section coordinated and took delivery of the MEU's combat ammunition basic load while at Camp Virginia. This consisted of 17 ISO containers. Combat loads for individuals and all crew served and vehicle-mounted weapons were issued in preparation for convoy movement into the ITO.

Upon completion of RSO&I, vehicle hardening and training in Kuwait, 11th MEU conducted movement to FOBs Echo and Duke in the ITO via tactical convoy, Intra-theater air and surface line haul. This movement consisted of:

Intra-theater Air

- 12-13 July ACE movement via C-130 (285 Pax/7 463L pallets)
- 17 July Quartering Party personnel via C-130 (99 pax)
- 19 July Main Body personnel via C-130 (338 pax)
- 26 July Rear Party personnel via C-130 (14 pax)

Tactical Convoy

- 16 July Quartering Party via four serials of 79 tactical vehicles
- 18 July Main Body via seven serials of 163 vehicles

#### Surface Line Haul

- 21 July cargo and equipment via 27 HETs and 28 flatbed tractor-trailers
- 23 July cargo and equipment via seven HETs and 41 flatbed tractor-trailers

The S-4 Officer and Supply Chief moved to FOB Duke with the Quartering Party to establish MEU logistics section in the ITO. Quartering Party activity revolved around turning over \$12 million in numerous contracts for camp services at FOBs Duke, Hotel and Echo, establishing the MEU's ASP at FOB Echo, implementing a comprehensive movement control process that could satisfy both I MEF and MNC-I movement control requirements, and turning over Health Services Support at FOB Duke.

In August the focus of effort was coordinating combat service support for the MEU which at times was reinforced with two mechanized battalions from the First Cavalry Division, their supporting units, two battalions of the Independent Iraqi Force (IIF), the Iraqi's 36th Commando Bn, and the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Force. The MEU S-4's Ammunition Section coordinated 14 different ammunition resupply deliveries from Tallil and Al Tagadum, using both ground and air, during the battle of An Najaf. Additionally, they assisted in coordinating the receipt and distribution of eight deliveries of ammunition for the various elements of the Iraqi security forces totaling over 931, 000 rounds of ammunition to support the fight in Najaf. The MEU S-4 also coordinated the receipt and distribution of various supplies in support of the various Iraqi security forces that were based out of FOBs Duke and Echo. This included 2,245 weapons and 6,260 various uniform items such as boots, helmets and body armor. In planning for what was to be the final assault, the MEU was augmented with Shock Trauma Platoon 2 from the 1st FSSG. MEU movement control tracked 345 administrative and logistical convoys moving in and around the MEU's AO. The MEU's S-4 section was significantly enabled when they were augmented with Capt S. Horton, 1stLt Odenwalder and SSgt Lyons. Each one of these Marines played critical roles in executing the expanded functions of the MEU S-4 in supporting a reinforced MEU operating from three different bases. SSgt Lyons was posted at Convoy Support Center (CSC) Scania along MSR Tampa where he served as a liaison between the 11th MEU and the Army's Movement Control Team at Scania ensuring safe, secure and routine transfer of PWC food trucks to the MEU's various bases. Capt Horton filled

the requirement to provide oversight of the MEU's three dining facilities, facilities and camp life support at FOB Duke and coordination of ISF logistics requirements. Lt Odenwalder augmented the MEU's supply section which served as the MEU's contracting and fiscal center through which all requests for contractor provided goods and services were staffed. Lt Odenwalder assisted in tracking the numerous open purchases the MEU made and developed the installation property record for FOB Duke.

In September the focus of effort shifted from supporting offensive combat operations to supporting FOB improvements and civil military operations designed to rebuild Najaf and improve local infrastructure. The S-4 supported civil military operations by establishing financing and accounting procedures that enabled payment of over \$ 7.5 million in Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds in condolence and reconstruction payments. Additionally, the supply section processed \$175,500 in contracts for goods and services in support of FOB improvements. One of the largest FOB improvements in both cost and size was the construction and opening of the new FOB Duke DFAC on 28 September. KBR also began full operations on FOB Hotel. MEU movement control tracked 294 logistics convoys in and around the MEU's AO during September.

In October the MEU S-4 continued supporting FOB improvements and civil military operations. The supply section administered payments of \$4.8 million in CERP funds. The section also processed over \$1 million in contracts this month. The MEU's medical planner researched and acquired medical supplies to support 11th MEU humanitarian assistance missions. MEU movement control tracked 329 movements in and around the MEU's AO. Engineering work began on developing a series of six different live fire ranges around FOB Duke. Plans were made to construct a known distance range, a shooting house for close quarters battle drills, an infantry assault range, a mechanized assault range and a sensitive target range. Both the detachment from 7th Naval Mobile Construction Battalion and elements from the 153d Engineering Battalion began upgrading FOB Duke's detention facility. A wash rack for FOB Duke was also designed to be constructed.

In November the MEU S-4 continued civil military operations support. The supply section administered \$2.1 million in CERP funds and \$514,000 in contracts. KBR began taking over camp services at FOB Duke. MEU movement



control managed 270 movements in and around the AO. Additionally, the embark section began developing the plan for redeployment. This included developing an executable TPFDD, developing a container plan, phasing of forces and preparing the force for redeployment. The MEU ammunition section began supporting training ranges at FOB Duke. Renovations to the MEU headquarters and COC building were completed by contractors. Construction began on the wash rack

Logistics support for civil military operations continued in December. Supply administered \$722,532 in CERP funds and \$335,190 in contracts. Movement control tracked 170 movements. The MEU's embark chief, SSgt Cashman, redeployed back to CONUS. The MEU's S-4A, Capt Salas, deployed to FOB Lima at Karbala to coordinate logistics support for MEU elements based there and to begin facilities improvements in preparation for the arrival of the 155 Enhanced Separate Battalion.

#### Communications/ S-6

From the period of July to December 2004, the 11th MEU, CE S-6 section has maintained digital networks and voice communications afloat and deployed ashore. The key events are as follows.

During June, 11th MEU S-6 maintained communications connectivity embarked aboard Expeditionary Strike Group - 3 shipping. Radio operators maintained a variety of single channel radio nets to support the MEU commander's command and control capability while embarked aboard the USS Belleau Wood Amphibious Readiness Group (ARG) ships. The data section maintained SIPR and NIPR connectivity between the three ships of the ARG, and with the Network Operations Center ashore, ensuring global data services were constantly available. In addition, Capt Wilson (JTFE OIC) supported the PDSS team in Kuwait and Iraq ensuring necessary and critical liaison was made with MNC-I, I MEF, and Task Force Dragon to ensure a smooth relief in place of communication capability would occur in July for 11th MEU's AOR in Iraq.

During July, the MEU S-6 phased ashore in Kuwait for follow on operations in Iraq. The JTFE detachment stood up their AN/TSC-93 van and pulled SIPR, NIPR and DSN phone service from I MEF in support of Stabilization and Security Operations (SASO) training in Kuwait. Later that month, the S-6 phased north into Iraq to support operations in An Najaf and Ad Diwaniyah provinces.

During August, while conducting combat operations in An Najaf, the S-6 provided the MEU with all communication services - SIPR, NIPR, and DSN phones at three FOBs (Duke, Hotel, and Echo). The JTFE's AN/TSC-93 pulled service from an LMST at Fallujah; a pair of AN/MRC-142's provided a link between FOB Duke and FOB Hotel; and a SMART-T (AN/TSC-154) at FOB Echo pulled service from another SMART-T at Fallujah. In addition, the MEU provided radio personnel and communication support to various MSEs and attachments. Cpl Walker provided radio operator support to Company A, Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1/4; Cpl Nichols provided radio operator support to Company B, BLT 1/4; Cpl Hodge provided radio operator support to Company C, BLT 1/4; and Sergeants Guzman and Pimentel provided radio operator support to the Maritime Special Purpose Force. Cpl Platt supported the 1st Iraqi Intervention Force with radio operator support and Sgt Wiltse and Cpl Ortega provided all communications between the 11th MEU COC and the Joint Coordination Center (JCC) located at the An Najaf Governor's compound. This link between the COC and JCC was the direct path to command and control the 404th and 405th Iraqi National Guard battalions in support of combat operations. Furthermore, the radio section established and maintained two retransmission sites in An Najaf to support combat radio nets. At the height of combat operations, 11th MEU had command and control of seven maneuver battalions. Operating similar to a brigade headquarters, S-6 planned, developed, and supported all communication networks in support of sustained combat operations. During this time, virtually every piece of 11th MEU's communications equipment was in use or temporarily loaned to the various units supporting 11th MEU.

In order to maintain positive command and control while mobile, the S-6 section installed 6 additional communication systems to the MEU Commander's M1116 up armored HMMWV to include a AN/VRC-92 for long range VHF communication; AN/VRC-83 for UHF communication; AN/PSC-5 with OS-302 providing mobile command and control satellite communication; AN/PRC-117 with AV-2090 providing mobile satellite communication via the Joint Air Request Net; Enhanced Position Location Reporting System (EPLRS); and Expeditionary Tactical Communication System (ETCS) via Iridium phone system. Additionally, Automated Business Power speakers and an AC/DC power converter were installed to provide enhanced capability.

After the cessation of hostilities, the S-6 continued to operate and maintain all of their network and single

channel services. In addition, an aggressive training program was started to ensure all Marines are maintaining their MOS proficiency in accordance with Marine Corps Individual Training Standards.

In November, as control of Diwaniyah and FOB Echo was turned over to MND-CS, the S-6 retrograded the SMART T and all communication services to FOB Duke in preparation to conduct a relief in place of Camp Lima in Karabala, Iraq.

In December, upon 11th MEU's transfer of authority and responsibility for Karabala, 11th MEU S-6 provided a SMART T to provide all SIPR, NIPR, and DSN phone services at Camp Lima.

Throughout this period the S-6 has also been a key coordination center for contracted communication systems to include SPAWAR funded Internet and telephone centers for all 4 FOBs and the "Big Voice" public announcement system on FOB Duke.

Lastly, the S-6 began coordination for the transition from deployed networking back to the NMCI network upon arrival in garrison in 2005.

#### Legal/SJA

The 11<sup>th</sup> MEU transitioned ashore from ESG-3 shipping in Kuwait during the first week of July and moved to Camp Virginia, Kuwait for training prior to movement into Iraq in mid-July. SJA section of Maj Chris Walters and Cpl Darryl Miller, trained and briefed the Rules for the Use of Force while in Kuwait and transition to OIF Rules of Engagement upon crossing into Iraq. SJA traveled with MEU CO and key leaders for liaison visits with Marine commands in Iraq. Met with I MEF SJA at Camp Fallujah, 1stMARDIV SJA at Camp Blue Diamond, 1<sup>st</sup> FSSG SJA, STC, SDC, LAO at Camp Taqqadum and 3d MAW SJA at Camp Al Asad. Upon subsequent movement to FOB Duke, Najaf Iraq, conducted Relief In Place with 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division Task Force Dragon SJA. Conducted multiple liaison visits with MND-CS legal liaison, CMO and Comptroller personnel at Camp Babylon. Transfer of Authority for the MEU AO (Najaf and Quadisiyah provinces) conducted on 30 July. On 5 August, an intense three-week battle ensued with Mahdi Militia in Najaf and attacks in Diwaniyah. Provided continuous coverage in the MEU COC, providing ROE, targeting and mission review for the MEU with augmented forces including (2) additional maneuver battalions, (1) Army aviation attack squadron, Iraqi National Guard and other Iraqi Security Forces,

including counter-terrorism and commando forces, and Coalition special forces. Provided ROE briefings for MEU, I MEF and MNC-I Commanders. Continued to provide operational law command center coverage throughout combat operations and security and stabilization missions throughout period in Iraq.

Developed and managed unit Detention Operations program, Standard Operating Procedures, training to all Detention Facility forces in use of force, applicable regulations and Geneva Conventions. Served as Detention Operations Coordinator and Legal Advisor. Between July and Dec 04, processed 314 detainees, including High Value Targets, women and children. Ensured legal compliance and coordinated releases, medevacs, and transfers to Theater Internment Facility at Abu Ghraib. Originally designated as a 14-day detention facility, transitioned to a 21-day facility in December. Conducted all Detention Authority Reviews/Magistrate probable cause hearings and evidentiary reviews. Achieved superior ratings during all Detention Facility inspections. Coordinated continuous facility upgrades to establish the FOB Duke Detention Facility as one of the premier regional (Brigade size equivalent) detention facilities in Iraq. Supervised Temporary Detention Facilities at FOB Hotel in Najaf, FOB Echo in Diwaniyah, and FOB Lima in Karbala.

Provided fiscal law review of operational and CMO/Civil Affairs projects and contract review as required with US, HN and TCN contractors. Processed Solatia payments and Foreign Claims Act cases. Implemented and directly managed mass battle damage claims-condolence individual payouts as part of consequence management for the Najaf AO, on a scale previously unprecedented in theater following OIF I. This program utilized O&M Solatia, Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds, both Congressionally appropriated and Developmental Fund Iraq (DFI-"like") seized funds. Coordinated program implementation with Najaf Governor's office and Najaf Human Rights Commission. Developed and directed a surge process encompassing 35 translators, 16 claims adjustor teams and clerks, processing 17,100 cases, approving payouts of 13,000 people for \$7.3 million dollars. Maintaining proper record keeping and database management. This program continues beyond this reporting period. Provided recommendations to I MEF SJA on process improvements to utilize in subsequent battle damage condolence repairs in Fallujah and elsewhere.

Supervised multiple combat related and other type JAGMAN investigations. Conducted multiple military justice and legal assistance matters during this timeframe.

Below is a list of Military Justice and Legal Assistance statistics documenting legal action within the 11th MEU from 1 Jul 04 - 31 Dec 04.

Command Element

General Courts-martial:	0
Special Courts-martial:	0
SPCM Clemency Matters:	3
Summary Courts-martial:	1
Non-Judicial Punishment:	0
Non-Judicial Punishment Appeals Reviewed:	0
JAGMAN Investigations/PI's:	4
Claims Reviewed & Processed:	17,100
Foreign Claims Reviewed & Processed:	5
Legal Assistance matters processed:	10
Legal Assistance Classes Conducted:	0
Law of Armed Conflict/ROE classes conducted:	5
Wills Prepared & Executed:	0
Powers of Attorney Prepared & Executed:	10
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests processed	0

Reviewed & Processed for the 11th MEU MSE's

General Courts-martial:	0
Special Courts-martial:	0
Summary Courts-martial:	3
Non-Judicial Punishment:	0
Non-Judicial Punishment Appeals Reviewed:	1
ADSEPs:	2
JAGMAN Investigations:	10
Claims Reviewed & Processed:	20
Legal Assistance matters processed	55
Legal Assistance Classes Conducted	0
Law of War/Code of Conduct Classes Conducted	5
Wills Prepared & Executed:	5
Powers of Attorney Prepared & Executed:	40

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In July, the Public Affairs (PA) office and embedded photographer Lucian Read of World Picture News photo agency

disembarked the USS Belleau Wood in Kuwait for Security and Stability Operations (SASO) training. Each day while in Kuwait, the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) and chief, GySgt Santiago Zapata, coordinated with various units of the MEU to have Cpl Matthew S. Richards, combat correspondent, and Cpls Richard S. Kotecki and Daniel J. Fosco, combat cameramen, participate and document the training. Lucian Read also participated and submitted photographs to his photo agency that were subsequently released back in the United States. Coordination was also conducted with all MEU units for cruisebook photos. Despite the busy training schedule, most units were able to take their photos. During this time, the PAO also read and conducted research about current and past events in Iraq, paying particular attention to Najaf and Diwaniyah. While the PA shop encountered a MEF firewall that preventing from uploading to the 11th MEU website, a temporary solution was found by sending the files to Headquarters Marine Corps Public Affairs, who would then upload them to the website.

At the end of SASO training, Cpl Kotecki and Lucian Read took a ground convoy up to Forward Operating Base Echo in Diwaniyah, while the rest of the shop flew via KC-130 and then CH-53E into Forward Operating Base Duke in Najaf. Upon arrival, the PA chief moved to FOB Echo, where he and Cpl Kotecki set up shop. The rest of the office remained at FOB Duke. During the last two weeks in July, the PAO conducted a left seat/right seat turnover with the Task Force Dragon PAO. While the shop's Marines took pictures and wrote articles, the PAO worked on the commanding officer's speech for the transfer of authority (TOA) ceremony, and prepared a press release for the TOA. On 31 July, the 11th MEU assumed control of both Najaf and Qadisiyah provinces, and the PA shop responded to numerous media queries regarding the TOA.

During the initial four days of August, the PAO traveled to FOB Echo and Babylon with the 11th MEU CO and staff, and met the 11th MEU's higher headquarters, the Polish-led Multi-National Division Central South. The PAO met with and discussed affairs with the MND-CS PAO and staff. On 2 Aug, CAAT-A got into a firefight with the Madhi Militia, creating a media stir, which the PAO responded to. On 4 Aug, the PAO accompanied the commanding officer to the Governor's compound in the evening to discuss media issues amongst other things. Returning late that night, the PAO was working when the Combat Operations Center learned about an initial attack on an Iraqi police station around 0100. As events unfolded and the station

came under two more attempted attacks, Cpl Richards joined the quick reaction force based at FOB Hotel that responded, and began documenting combat operations as they began. As fighting broke out between 11th MEU forces and the Muqtada Militia, and a UH-1N Huey was shot down, a media fury began which the PAO responded to. On 6 Aug, Cpl Fosco caught a convoy down to FOB Hotel with 2nd Platoon, Charlie Company, and stayed with them as they reinforced BLT 1/4 in the Wadi Al-Salem cemetery. Media from Baghdad also flew down to FOB Duke on a surprise visit that MNF-I hosted but didn't coordinate with the MEU. Media included the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, CBS, Associated Press photo, National Public Radio (NPR), Al-Iraqiya, Sunday Star Times (New Zealand), and the Guardian (British). Quickly throwing something together, the Operations Officer gave an operations update to media, followed by questions and answers. The commanding officer then followed, answering media's questions. Late that evening, GySgt Zapata and Cpl Kotecki flew into Duke to help augment the Najaf PA team. On 7 Aug, the PAO coordinated a second media visit, this time at FOB Hotel with the BLT 1/4 CO, Executive Officer, Operations Officer, Najaf Police Chief, and a representative from the Iraqi National Guard. The following media arrived via helicopter: Fox News (Tadek Markowski, John Templeton), NY Times (reporter Alex Berenson, photographer Tyler P. Hicks), LA Times (reporter Edmund Sanders, photographer Carolyn Cole), and Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (Baghdad/London newspaper, Salama Abdul Hassan), Al-Ofq (Baghdad newspaper, Ali Mohamed) and Al-Sharkiya (most popular TV station in Iraq, Kasim Fafaisel, Ali Mohamed). The Najaf police chief began the press conference, and then the BLT 1/4 commander made comments regarding recent operations against the Muqtada Militia. After the press conference, stand-up interviews were conducted. At the end of the event, Al Sharkiya, NY Times and LA Times were embedded with the MEU at FOB Hotel. The PA Marines also returned to Hotel with BLT 1/4.

On 8 Aug, Prime Minister Allawi and Gen Casey visited the MEU and the Governor's compound, and embedded media, local media and Arab press in Najaf such as Al Arabiya attended the visit. Once Al Arabiya went live from the compound, mortars began to land near the compound and the visit was cut short. Cpls. Fosco and Kotecki joined Alpha Company, and Cpl. Richards joined CAAT-B on a raid on a school, and were later ambushed as they were mounting their vehicles to leave. On 9 Aug, the MEU came under tactical control of I MEF vice MND-CS. On 10 Aug, Capt Tyson

Dunkelberger from MNC-I arrived at Duke to augment the PA shop, bringing more embedded media: CNN (talent Matthew Chance, cameraman Ken Tillis, bodyguard and cameraman Geoff Newport), Fox News (talent Tadek Markowski, cameraman Olaf Wiig); Washington Post (Karl Vick), Associated Press (Todd Pitman). These media were shared between BLT 1/4 and 1-5 Cav. Al Sharkiya returned back to Baghdad, and Cpl Richards went on a patrol with CAAT-A that resulted in a firefight with militia members.

On 12 Aug, a DVIDS satellite crew and more embedded media arrived: NPR (Ivan Watson), Kuwait TV (Jabar Al Meshdany, Aiaad Jabaar), Azzaman (most popular Iraqi newspaper, Khalid Talib), Associated Press Photo (Jim MacMillian) and third man for Fox News crew (John Cookson). Unexpectedly, a four-man NBC crew arrived at FOB Duke to embed with 2/7 Cavalry, which the PAO coordinated. Cpls Richards, Fosco and Kotecki joined a raid on Sadr's neighborhood. Cpl Richards attached to CAAT-A and Cpl Fosco and Kotecki attached to Charlie Company. Early in the morning on 13 Aug, Gunny Zapata went on a raid with Iraqi Commandos and their US trainers on the Salah Mosque in Kufa, taking video outside the mosque. On 13 Aug, the PAO conducted numerous live interviews using the DVIDS satellite system that aired on CNN, CNN International, BBC, Fox News, CBS, NBC, ABC, Associated Press TV, Associated Press Radio, Reuters TV, Al Hurra TV, WSB Atlanta, and KOMO TV Oklahoma, and additional local TV stations. Interview topics included the raid on Sadr's neighborhood, the direct action mission on Salah Mosque in Kufa with Iraqi Commandos, and the injury of Muqtada Sadr that morning. On 14 Aug, PAO took the embedded media and DVIDS crew to the Governor's compound to cover negotiations between Sadr and the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG), and invited local Arab media to attend. The conference room ended up being packed with media, to include western and Arab media staying out in town. As the press briefing was about to begin, a Sadr representative entered the compound, and negotiations continued. After media had waited for approximately an hour, the Governor came into the conference room to appease media, announcing that negotiations were underway and that a resolution had not resulted. He answered questions from the media for about 15 minutes. A couple of hours later, a second press conference was held, and the Iraqi National Security Advisor announced that negotiations had failed.

On 15 Aug, the PAO conducted an interview with the Wall Street Journal, and on 16 Aug Capt Dunkelberger departed Najaf to return to Baghdad. Azzaman newspaper,



Kuwait TV, NPR, Associated Press, NBC and Fox News returned to Baghdad to cover the Iraqi National Convention. Cpls Fosco went on a patrol with Charlie Company. During the next couple of days, the PAO continued to support media queries from various media outlets, and supported planning for a possible assault on the Imam Ali Shrine by Iraqi forces. Planning involved what media would be embedded and with what unit, what the ground rules would be, how combat camera assets would be utilized, and how the imagery and footage would be quickly brought back to the rear for immediate release to media agencies. On 17 Aug, Cpls Fosco, Richards and Kotecki visited an Iraqi police station, documenting the distribution of new gear for the policemen. On 19 Aug, Cpl Kotecki attached to B Company for a raid in Kufa, Cpl Fosco attached to Recon as they conducted a blocking position for the raid, Cpl Richards attached to A Company for their raid in Kufa. On 20 Aug, the Marines went to the police station again.

On 21 Aug, Al Sharqiya, Oman News Agency, and FOX News embed with 11th MEU forces. Cpl Fosco attached to Recon platoon and conducted a security patrol out in the city. On 22 Aug, more media embed with MEU forces: ABC (talent Stephanie Gosk, and cameraman Geoff Thorpe-Willet), Stars and Stripes (Jason Chudy), and Getty Images (Joe Raedle), who attached to 2/7 Cav. The PAO briefed the PA plan for an assault on the Imam Ali Shrine at the ROC drill, and received approval from the Minister of Defense for the embedding of media with units entering the shrine (CNN). On 24 Aug, the PAO and chief set up a press briefing for the Minister of Defense at FOB Duke. Media in attendance were: Reuters TV and Al Arabiya TV. Cpl Richards attached to CAAT-B during a patrol in Najaf. On 25 Aug, Cpls Fosco, Kotecki and Richards attached to C Company, and assaulted the Old City. On 26 Aug, the PAO answered numerous media queries regarding mortars that hit the Kufa mosque, killing several Iraqis. Later that day, Grand Ayatollah Sistani brokered a cease-fire agreement with the IIG and Sadr. On 28 Aug, all remaining embedded media arrived at FOB Duke and flew back to Baghdad (CNN, Fox, ABC, Washington Post, LA Times, NY Times, AP Photo, Getty Images). Stars and Stripes remained to cover activities around the base. The next few days consisted of media queries regarding the Sharia Court atrocities and the summary of fighting.

Throughout the duration of the fight, the PA office also managed, coordinated and distributed combat camera coverage to higher headquarters, to include the imagery of Army and Air Force combat camera augments from Baghdad.

The PA office also consistently put out press releases, answered media queries not previously mentioned, sent daily updates to a handful of media agencies (CNN, ABC, Reuters, Agency French Presse, Associated Press, Knight Ridder, Financial Times, National Public Radio), provided higher headquarters information for media briefings in Baghdad, and posted articles and deployment updates concerning MEU activities on the 11th MEU website ([www.usmc.mil/11thmeu](http://www.usmc.mil/11thmeu)) and USMC website ([www.usmc.mil](http://www.usmc.mil)). The PA office also supported family readiness issues, answering e-mails from concerned family and friends and updating the Key Volunteer call roster as augments to the MEU arrived.

Of note, when writing press releases, the PAO tried to be predictive regarding the content of the releases, in an attempt to lessen the number of follow-up questions from media and to hopefully cut down on inaccurate reporting, knowing that US forces are always painted as aggressors in Arab and some western media, even when responding to a threat; US forces are almost always accused of causing collateral damage, whether it is by dropped bombs or errant rounds of ammunition; and US forces are often accused of isolating out a person or place (a cleric, a mosque, a neighborhood, a particular insurgent). The PA office also supported family readiness issues, answering e-mails from concerned family and friends.

On 2-3 Sept, the PAO supported a 60 Minutes trip to Najaf. PAO and Civil Affairs took the three man team (talent Scott Pelley, producer Shawn Efran, and cameraman Ian Robbie) to a reconstruction project in Kufa, arranged a reconstruction interview with Majid Jabreem (works in the governor's office and headed Najaf's reconstruction effort), conducted interviews with BLT 1/4 Marines involved in fighting in the cemetery, and visited the cemetery for more interviews on site.

From 4-16 Sept, the PAO supported a PA/Reconstruction team to augment the Civil Military Operations Center at FOB Baker. PAO coordinated with BLT 1/4 for berthing and work spaces for the team, which included the 11th MEU PAO, MNC-I PAO augment, DVIDS crew, Project and Contracting Office (PCO) PAO (Erich Langer) and Iraqi Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO) PAO (Theresa Shope). PAO coordinated with BLT 1/4 to get combat camera augments on security and civil affairs patrols for still and video imagery, which was then expeditiously sent up to higher headquarters for release. The PA/reconstruction team began planning and coordination for a reconstruction media day in Najaf, and the MEU PAO coordinated with BLT 1/4 for the

event. In total, four reconstruction media days were held. The first was 10 Sept, with the following media in attendance: Fox News (talent Jula, cameraman Kevin Flowers), Chicago Tribune (Evan Osnos), Reuters photo (Aldin Aly), Al Sabah newspaper (Mudhhir Al-Zuhairy), Ash Shariqiya TV, and Radio Dilja. The trip included a briefing by civil affairs officers Maj Amber Lehning and Maj Chuck Nelson, a tour of Najaf, one marketplace, two schools under reconstruction, and finished with a press conference with the governor. The second was on 13 Sept and the following media attended: Knight Ridder (Soraya Nelson), Agency French Presse photo (Ahmed Al-Rubaie), ABC, Al Sabah newspaper (Mudhhir Al-Zuhairy), BBC Radio (Shadda Muhammad), Al-Hurriya TV. The trip included a civil affairs briefing, a tour of the city, visits to a the Waffa police station to watch police train, two schools-- one complete and one under reconstruction--, and a interview with Majid Jabreem. The third event was on 16 Sept, and was attended by BGen. Erv Lessel (MNF-I Strategic Communications), RADM Slavonic (MNF-I PAO), and the following media: Al Arabiya (talent Jawad Kadum, cameraman Mohamen Hussien), Kuwait News Network (talent Jabur Al Mahhdany, cameraman Hugy Ismael), LA Times (Patrick McDonnell), Boston Globe (Anne Bernard ), CBS (talent/cameraman Siphio Ralo, soundman Trevor Barker), Russia 1 TV (talent Nickoli Koutryashow, cameraman Andrey Leomox). Media were given a tour of the city, visited the Fast Reaction Unit police station where they observed training and spoke with policemen; visited the Imam Ali School to observe the reconstruction effort; visited the Governor's compound for interview with Majid; toured the Old City with the Governor's representative for the Old City. In-between each visit, new sites were researched, interviews with Marines and Iraqi government officials set up, a route reconnaissance completed, fact sheets compiled, logistics planned (transportation, security, continental breakfast and refreshments for on the move).

On 21 Sept, combat camera supported imagery acquisition of items recovered from raid and detention of Sadr supporters, to include his spokesperson in Najaf, Ahmed Shaybani, in the Old City. Throughout the next couple of days, the PAO answered numerous media queries regarding raid and reconstruction projects.

On 28 Sept, the PAO conducted the fourth reconstruction media event. Media in attendance were: Al Sharkiya TV, Al Fayhaa TV, Free Iraq Radio, Al Arabiya TV, Al Hurriya Newspaper, Telegraph Newspaper (British

newspaper, Jack Fairweather), and New York Times (James Glanz). Media were given a civil affairs briefing, visited the Fast Reaction Police station and interviewed the police chief, visited the Teaching Hospital, and conducted an interview with Majid Jabreem. Upon end of event, media and the PAO flew back to Baghdad. The PAO attended a MNF-I Public Affairs conference from 29 Sept- 1 Oct.

In October, the PA office continued to answer numerous media queries regarding reconstruction efforts, condolence payments, and hometown media queries regarding 11th MEU troops. On 11 Oct, the PAO began to support condolence payments out in town, which would continue every Monday thereafter. During the solatia processing, the PA supported numerous media interviews by Arab and western media attending the event, to include Al Hurra, Ad-Dustor, Associated Press TV, Al Iraqiya, etc. On 12 Oct, the PA shop supported the ING graduation in Diwaniyah, which was attended by Prime Minister Allawi. Media in attendance were: Al-Arabiya, Al Iraqiya, Al Hayt Magazine, Reuters, London Times, and the local Diwaniyah TV station and newspaper. On 14 Oct, the PAO coordinated a press briefing at the Governor's compound for Ambassador Negroponte. Media in attendance were: Al Hurra TV, Al Ghadeer TV, Al Alem, AL Mada Newspaper; Al Manar (Lebanese TV), Lebanese Broadcast Channel, CNN, Associated Press, Knight Ridder, Washington Post, LA Times, and Reuters. The PAO also at this time began planning a public affairs plan for elections registration, and arranged for Lucian Read to embed with 3/1 in Falluja. On 23 Oct, the PAO coordinated local Arab media to attend a ING barracks groundbreaking ceremony in Najaf.

From 2-15 Nov, the PAO and MEU elections representative displaced to FOB Hotel to work with an elections cell from MEF that included a Information Quick Reaction Team with a DVIDS system. During this time, the PAO worked on a plan to get information about elections registration out in town, to include billboards, banners, information on local TV stations and the newspaper. The PAO also helped the DVIDS satellite team set up media interviews regarding elections and reconstruction projects in Najaf. On 4 Nov, the PAO and IQRT met with the Independent Elections Committee Iraq (IECI) representative at the Governor's compound. The DVIDS crew also conducted one Arabic and one English interview with the governor regarding elections to market to media. On 9 Nov, the DVIDS crew conducted a live interview with Maj Lehning, civil affairs officer, with FOX News. On 10 Nov, the DVIDS crew

conducted an interview with the Najaf Governor with CNN USA, CNN International, and Al Hurra. On 26 Nov, local media in Diwaniyah covered the transfer of authority between 11th MEU forces and MND-CS forces.

On 5 Dec, Cpls Kotecki and Fosco head back to the United States to EAS. On 9 Dec, BGen Williams, the military head of reconstruction in Iraq, visited Najaf with reporters from the Economist, Financial Times and Ashwaq al-Awsat newspaper. In December the MEU marketed out numerous hometown media interviews regarding the status of Najaf. On Dec 16 the PA chief departed for Karbala, which was officially transferred to 11th MEU forces on 21 Dec. The local Karbala TV station attended the ceremony. On 17 Dec, the PAO invited the local TV stations Najaf TV and Al Gahdeer to attend a humanitarian assistance operation in Hyderia. For the rest of the month, the PAO answered media queries regarding the 18 Dec car bombs in Najaf and Karbala, a car bomb on 25 Dec, and the shooting of an ING on 28 Dec.

After fighting ended on 27 Aug, members of the PA office continued to work on the 208 page, all color, deployment book. Group photos were completed, photos collected from the units, layout begun, and books sold for \$10 each. The cost of each book is \$30, but the MEU subsidized the cost with other funds they were able to receive from MCCS.

The PAO office also supported family readiness programs and issues, MWR activities, the distribution of more than 100 care packages for 11th MEU Marines, and updated the 11th MEU webpage every few days with photos and articles and a new deployment update every week. The combat cameramen stayed busy taking photos and submitting them to MEF combat camera for distribution, as well as taking promotion photos for 11th MEU Marines and sailors. Gunny Zapata and Cpl Richards continued to write articles about 11th MEU Marines and activities.

SECTION III

SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

01 JUL - 31 DEC 04

6 - 11 Jul	Off load ESG shipping
6 - 12 Jul	Movement to Camp Virginia
6 - 14 Jul	Vehicle hardening
9 - 13 Jul	Leaders reconnaissance to 11 <sup>th</sup> MEU(SOC) TAOR, 1 MEF, 1 MARDIV, 1 FSSG
9 - 16 Jul	Live fire training at the Udari Range Complex
16 - 17 Jul	Ground movement (Quartering Party) from Camp Virginia, Kuwait to An Najaf, Iraq
17 - 18 Jul	Air movement (Quartering Party) from Camp Virginia, Kuwait to An Najaf, Iraq
21 Jul	Relief in Place (RIP) with TF Dragon (1ID)
31 Jul	Transfer of Authority (TOA) between TF Dragon and 11 <sup>th</sup> MEU(SOC)
2 - 26 Aug	Hostilities in An Najaf
5 Aug	-MM conducts multiple harassing attack from the Najaf Cemetery on the Main IP Station and the Governor requested CF assistance -Motorized QRF, CAAT(+), from FOB Hotel was deployed -0830 QRF was engaged vicinity of the Main IP Station by an estimated 300 MM located in and around the Najaf Cemetery. QRF returned fire and requested mechanized QRF -A mechanized QRF (AAVs, LAVs and M1A1s) was dispatched to reinforce the forces engaged

-RWCAS was launched to provide on-call CAS

-1 X UH-1N was shot down with two crewmembers sustaining injuries

-Mechanized QRF rerouted to secure the site of the downed aircraft

-A Co, 1/4 ordered to deploy from FOB Echo in Diwaniyah to reinforce battalion in Najaf

-An Najaf Governor orders ING and IPS to seal Kufa and Najaf

-JCC coordinated the reinforcement of TCPs with additional ISF along avenues of approach leading into Najaf

-1XUH-1N recovered to Forward Operating Base Hotel

-MSPF and BLT Recon dispatched to reinforce TCP 1

-11th MEU CO requests additional maneuver battalion to support combat operations in Najaf

-Report from MNC-I Via MND-CS indicated that "Busloads of MM Reinforcements" are moving towards Najaf from Baghdad and An Nasiriyah

-MNC-I/MND-CS relayed plan to reinforce 11th MEU with a BN TF from 1CD

-Alpha Company completed its movement and link up with BLT 1/4

-Intelligence reports MM Command Element in charge of "Cemetery Defenses" was overrun and destroyed by Marine forces. 130 estimated MM killed

-TF 1-5 Cavalry ADVON arrives FOB Duke

-Upon approval from CG MNC-I, BLT 1/4 (-)(rein) attacks to clear MM forces within eastern sector of Najaf Cemetery

6 Aug

-BLT 1/4 continues the attack in the Najaf cemetery

-Link up between the 11th MEU(SOC) and lead elements of TF 1-5 Cav

-Numerous weapons caches also uncovered yielding thousands of rounds of ammunition, hundreds of RPG's, AK-47s, and IED making material

7 Aug -ING raid a Sadr safehouse  
 -TF 1-5 Cav main body arrives FOB Duke  
 BLT 1/4 reaches Limit Of Advance (Rte Hayes)

8 Aug -BLT 1/4 withdraws from Najaf Cemetery to refit and rearm  
 -I MEF (Forward) assumes operational control  
 -Exclusion Zones for Najaf and Kufa reduced

9 Aug -TF 1-5 attacks to clear western sector of Najaf Cemetery  
 -11th MEU (SOC) CHOPs (Change of Operational Control) to Multi-National Force-West (I-MEF)

10 Aug TF 2-7 Cav arrives FOB Duke

11 Aug -A Co, 404th ING returns to Diwaniyha  
 -First cessation of offensive operations (24 hours) directed by MNC-I

12 Aug -TF 2-7 Cav attacks in zone to clear MM forces. Lead element engaged at 0645  
 -TF 2-7 occupies BPs SW Najaf  
 -All three-maneuver battalions are in contact with the enemy and surround Imam Ali Mosque Complex  
 -BLT 1/4 raid on Sadr's house and Maternity Hospital  
 -TF Commando raids Salah Mosque in Kufa

13 Aug -Second cessation of offensive operations (24 hours) directed by MNC-I  
 -Sadr reportedly wounded

14 Aug -First day of Iraqi National Assembly (through Aug 16)

19 Aug -2nd Bn IIF closes on FOB Duke  
 -IP Station Kufa attacked  
 -BLT 1/4 conducts destruction raid in Kufa (Technical College)



20 Aug Third cessation of offensive operations  
(24 hours) directed by MNC-I

21 Aug -BLT 1/4 raids Kufa (Technical College)  
-TF 1-5 Cav conducts probing attack  
west of parking garage. Heavy  
resistance encountered

22 Aug -Rehearse Of Concept (ROC) drill for  
deliberate attack on MEF OBJ A  
conducted at FOB Duke. LTG Metz (CG  
MNC-I) and LtGen Conway (CG MNF-W) in  
attendance

24 Aug -LTG Metz (MNC-I) arrives FOB Duke to  
receive mission update for immediate  
attack on MEF OBJ A (Imam Ali Mosque)

25 Aug -4th BN IIF Bn closes on FOB Echo  
-All three maneuver battalions are now  
conducting urban combat operations  
inside Ring Road  
-FW strikes on multiple building  
occupied by MM forces

26 Aug -Fourth cessation of offensive  
operations directed by MNC-I  
-Negotiations begin between the Grand  
Ayatollah Sistani and Muqtada Sadr

27 Aug -Grand Ayatollah Sistani received keys  
to the Imam Ali Mosque

2 Sep -MEU relinquished TACON of 36<sup>th</sup> Commando

2 Sep -CG 3d MAW visits Marines of HMM-166

4 Sep -MEU relinquished TACON of TF 1-5 Cav

6 Sep -IIF, IP, and ING commenced clearing  
operations in Old City Najaf

8 Sep -MEU relinquished TACON of TF 2-7 Cav

8 Sep -IIF executes raid on Sadrs' office in  
Old City Najaf

9 Sep -CAAT B hit by IED

14 Sep -IIF redeployed  
-Ambassadors Jeffries and Taylor and Admiral Nash visit Najaf

21 Sep -MSPF, USSF ODA, and the ICTF conduct a Direct Action mission vic Sadr Offices in Old City Najaf

27 Sep -MEU Solatia team establishes a claims payment site at the Government Information Center (GIC)

2 Oct MSPF and ODA 512 conduct Direct Action mission on suspected Al Qaida VBIED maker

11 Oct MEU Solatia team conducts payments at GIC

12 Oct PM Allawi visits Najaf

14 Oct Operation Exxon

14 - 16 Oct I MEF Elections OPT

21 Oct Operation Exxon

22 Oct MEU wide safety stand-down

23 Oct Operation Exxon

24 Oct MEU Force Recon Platoon and ANGLICO FCT depart for Fallujah ISO Operation Phantom Fury

25 Oct MEU Solatia team conducts payments at GIC

LTGEN Kiszely DCG MNF-I visits Najaf

28 Oct 155 BCT PDSS visits Najaf

28 Oct Operation Exxon

29 Oct Bravo 1/4 (+) TACON to 1 Mar Div

1 Nov	Iraqi National Election registration begins
4 Nov	Force package in place at Fallujah for Operation PHANTOM FURY
5 Nov	Operation Cover Up
6 Nov	Operation Exxon
8 Nov	MEU Solatia team conducts payments at GIC
9 Nov	BGEN Medina visits Marines and Sailors of 11 <sup>th</sup> MEU(SOC)
10 Nov	Marine Corps birthday celebration with special guest BGEN Medina
11 Nov	TF Charlie departs for FOB Kalsu ISO 24 MEU bridge rebuilding effort
14 Nov	TF Charlie mission complete
	Operation Exxon
	Operation Exxon
	HA mission in Ash Shaifiyah
15 Nov	MEU Solatia team conducts payments at GIC
18 Nov	Provincial Gas station opens in Najaf
19 Nov	MEU forces conduct cordon and knock
	HA mission in Diwaniyah
22 Nov	MEU Solatia team conducts payments at GIC
6 Dec	MEU Solatia team conducts payments at GIC

7 Dec = Ambassador Taylor arrives FOB Duke for  
update and tour of CA projects

8 Dec LTGEN Sattler arrives FOB Duke for  
operational update and tour of CA  
projects

10 Dec Quartering Party departs for Camp Lima,  
Karbala

13 Dec MEU Solatia team conducts payments at  
GIC

16 Dec Main body departs for Camp Lima,  
Karbala

17 Dec HA mission in Al Hyderia

19 Dec VBIED detonates in An Najaf

21 Dec TOA in Karbala

25 Dec VBIED detonates north of FOB Hotel

SECTION IV

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Item 1            11th MEU Family Newsletter "Yankee Post",  
Public affairs section; Feb-Mar.
- Item 2            11th MEU Family newsletter "Pacific Pride,"  
Public Affairs section; Mar-Apr.
- Item 3            Stories written by Combat Correspondent,  
Public Affairs section; Jan-Mar.
- Item 4            11th MEU cruise book, Public Affairs  
section.



**Item 1**

# Press Releases

## PAO



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

**Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-08**

July 31, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** – The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) assumed operational control of the An Najaf and Al Qadisiyah provinces from the U.S. Army during a ceremony here today.

Working for the Polish-led Multi-National Division Central South (MND-CS), 11th MEU Marines will focus on full spectrum operations that include combat operations; training, equipping and building leadership in the Iraqi security forces; and conducting civil military operations in their area of responsibility south of Baghdad.

Operating from three bases outside the major cities of An Najaf and Ad Diwaniyah, and one air station west of Baghdad, the MEU's aim will be to support Iraq's sovereignty, enable Iraqis to take the lead in their own defense, and set the stage for national elections. As the Iraqi national guardsmen, local police and border police assume greater responsibilities and build their strength, MEU forces will stand ready to support them in combat operations if called upon.

In this effort for security and stability, a battalion of El Salvadorian infantrymen, along with Army civil affairs teams, engineers and military police, will augment the MEU's own combination of infantry, helicopters, tanks, artillery, mechanized and motorized vehicles, and support assets.

The MEU's area of operations holds great historical and current significance. An Najaf, population 550,000, is home to Iraq's top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and the radical Shiite cleric Muqtada Sadr and his Mahdi Army. The 10th-century Imam Ali Shrine and its neighboring cemetery make Najaf one of the holiest cities for Shiite Muslims. Ad Diwaniyah, population 450,000, is located on a branch of the Euphrates River and on the Baghdad-Basra railroad.

**Background:**

After five months of rigorous training, the 11th MEU, based out of Camp Pendleton, Calif., deployed a month early on May 28 to replace elements of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment. Sailing aboard the amphibious assault ships USS Belleau Wood, USS Denver and USS Comstock, the MEU offloaded in Kuwait July 7. After conducting



training for support and stability operations, MEU Marines loaded vehicle convoys and military aircraft headed for Iraq.

Upon arrival in country, the MEU began a 10-day turnover with Task Force Dragon, comprised of elements of the 1st Infantry Division. This task force assumed control of the area of operations in June, relieving the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment who had been extended twice in Iraq.

The 11th MEU's current deployment is different than most. Instead of remaining aboard ship and acting as a quick response force in the U.S. Central Command area of operations, MEU Marines will remain in Iraq for the duration of their deployment.

The 11th MEU (SOC) is commanded by Col. Anthony M. Haslam.

\* For more information, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

\* Visit the 11th MEU website at [www.11meu.usmc.mil](http://www.11meu.usmc.mil) or [www.usmc.mil/11thmeu](http://www.usmc.mil/11thmeu)

--USMC--



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-09**

Aug. 2, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** -- Marines from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) came under small arms, RPG and mortar fire while driving past the An Najaf Maternity Hospital during a peaceful security patrol in the city today.

Marines were patrolling in areas of the city authorized under the cease-fire agreement reached in June between coalition forces and Muqtada Sadr's self-designated Madhi Army, as brokered by the Governor of Najaf, other local civic leaders and the Bayt al-Shia (the informal counsel of senior Shia clerics).

Marines returned well-aimed fire, taking caution to avoid all non-combatants. It is estimated that two Anti-Iraqi Forces were killed during the engagement.

There were no Marine casualties.

11th MEU Marines stand committed with the citizens of the An Najaf province against those who violently oppose a new and democratic Iraq. Let Anti-Iraqi Forces understand the clear message that precise, lethal firepower will be brought to bear upon them when they chose to stand and fight.

The 11th MEU assumed control of the An Najaf and Al Qadisiyah provinces on July 31, and are conducting operations in order to foster a secure and stable environment for the citizens of the two provinces.

\* For more information, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

\* Visit the 11th MEU website at [www.11meu.usmc.mil](http://www.11meu.usmc.mil) or [www.usmc.mil/11thmeu](http://www.usmc.mil/11thmeu)

--USMC--



# **11th Marine Expeditionary Unit**

**(Special Operations Capable)**

**Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-010**

Aug. 3, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** -- A Marine assigned to the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit died today as a result of a non-hostile gunshot wound.

The incident is under investigation.

The Marine's name is being withheld pending next of kin notification.

-USMC-



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

---

PRESS RELEASE #04-11

Aug. 5, 2004

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FOB DUKE** -- A quick reaction force from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit was dispatched at the request of the governor of An Najaf province after the city's main Iraqi police station was attacked for the second time this morning.

A significant number of aggressors, presumed to be members of the self-designated Madhi Army, began attacking the station with heavy machine guns, RPGs, mortars, and small arms around 3 a.m. This came after an initial attack on the police station around 1 a.m. was unsuccessful.

Iraqi national guardsmen quickly reinforced Iraqi police, and the two units successfully defended the station from the attackers. Upon arrival of the Marines, Madhi Army members withdrew into the city's exclusion zone. No shots were fired by the Marines, and there were no Marine casualties. Enemy casualties are unknown at this time.

The attack is an overt violation of the cease-fire agreement reached in June between coalition forces and Muqtada Sadr, as brokered by the Governor of Najaf, other local civic leaders and the Bayt al-Shia (the informal counsel of senior Shia clerics). Attacking local police, whose sole job is to maintain peace in Najaf and keep its citizens safe, is another demonstration of the Madhi Army's disregard for the people of the city, and their desire to prevent a free and prosperous Iraq.

The attacks this morning come on the heels of the Madhi Army's release yesterday of five of the six Iraqi police officers kidnapped in the past few days. The action occurred after the governor of Najaf, Adnan al-Zurufi, demanded their release.

On Aug. 2., 11th MEU Marines conducting a joint security patrol with Iraqi national guardsmen outside the exclusion zone in Najaf were alerted by the guardsmen to RPGs visibly staged in a lot near the An Najaf Maternity Hospital, close to Sadr's home. As the Marines moved to investigate the scene, they came under small arms, RPG and mortar fire. The Marines returned fire, supported by the Iraqi soldiers, killing an estimated seven Madhi Army soldiers. The Marines suffered one injury, though minor; the Marine immediately returned to his unit.

Eleventh MEU Marines stand committed with the citizens of the An Najaf province against those who violently oppose a new and democratic Iraq. Let Anti-Iraqi Forces understand the clear message that precise, lethal firepower will be brought to bear upon them when they choose to stand and fight.

The 11th MEU assumed control of the An Najaf and Al Qadisiyah provinces on July 31, and are conducting operations in order to foster a secure and stable environment for the citizens of the two provinces.

\* For more information, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

\* Visit the 11th MEU website at [www.11meu.usmc.mil](http://www.11meu.usmc.mil) or [www.usmc.mil/11thmeu](http://www.usmc.mil/11thmeu)

--USMC--



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-12**

Aug. 5, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** -- Members of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's self-designated Muqtada Militia launched attacks on 11th MEU Marines and Iraqi security forces today from the Imam Ali-Shrine and neighboring cemetery, both located in an exclusion zone in the city of Najaf, violating international laws of war and a cease-fire agreement signed by Sadr and Iraqi officials in June.

Muqtada Militia members also attacked Marines, Iraqi police and national guardsmen throughout other parts of the city, to include the governor's building and road checkpoints.

At approximately 10:45, Marines and security forces received more than 30 mortar attacks, originating from within the cemetery. The Marines counter-attacked the point of origin of the mortar fire with two guided bombs from an F-15 jet, striking out of effects range of the Imam Ali Shrine. Great efforts were made to minimize collateral damage to the shrine and cemetery. While the laws of war normally identify mosques and cemeteries as protected places, such sites forfeit that status if used for military purposes. In this case, the mortar site within the cemetery became a legitimate military objective, targeted out of necessity and self-defense.

The cemetery in the exclusion zone is continuously used as a safe haven for the Muqtada Militia. They have hijacked the sacred site, using it as a base of operations to stage large caches of weapons and launch attacks from within, while seeking sanctuary in the holy area.

**From the beginning**

Fighting began at 1 a.m. this morning when the Muqtada Militia unsuccessfully attacked the main police station in Najaf. Iraqi national guardsmen quickly reinforced the police, and the two units successfully defended the station from the attackers for a second time at approximately 3 a.m. At the request of the governor of An Najaf province, Adnan al-Zurufi, Marines launched a quick reaction force to assist. Upon arrival of the Marines, Muqtada Militia members withdrew into the city's exclusion zone. No shots were fired by the Marines, and there were no Marine casualties.

At approximately 10 a.m., a Marine helicopter made a landing in the city after receiving fire. Marines secured the site and evacuated the aircrew to a local hospital. Both members of the crew are in stable condition.

Today's attacks are an overt violation of the cease-fire agreement reached in June between coalition forces and Muqtada al-Sadr, as brokered by the Governor of Najaf, other local civic leaders and the Bayt al-Shia (the informal counsel of senior Shia clerics). In addition, such attacks on the governor's building, Iraqi police, national guardsmen and coalition forces demonstrate the Muqtada Militia's disregard for the people of the city, and their desire to prevent a free and prosperous Iraq.

Eleventh MEU Marines stand committed with the citizens of the An Najaf province against those who violently oppose a democratic Iraq. Let Anti-Iraqi Forces understand the clear message that precise, lethal firepower will be brought to bear upon them when they choose to stand and fight.

Combat operations are ongoing. Friendly and enemy casualties are unknown at this time.

### **Background**

The attacks today come on the heels of the Muqtada Militia's release yesterday of five of the six Iraqi police officers kidnapped in the past few days. The action occurred after the governor of An Najaf province demanded their release.

On Aug. 2., 11th MEU Marines conducting a joint security patrol with Iraqi national guardsmen outside the exclusion zone in Najaf were alerted by the guardsmen to RPGs visibly staged in a lot near the An Najaf Maternity Hospital, close to Sadr's home. As the Marines moved to investigate the scene, they came under small arms, RPG and mortar fire. The Marines returned fire, supported by the Iraqi soldiers, killing an estimated seven Muqtada Militia members. The Marines suffered one injury, though minor; the Marine immediately returned to his unit.

The 11th MEU assumed control of the An Najaf and Al Qadisiyah provinces on July 31, and are conducting operations in order to foster a secure and stable environment for the citizens of the two provinces.

\* For more information, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

\* Visit the 11th MEU website at [www.11meu.usmc.mil](http://www.11meu.usmc.mil) or [www.usmc.mil/11thmeu](http://www.usmc.mil/11thmeu)

--USMC--



## **11th Marine Expeditionary Unit**

(Special Operations Capable)

**Public Affairs Office**  
**Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-013**

Aug. 5, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** -- Two Marines from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit were killed as a result of enemy action in the An Najaf province today.

Eleventh MEU force protection measures preclude the release of any information that could aid enemy personnel in assessing the effectiveness or lack thereof with regard to their tactics, techniques and procedures. The release of more details about the incident could place our Marines and sailors at greater risk.

The names of the deceased are being withheld pending next of kin notification.

- USMC -





## **11th Marine Expeditionary Unit** (Special Operations Capable)

**Public Affairs Office**  
**Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-014**

Aug. 6, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** -- Two Marines from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit were killed as a result of enemy action in the An Najaf province today.

Eleventh MEU force protection measures preclude the release of any information that could aid enemy personnel in assessing the effectiveness or lack thereof with regard to their tactics, techniques and procedures. The release of more details about the incident could place our Marines and sailors at greater risk.

The names of the deceased are being withheld pending next of kin notification.

- USMC -



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

---

PRESS RELEASE #04-015

Aug. 7, 2004

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FOB DUKE** -- Marines from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit completed its mission in the cemetery after a successful battle with members of the radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's Muqtada Militia, as Iraqi security forces continued to fight militia members inside the city.

Numerous enemy weapons caches were also uncovered and captured by the Marines during the fighting, yielding IED-making material, RPGs, AK-47s, and machine gun ammunition.

Marines entered the cemetery Thursday, supported by Marine and Army helicopters and Air Force jets, and immediately engaged in heavy fighting with the militia members that lasted two days. Since then, an estimated 300 enemy were killed. The Marines have suffered four killed in action.

The assault by the Marines was a result of the Muqtada Militia launching numerous attacks from the sacred site, violating international laws of war and the cease-fire agreement between Sadr and coalition forces. The agreement, negotiated in June by the Governor of Najaf and other local civic and religious leaders, included the creation of an exclusion zone for coalition forces around the Imam Ali Shrine and its neighboring cemetery.

Immediately upon reaching this agreement, Muqtada Militia wasted no time in using the cemetery as an operating base, hiding in its sanctuary. They began by staging large weapons caches in the cemetery. Activity increased over time, to include sporadic offensive operations against Iraqi Security Forces and several kidnappings of Iraqi police, whose bodies were branded before being released by militiamen. The Muqtada Militia kidnapped their enemies, including innocent civilians, bringing them to the cemetery for torture, execution, and burial. On Thursday morning, attacks on the main police station in Najaf originated from and were reinforced from the cemetery. Soon mortar fire, originating from the cemetery, targeted and rained down close to Iraqi Security Forces and Marines until the enemy firing position was destroyed by an F-15 fighter jet. Militia fighters were continually observed in the holy site replenishing themselves with weapons and ammunition staged there.

Approximately 5 km in length and 3 km at its widest point, the cemetery stands in stark contrast to a typical western one, fairly open and filled with headstones. Instead, there are multi-story, mausoleum-like buildings surrounded by walls, roughly constructed with concrete and brick. These buildings make perfect bunkers and hardened positions. In addition to caves and underground rooms, the cemetery makes a perfect hiding and operating base for Muqtada Militia and their weapons caches.

While the international laws of armed conflict normally identify sites like this as protected places, such status is forfeited if the site is used for military purposes. The actions of the Muqtada Militia make the cemetery a legitimate military objective, which were only assaulted due to necessity and self-defense. During the fighting, great efforts were made on the part of the Marines to minimize collateral damage and preserve the cemetery.

Let the Muqtada Militia clearly understand that 11th MEU Marines and Iraqi Security Forces will not allow them to seek sanctuary and hijack this holy cemetery from the people of Iraq. We will not allow them to continue to desecrate this sacred site, using it as an insurgent base of operations. There will be no sanctuary for thugs and criminals in Najaf.

\* For more information, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

\* Visit the 11th MEU website at [www.11meu.usmc.mil](http://www.11meu.usmc.mil) or [www.usmc.mil/11thmeu](http://www.usmc.mil/11thmeu)

--USMC--



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

**Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-016**

Aug. 9, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** – Forces with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit and the Iraqi security forces continue to battle Anti-Iraqi Forces in Najaf today in an effort to rid the city of those who break the rules of law and order.

In response to current enemy operations in the sacred Wadi Al Salam cemetery, MEU forces are currently fighting Anti-Iraqi Forces and capturing numerous weapons caches found in the holy site's catacombs and mausoleums.

The current MEU offensive kicked off yesterday when AIF, who fled into mosques and buildings surrounding the Imam Ali Shrine after an initial Marine assault on Friday, began to once again operate and launch attacks from the cemetery. AIF today are conducting the same tactics -- launching attacks from the cemetery and surrounding areas, only to immediately run back and seek sanctuary in the mosques and buildings surrounding the Imam Ali Shrine.

Early this morning, at the request of the governor of An Najaf province, MEU and Iraq National Guard forces kicked off several joint raids on suspected AIF positions. While enemy were not found at these sites, Marine and ING troops successfully fought off an attempted enemy ambush as they retrograded through the city after their mission. No Marines or ING forces were killed.

In a move to operate efficiently, members of Najaf's ING and portions of neighboring ING units were put under operational control of the 11th MEU yesterday. This action will allow for a more effective integration with ING forces, as both units fight side-by-side against enemy forces that threaten the peace and stability of Najaf. In addition, ING soldiers received a shipment of hundreds of AK-47 machine guns and crates of ammunition.

Also working directly for the MEU are two reinforced U.S. Army infantry battalions, and a U.S. Army helicopter battalion. Units are:

Task Force ask Force 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

Task Force 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat  
Team, 1st Cavalry Division

Task Force 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat  
Team, 1st Cavalry Division

Current MEU offensives are a result of AIF operating from the sacred cemetery and surrounding mosques and buildings, violating international laws of war and the cease-fire agreement between Muqtada al-Sadr and coalition forces. The agreement, negotiated in June by the Governor of Najaf and other local civic and religious leaders, included the creation of an exclusion zone for coalition forces around the Imam Ali Shrine and its neighboring cemetery.

Upon reaching this agreement, AIF wasted no time in using the holy site as an operating base. Using it as sanctuary, they began by staging large weapons caches there. Activity increased over time, to including sporadic offensive operations against Iraqi security forces and kidnapping Iraqi policemen. The AIF kidnapped their victims, including innocent civilians, bringing them to the cemetery for torture, execution, and burial.

While the international laws of armed conflict normally identify such sites as protected places, that status is forfeited if it is used for military purposes. AIF actions make the cemetery a legitimate military objective, which is being assaulted out of necessity and self-defense. During the fighting, great efforts were made on the part of the Marines to minimize collateral damage and preserve the cemetery.

"Let the AIF clearly understand that 11th MEU Marines and Iraqi Security Forces will not allow them to seek sanctuary and hijack this holy cemetery from the people of Iraq," said Col Anthony M. Haslam, commanding officer of the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU. "We will not allow them to continue to desecrate this sacred site, using it as an insurgent base of operations. There will be no sanctuary for thugs and criminals in Najaf."

For more information, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

\* Visit the 11th MEU website at [www.11meu.usmc.mil](http://www.11meu.usmc.mil) or [www.usmc.mil/11thmeu](http://www.usmc.mil/11thmeu)

--USMC--



## **11th Marine Expeditionary Unit** (Special Operations Capable)

**Public Affairs Office**  
**Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-018**

Aug. 13, 2004

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** – Iraqi Security Forces, augmented by Marines of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, conducted a raid before dawn today on Muqtada Militia troops using a mosque in Kufa as a militant stronghold. The Iraqi Security Forces, who entered and cleared the building of militia members, were supported by Marines who remained outside the mosque the entire time, and provided a security cordon around the building to prevent militants from reinforcing or escaping.

The raid was conducted on the small, Saleh mosque located on the outskirts of Kufa. Several militiamen were killed and eight were detained.

The raid comes at a time when over 80 percent of Najaf has been stabilized, and is relatively calm except for isolated hot spots. While Iraqi Security Forces and MEU forces are not experiencing a large number of fighters in the city, there are smaller groups of Muqtada Militia who continue to operate out of isolated areas.

While current media reports state that Muqtada al-Sadr has possibly been injured or killed, these reports cannot be confirmed at this time. There is no indication that Multi-National Forces had any involvement in an attack launched against Sadr.

### **Other actions past 24 hours**

In other locations in Najaf today, U.S. Army units attached to the 11th MEU continue to repel light, sporadic attacks by Anti-Iraqi Forces in the old city, south of the Imam Ali Shrine, and in the Wadi Al Salam cemetery. The old city is relatively quiet at the time, after U.S. soldiers were involved in intense fighting yesterday involving an IED, small arms fire and RPGs. Soldiers in the cemetery also report that fighting has died down considerably the last two days. U.S. Army soldiers have ceased offensive operations since 7 a.m. this morning as Iraqi government leaders continue to work towards a peaceful conclusion.

Yesterday, Iraqi National Guardsmen, augmented by 11th MEU Marines, conducted a joint raid within the neighborhood of Muqtada al-Sadr in an effort to continue stabilization of the city. The Sadr neighborhood, a center for violence and volatility, has been known for heavily fortified positions throughout the streets, numerous weapons

caches, and militia members. Its presence stood as a significant threat to a secure and stable Najaf.

The area raided consisted of two medical clinics/hospitals occupied by the Muqtada Militia for more than four months, and the al-Sadr house itself. Muqtada al-Sadr was not present at the house, nor was he expected to be. Militia fighters, however, were found operating out of buildings approximately 500 meters from the house, and a carefully planned, precision air strike was called in on the building.

The neighborhood, a stronghold for Muqtada Militia members, is located approximately 3 km east of the holy Imam Ali Shrine in the city of Najaf.

"Our greatest interests are to stabilize Najaf and help to foster a strong and prosperous city," said Col. Anthony M. Haslam, commanding officer, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. "Our current actions are for this purpose. Stability and peace will only flourish when the city has been rid of safe havens that harbor thugs and criminals."

-USMC -



# **11th Marine Expeditionary Unit**

(Special Operations Capable)

**Public Affairs Office**  
**Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-019**

Aug. 15, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** -- Two U.S. soldiers attached to the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit were killed as a result of enemy action in the An Najaf province today.

Eleventh MEU force protection measures preclude the release of any information that could aid enemy personnel in assessing the effectiveness or lack thereof with regard to their tactics, techniques and procedures. The release of more details about the incident could place our Marines and sailors at greater risk.

The names of the deceased are being withheld pending next of kin notification.

- USMC -





## **11th Marine Expeditionary Unit**

**(Special Operations Capable)**

**Public Affairs Office**

**Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-020**

Aug. 26, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** -- One Marine attached to the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit were killed as a result of enemy action in the An Najaf province today.

Eleventh MEU force protection measures preclude the release of any information that could aid enemy personnel in assessing the effectiveness or lack thereof with regard to their tactics, techniques and procedures. The release of more details about the incident could place our Marines and sailors at greater risk.

The names of the deceased are being withheld pending next of kin notification.

- USMC -



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

**Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-021**

Sept. 5, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** -- Sister cities Najaf and Kufa bustle with activity as Iraqis and MEU Marines and sailors work together to continue reconstruction efforts started after fighting in the city ceased Aug. 28. Local Iraqi citizens, government leaders, security forces, reconstruction and clean-up workers are joining in the effort to re-establish "life as normal" for its citizens and improve infrastructure to its pre-fighting condition.

At the request of local leaders, MEU explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) Marines continue to assist Iraqi police, national guardsmen and two battalions of Iraqi Intervention Forces to clear weapons caches and IEDs hidden by Sadr's militia in the holy Wadi al-Salem cemetery and Old City. Approximately 240 IEDs have been discovered and disabled in the sacred site and along roads in the Old City. Iraqi security forces report that locals and cemetery caretakers have voluntarily joined in the clean up effort, moving weapons caches alongside the cemetery's roads for easy pickup by Iraqi forces.

Large amounts of weapons and ammunition continue to be uncovered in buildings surrounding the shrine, to include a large parking garage west of it. These caches, as well as the prevalent IEDs, pose a great danger to Iraqis visiting the cemetery and living in the Old City district. As a result, Iraqi troops and EOD Marines are working tirelessly to remove these dangers as quickly as possible. (See statistics below.)

Iraqi security forces also continue to maintain an active security presence in the cities. Iraqi national guardsmen and police man vehicle checkpoints as other policemen patrol the cities and conduct cordon and knock operations to find and confiscate illegal weapons and ammunition caches.

11th MEU Marines are busy as they resume training Iraqi national guardsmen in Najaf. Marines are also conducting presence patrols around the two cities in order to identify areas in need of reconstruction projects as well as to monitor the progress of civil military projects currently underway.

### **Civil Affairs Projects**

Civil affairs Marines and soldiers attached to the MEU continue to work closely with the governor's office to identify future projects and critical services in need of restoration, and procure funding for them. Projects are making headway while construction efforts are in full swing.

For more than a week, eight clean-up crews have made a remarkable difference around the streets of the Imam Ali Shrine and Old City as they methodically clear rubble and trash from the streets in the neighborhood. Each all-Iraqi crew consists of one project manager, 10 supervisors and 100 workers who will be paid for two weeks to conduct the clean-up. Funding for these projects was received from the Commanders Emergency Response Program. CERP funds come from a U.S. Congressional appropriation to the Department of Defense to pay for collateral damage caused by combat operations, as well to fund other humanitarian and reconstruction projects. The cities of Najaf and Kufa will take part in a \$4.8 million CERP funds allocation for the provinces of An Najaf and Al Qadisiyah that will cover rebuilding costs this month.

Other CERP projects in the two cities include funds to repair schools damaged in the fighting, improve conditions at the city's Human Rights Center, and repair critical facilities providing life support services to the local people. Schools are expected to open on time for the beginning of the school year in a few weeks.

### **Other Recent Events**

- Around noon on Sept. 3, more than 200 anti-Muqtada al-Sadr demonstrators took to the streets surrounding the Imam Ali Shrine, carrying banners and chanting anti-Sadr slogans urging him and his militia to depart the city. During the same day, calls for a demonstration against the local government by self-styled Grand Ayatollah Hassani, a radical Shiite cleric, never materialized.
- More than 250 Iraqi men congregated at the Waffa Police Station in Najaf Sept. 2 to volunteer their time, stating they'd work for free with the hopes they could get hired in the future. The police chief and the Minister of the Interior's office are working the screening process for these men.
- The Arabic website "An Najaf News Network" posted a Sept. 1 press statement by the holy An-Najaf Seminary on the atrocities of the Muqtada al-Sadr's "so-called" Sharia Court. It stated that "mutilated bodies and torture machines have been found and crimes discovered" in the court, and that these acts have nothing to do with Islam. The Shiite seminary called those involved in these crimes "fake imposters" and demanded that they "be referred to justice in order to receive the punishment they deserve." The press statement also states that Sadr "exceeded all bounds" when he took over the Imam Ali Mausoleum and its compound, and that they had warned him of "waging a losing battle whose outcome was known in advance."

- The local government recently established a claims office in the Human Rights Center in Najaf, which began taking claims on Aug. 29. A radio and TV ad campaign prepared by the local government immediately began notifying residents about the establishment of this office once fighting in the city ceased. The office will initially process claims for death, injury and loss of residence. Claims for property damage will subsequently be processed.

#### **Captured Muqatada Militia Weapons Caches**

Hundreds of Muqtada Militia weapons caches have been retrieved in the cemetery, buildings surrounding the Imam Ali Shrine, and numerous other locations since fighting ended Aug. 28:

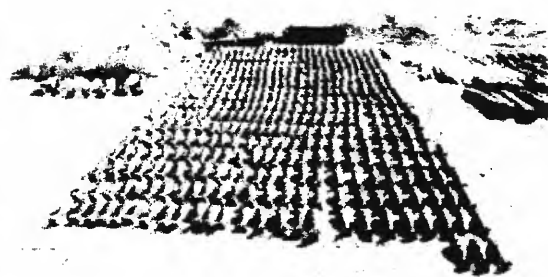
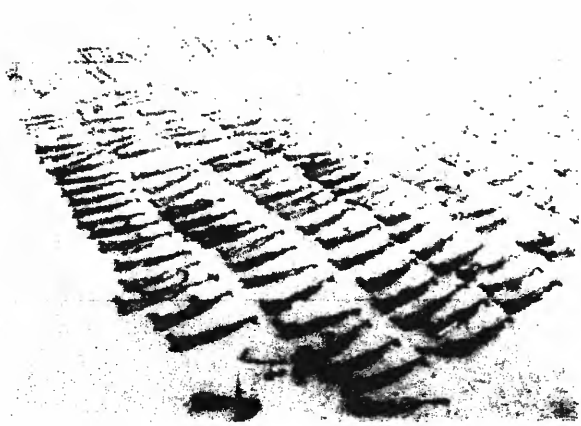
- (784) AK-47 rifles
- (143) various other rifles (not AK-47s)
- (157) RPG launchers
- (53) 60mm mortar tubes
- (26) 60mm mortar tripods
- (20) 60 mm mortar baseplates
- (16) 82 mm mortar tubes
- (3) 82 mm mortar tripods
- (4) 82 mm mortar baseplates
- (1) 120 mm mortar tube
- (49) medium and heavy machine guns
- (2) pistols

**TOTAL WEAPONS FOUND: 1, 258**

#### **Captured Muqtada Militia Munitions**

- Thousands of munitions found in cemetery, Old City, and during vehicle checkpoints by Iraqi security forces and 11th MEU forces have been collected and destroyed since Aug. 28:
  - (242) IEDs
  - (3) bombs (to include a 250 kg bomb located in a street intersection north of the Imam Ali Shrine)
  - (925) mortars (60, 82, 120mm)
  - (40) grenades
  - (273) rockets
  - (6) guided missiles
  - (41) mines
  - (108) fuses for IEDs
  - (42) miscellaneous explosives
  - (8,930) small arms ammunition
  - (58) other (pyrotechnics, depth charge)

**TOTAL MUNITIONS DESTROYED 10,596**



**\*\*Photographs:**

Some weapons and munitions found in Najaf (IEDs, AK-47s, RPG launchers, 7-ton truck filled with weapons, 120mm mortars).

Aug. 2 anti-Sadr demonstration near the Imam Ali Shrine.



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

**Public Affairs Office**  
**Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-022**

Oct. 4, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** – Marines from the 11th MEU distributed more than \$200,300 today in condolence and collateral damage repair payments to demonstrate goodwill to Iraqis caught in the crossfire as multinational and Iraqi security forces battled to free Najaf and its citizens from Muqtada al-Sadr and his fighters in August.

The first payments were made on Sept. 20, resulting in a total of \$367,300 paid to Najafis since then. Payments will continue as long as needed to meet each valid case.

Condolence payments, known as solatia, are being paid to express sympathy to those injured or who lost a family member during the fighting. Collateral damage repair payments are intended for Iraqis who experienced damage to their home, business or other property.

Subsequently, MEU Marines continue to spend millions of dollars to contract local Iraqi businessmen and workers to repair public infrastructure damaged during the fighting.

"We are working hard to demonstrate goodwill to the people of Najaf who incurred loses during fighting in August," said Col. Anthony M. Haslam, commanding officer, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. "Now that Najaf is stable and under control of Iraqi security forces, we're working with the local government around the clock to rebuild and revitalize this city for its people."

**Background:**

A simple process for Iraqis filing a report of injury, death or damage was in place immediately after the fighting and was advertised in local media and in government offices. Iraqis wanting to file a report can go to the Human Rights Center in Najaf, where a team of Iraqi volunteers build the file, collect evidence, and receive assessments of any damage that occurred. A three person team from the local government then validates and verifies the information, approving or sending the report back for more information. Applicants are notified through the local newspaper and postings when their report has been approved. They are also told the date, location and time they can receive payment.

Mobile solatia teams have also been created and are visiting neighborhoods damaged by the fighting to make "on the spot" solatia and collateral damage repair payments. The intention of this team is to ensure those who do not have the means to get to the Human Rights Center can also file a report.

\* **For more information**, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

\* Visit the 11th MEU website at [www.11meu.usmc.mil](http://www.11meu.usmc.mil) or [www.usmc.mil/11thmeu](http://www.usmc.mil/11thmeu)

--USMC--



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office

Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

**PRESS RELEASE #04-023**

Oct. 5, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** – Marines from the 11th MEU dispatched a mobile payment team to neighborhoods in Najaf for 10 hours today, making \$176,180 worth of "on the spot" solatia and collateral damage payments to Iraqis caught in the crossfire when multinational and Iraqi security forces battled Muqtada al-Sadr and his militia in August.

The mobile team, which visited neighborhoods throughout the city for a second time this week, was created to expedite payments and ensure all Najafis have the opportunity to get paid for legitimate damage.

The mobile team serves as an augment to enhance weekly payouts held at the Government Information Center, which began Sept. 20.

Since then, more than \$570,000 has been paid to 533 Najafis. Payments will continue as long as needed to meet each valid case.

Condolence payments, or solatia, are given to express sympathy for injury or death. Collateral damage repair payments are intended to cover damage to homes, businesses or other property.

"We've gone mobile to ensure every Najafi gets the opportunity to get quickly compensated for legitimate losses or injury," said Col. Anthony M. Haslam, commanding officer, 11th MEU. "We're thinking outside the box to expedite a slow process, motivated by the desire to make life better for the locals."

\* **For more information**, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--





## **11th Marine Expeditionary Unit**

(Special Operations Capable)

**Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-024**

Oct. 12, 2004

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

AD DIWANIYAH, Iraq -- The Iraqi Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and National Security Advisor along with local dignitaries attended the graduation ceremony of more than two hundred Iraqi National Guard recruits here at the ING compound, today.

During the ceremony, five recruits from Ad Diwaniyah and five from An Najaf were recognized for heroism during the battle of Najaf in August.

The recruits, who just completed a five-week training course led by ING staff non-commissioned officers and Marines from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, will join the ranks of the 404th ING Battalion, 50th Brigade, based here.

The ING soldiers will be responsible for helping to provide for the security and stability of the city and its outlying areas.

\* **For more information**, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

\* Visit the 11th MEU website at [www.11meu.usmc.mil](http://www.11meu.usmc.mil) or [www.usmc.mil/11thmeu](http://www.usmc.mil/11thmeu)

--USMC--



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

---

PRESS RELEASE #04-025

Oct. 23, 2004

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AD DIWANIYAH, Iraq -- Marines and sailors from the 11th MEU and soldiers from the 451st Civil Affairs Battalion distributed more than 1,500 backpacks here today to children in five different schools.

"This is a good initiative that will foster friendly relations between the U.S. and the Iraqi people," said Hakima Atheem, principal of the Al-Nada kindergarten school. "It's a gift from America to our children -- the future of Iraq."

The children from the kindergarten school received backpacks with cartoon characters printed on them, while the older children in the four primary schools were given backpacks tailored for either boys or girls.

Each pack came filled with school supplies, such as notebooks, pencils, a ruler and other essential items.

"I think we've generated quite a bit of trust towards coalition forces, which will make it easier to accomplish other missions in Diwaniyah in the future," said Lt. Col. Ted A. Ruane, commanding officer, MEU Service Support Group 11, 11th MEU. "If we start with the young kids and teach them that Americans are good people and that we're here to help them, I think that will go a long way for both their country and ours."

The \$25,000 project was funded by the MEU's Commander's Emergency Response Program and was contracted out to three local contractors. Since the backpacks were received, the MSSG-11 commanding officer and members of the civil affairs team have visited more than eight schools and have handed out more than 2,500 backpacks.

\* For more information, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

**Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-026**

Oct. 23, 2004

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

AD DIWANIYAH, Iraq -- Marines and sailors from the 11th MEU and soldiers from 451st Civil Affairs Battalion augmenting the MEU, distributed more than 1,500 backpacks here today to children in five different schools.

As the 11th MEU team visited each school, they were greeted politely with excitement and courtesy by both faculty and students.

"This is a good initiative that will foster friendly relations between the U.S. and the Iraqi people," said Hakima Atheem, principal of the Al-Nada kindergarten school. "It's a gift from America to our children -- the future of Iraq."

The children from the kindergarten school received backpacks with cartoon characters printed on them, while the older children in the four primary schools were given backpacks tailored for either boys or girls.

"I like the backpack very much," said Saraab Kudair, a 13-year-old 6th grader from the Al-Nawsaim primary school for girls. "I'm very satisfied. Everything I need is in it."

Each pack came filled with school supplies, such as notebooks, pencils, a ruler and other essential items.

"I think that we've generated quite a bit of trust towards coalition forces, which will make it easier to accomplish other missions in Diwaniyah in the future," said Lt. Col. Ted A. Ruane, commanding officer, Marine Expeditionary Unit Service Support Group 11, 11th MEU. "If we start with the young kids and teach them that Americans are good people, that we're here to help them, I think that will go a long way for both their country and ours."

The \$25,000 which funded the project came from the Commander's Emergency Response Program and was contracted out to three local contractors. Since the backpacks were received, the MSSG-11 commanding officer and members of the civil affairs team have visited a total more than eight schools and handed out thousands of backpacks.

The 11th MEU assumed operational control of An Najaf and Qadisiyah Provinces July 31. Since then, the Marines have worked closely with the local government to improve the quality of life for the people in the area.

Based out of Camp Pendleton, Calif., the MEU is composed of 2,200 Marines and sailors. The MEU's mission is to assist Iraqi authorities and ISF in fostering security and stability for the citizens of the provinces.

\* **For more information**, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--



## 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

PRESS RELEASE #04-027

Oct. 29, 2004

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FOB DUKE** – More than 160 reconstruction projects worth \$6.5 million dollars are currently underway or have been completed since fighting ended in Najaf in August.

In an effort to stimulate the local economy and directly benefit Najaf's families, all projects are contracted to local Iraqi businessmen who hire their labor force from the neighborhood where each project is located.

Funding for all projects comes from the 11th MEU's Commander's Emergency Response Program -- funds allocated to the Department of Defense by the U.S. Congress.

Projects are addressing damage done during fighting in Najaf, specifically schools, which were used by the Muqtada Militia to launch attacks and store weapons caches. However, the majority of projects are focusing on the refurbishment of this Shia city's dilapidated infrastructure, a result of decades of neglect under Saddam Hussein's regime.

Projects are improving conditions in the following sectors: public education, essential services (water, electricity, parking, etc), governance, public health and the economy.

Subsequently, MEU Marines continue to make payments to innocent Iraqis who experienced property damage, injury or a death in the family during August's fighting. More than \$1.9 million has been paid to more than 2,660 Najafis thus far.

"We're out in town every day, working with local citizens and the government to respond to Najaf's immediate needs," said Col. Anthony M. Haslam, commanding officer, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. "These projects are not only improving the day-to-day lives of the Najafis, but they're providing jobs at every labor tier, from business owners to the contracted laborers."

\* For more information, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

PRESS RELEASE #04-028

Nov. 2, 2004

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FOB ECHO** – Eighty-nine projects worth more than \$3.2 million dollars are currently underway or have been completed in Al Qadisiyah province since August of this year.

In an effort to stimulate the local economy, which directly benefits Diwaniyah families, the majority of projects are contracted to local businessmen and local laborers in order to develop and keep the wealth in the area.

Funding for all projects comes from the 11th MEU's Commander's Emergency Response Program, which is allocated to the Department of Defense by the U.S. Congress.

Projects are aimed at repairing damage done last year during the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom and improving the quality of life for the people of Ad Diwaniyah. Many of the projects, however, are focusing on the restoring the city's run down infrastructure, a result of decades of neglect under Saddam Hussein's regime.

"There is some battle damage, but the majority are things that were put in 30 to 40 years ago are just plain worn out," said Army Maj. Ken Booth, officer in charge, Detachment 1, Company C, 451st Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to the 11th MEU.

Projects are improving conditions in the following sectors: public education, essential services (water, electricity, parking, etc), governance, public health, the economy and general quality of life.

"Our goals are to legitimize the government, improve the local infrastructure, improve the local economy and support the elections," Booth explained. "Every project we do we more or less try to fit in one of those categories."

"We want to improve the quality of life for the people of Ad Qadisiyah and An Najaf provinces," said Col. Anthony M. Haslam, commanding officer, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. "It's important to ensure essential services are available to the people here so they can lead comfortable, productive lives in a free society."

\* **For more information**, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office

Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

---

PRESS RELEASE #04-029

Nov. 12, 2004

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ASH SHAFIYAH, Iraq** – Marines, sailors and soldiers of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) conducted a Humanitarian Assistance Operation, which provided medical and dental treatment to more than 115 Iraqis here, Nov. 12.

The Medical/Dental Civilian Assistance Program, or MedCAP/DenCAP, was organized by Marine Expeditionary Unit Service Support Group 11, 11th MEU (SOC), with help from soldiers of Detachment 1, Company C, 451st Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to the MEU.

"Working with the local deputy minister of health, we tried to find some of the poorest areas in the province and identified a requirement in the village of Ash Shafiyah," said Lt. Col. Ted A. Ruane, commanding officer, MSSG-11, 11th MEU (SOC). "We were able to get supplies and many other things just came together at one time in order to make this mission happen."

After establishing security and organizing the site in a way that would allow the people to go through and be seen in a timely manner, team members processed a total of 464 people. 115 of whom received medical treatment, 25 received dental treatment and the rest went through the line to get food, water and gifts, which included soccer balls, miscellaneous toys, backpacks, school supplies and hygiene items.

"A lot of what we saw were general aches and pains, and the more routine medical issues we face such as ear infections, upper respiratory infections, pneumonia, diarrhea and the occasional surgical case," said Army Maj. Tad Gow, nurse, 601st Area Support Medical Company, augmenting the MEU. "Many people here have crossed eyes or cataracts but we were limited in the kinds of treatment we could give. There were a lot of patients who just needed information."

Medical and dental personnel gave hygiene and toothbrush classes, talked about its importance and how it could prevent diseases and generally allow them to maintain better health.

"(Iraqis) don't know too much about good hygiene," Gow said. "Basic hygiene information tends to go a long way with them as far as having a positive effect on their

health. Most of their problems are caused by their lack of information and general health knowledge."

According to Gow, the majority of patients attended were either children ages 1 to 5 or people older than 50.

"These are the kinds of operations I think we're here for," Gow continued. "Of course our primary mission is to serve soldiers, sailors and Marines in an emergency but anything we can do to show the Iraqis that we really do care, that we are compassionate and not just for our own people will go a long way."

One of the challenges faced during the operation was the low number of Iraqis who went to see the dentist, although many of them needed dental treatment.

"Most of the Iraqi's had teeth that were literally rotting in their mouths or so infected that they needed to come out," said Navy Lt. Brian Olsen, dentist, Health Services Detachment, MSSG-11, 11th MEU (SOC). "Because of Ramadan, they wouldn't let me pull their bad teeth out. If they bleed and swallow it, it would be considered breaking their fast."

According to Ruane, even with the challenges they faced, the operation was a textbook HAO.

"It was amazing, with all the training that we did during workups, this operation actually went down just like we'd rehearsed it back in Camp Pendleton, Calif.," Ruane said. "We set up the site fairly quickly, we were able to process the people quickly and we had the security element in place. It was well rehearsed and well run."

Ruane said the operation was a great opportunity for personnel of the unit to go out and support the local Iraqis. They got a sense of what they're doing in Iraq, that they are making a difference.

"I think we made a difference in their lives," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Juan L. Reyes, dental technician, Health Services Detachment, MSSG-11, 11th MEU (SOC). "That little bit of knowledge we gave them about how to brush their teeth and proper hygiene, if they use it, could give them a healthier life."

**\* For more information**, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--





## 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

**PRESS RELEASE #04-030**

Nov. 19, 2004

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AD DIWANIYAH, Iraq** – Marines, sailors and soldiers of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit along with Polish and Bulgarian doctors conducted a Humanitarian Assistance Operation, providing medical treatment to more than ??? Iraqis here, Nov. 19.

This is the second humanitarian assistance mission conducted by the 11th MEU in the area here. The previous HAO provided medical treatment to 115 Iraqis and dental treatment to 25 on Nov. 12.

The Medical Civilian Assistance Program, or MedCAP, was organized by Marine Expeditionary Unit Service Support Group 11, 11th MEU (SOC), with help from soldiers of Detachment 1, Company C, 451st Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to the MEU.

More than \_\_\_ Iraqis also received food, water and gifts, including miscellaneous toys, backpacks, school supplies and hygiene items.

Medical personnel gave hygiene classes, talked about its importance and how it could prevent diseases and generally allow them to maintain better health.

\* **For more information**, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--



## **11th Marine Expeditionary Unit**

(Special Operations Capable)

**Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-031**

Nov. 22, 2004

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** – Marines from the 11th MEU distributed more than \$1.1 million today in condolence and collateral damage repair payments to demonstrate goodwill to Iraqis caught in the crossfire during fighting in Najaf this August.

Payments began on Sept. 30 and have resulted in a total of \$4.7 million paid to more than 8,300 Najafis since then. Payments will continue as long as needed to meet each valid case.

Condolence payments, known as solatia, are being paid to express sympathy to those injured or who lost a family member during the fighting. Collateral damage repair payments are intended for Iraqis who experienced damage to their home, business or other property.

Subsequently, MEU Marines continue to spend millions of dollars to contract local Iraqi businessmen and workers to repair public infrastructure damaged during the fighting.

"We're building trust with the locals by making these payments," said Col. Anthony M. Haslam, commanding officer, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. "Since fighting ended in August, Najaf has made tremendous progress. There is little doubt that these payments have helped in that process."

\* **For more information**, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

---

PRESS RELEASE #04-032

Nov. 23, 2004

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AN NAJAF, Iraq** – A ground breaking ceremony here today marked the beginning of construction on a new \$1.8 million barracks facility for the 405th Battalion, 50th Iraqi National Guard Brigade.

The facility, the first of its kind for Najaf's national guardsmen, demonstrates the partnership between Multi-National Forces and the Iraqi Government to support a capable Iraqi security force. Multinational Security Transition Command- Iraq is funding the project.

National guardsmen are currently billeted at the Kufa University. One of the main reasons for completing the barracks sooner is so the university can be turned back over to the Ministry of Education and opened back up for classes. It will take a local contractor approximately three months to complete the facility.

Distinguished guests included Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander of the MNSTC-I; Adnan al-Zurufi, governor of Najaf; General Uthman Ali Farhood, commander of the 50th ING Brigade; and Col. Aqeel Khaleel Borhan, commander of the 405th ING Battalion.

\* **For more information**, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

**Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq**

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-033**

Nov. 27 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE, Iraq** – Marines and sailors of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted a humanitarian assistance operation today in Musa al Umran as Sardun, a small village on the outskirts of Najaf.

11th MEU forces provided nearly 100 Iraqis medical and dental treatment, food, water, and soccer balls. Navy Seabees assisted local contractors in laying a foundation for the village's new primary school and constructed an animal corral for the village.

The operation was organized by Marine Expeditionary Unit Service Support Group 11, 11th MEU (SOC).

\* **For more information**, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office

Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

**PRESS RELEASE #04-034**

Nov. 30, 2004

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** –Approximately three months after decisive combat operations ended in Najaf, the 11th MEU commander declared today that Iraqi security forces have formally assumed local control of An Najaf province.

Since fighting ended Aug. 28, no major incidents have occurred despite reduced MEU security operations in the city and the Ramadan holiday.

With little to no MEU oversight, Najaf's ISF have demonstrated their ability to respond and take control of threats to the province's stability, as well as plan, direct and conduct limited security operations. Iraqi police and national guardsmen have conducted several successful raids using intelligence compiled on their own, netting several insurgents and criminals. Iraqi border enforcement officials continue to effectively work the borders, stopping several illegal crossings and narcotics trafficking.

While MEU forces will continue to train and equip ISF and conduct a reduced number of security patrols in the city, ISF have achieved and demonstrated the capacity to maintain security in their province.

"We've been working hard with Najaf's governor and security forces to ensure they have the tools and talents needed to stabilize this city," said Col. Anthony M. Haslam, commanding officer, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. "In the past three months, they have demonstrated their ability to keep this province and its citizens safe and secure."

\* **For more information**, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-35**

Nov. 30, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE** -- The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit relinquished operational control of Al Qadisiyah province to the Polish-led Multi-National Division Central South (MND-CS) during a ceremony here today.

The move came as part of a realignment of forces in southern Iraq. MEU Marines will replace MND-CS forces in Karbala province next month.

While in Al Qadisiyah province, MEU Marines conducted limited combat operations; trained, equipped and mentored leadership in the 404th Iraqi National Guard Battalion and police force; and conducted numerous civil military operations in their area of responsibility south of Baghdad.

During their four-month stay, 11th MEU units were responsible for 89 reconstruction and refurbishment projects worth more than \$3.2 million dollars. Projects improved conditions in the following sectors: public education, essential services (water, electricity, parking, etc), governance, public health, the economy and general quality of life. MEU Marines also conducted three humanitarian assistance operations.

MEU Marines assumed control of the province and its major city, Ad Diwaniyah, on July 31, 2004.

\* **For more information**, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--



# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office  
Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

---

PRESS RELEASE #04-036

Dec. 17, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOB DUKE, Iraq** – Marines and sailors of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted a humanitarian assistance operation today in Al Hyderia, a small village north of Najaf city.

More than 600 residents attended the HAO, and 11th MEU forces provided 130 Iraqis medical and dental treatment. In addition, MEU forces passed out food, water, 430 thick blankets, and more than a thousand toys and books.

The operation was organized by Marine Expeditionary Unit Service Support Group 11, 11th MEU (SOC).

\* **For more information**, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--



## 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office

Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

PRESS RELEASE #04-37

Dec. 17, 2004

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FOB DUKE** -- Navy Seabees attached to the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit in Najaf completed their part in a major road expansion project in Kufa today. The work was done at the request of Najaf Province's governor, Adnan al-Zurufi, as part of a larger government road expansion project.

The project consisted of widening 3 km of a major thoroughfare between Najaf and Kufa, turning the two lane road into a four lane road. Seabees leveled and graded the ground, laid a rock and sand mixture as the road's sub-base, and then rolled and compacted the sub-base. A local contractor will be hired to asphalt the additional two lanes.

The month-long project serves as part of an overall government transportation plan, which includes three distinct phases of road improvements that will provide a long-term solution to automobile traffic between the two cities.

"The MEU has funded \$10 million in reconstruction projects since fighting ended in August, but all this work has been or is being done by Iraqi contractors and workers," said Col. Anthony M. Haslam, 11th MEU commander. "This project afforded us the opportunity to show the locals we're committed to helping, and that we're not afraid to break a sweat in doing so."

The Seabees are from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 7.

\* For more information, contact Capt. Carrie C. Batson at [batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil](mailto:batsoncc@11meu.usmc.mil)

--USMC--





# 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

(Special Operations Capable)

Public Affairs Office

Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq

---

**PRESS RELEASE #04-38**

Dec. 21, 2004

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CAMP LIMA, Iraq** -- The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit assumed operational control of Karbala province from the Polish-led Multi-National Division Central South (MND-CS) during a ceremony here today.

The move came as part of a realignment of forces in southern Iraq. MEU Marines relinquished responsibility of Al Qadisiyah province last month to MND-CS forces.

While in Karbala province, MEU Marines will conduct security patrols; train, equip and build leadership in the 401th Iraqi National Guard Battalion and police force; and conduct civil military operations in their area of responsibility southwest of Baghdad.

MEU forces will work on civil affairs projects to improve conditions in the following sectors: public education, essential services (water, electricity, parking, etc), governance, public health, the economy and general quality of life.

MEU Marines assumed control of the An Najaf and Al Qadisiyah provinces on July 31, 2004 and relinquished control of Al Qadisiyah province to MND-CS forces on Nov. 30.

**\* For more information**, contact Gunnery Sgt. Chago Zapata at [zapatas@11meudf.usmc.mil](mailto:zapatas@11meudf.usmc.mil)

--USMC--



**Item 2**

**Family  
Newsletter  
PAO**

# Pacific Pride

For the Families and Friends of Marines and Sailors of the 11th MEU Command Element



## 11th MEU departs early to re-inforce troops in Iraq

Story by Cpl. Matthew S. Richards

**ABOARD THE USS BELLEAU WOOD**—The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) departed Thursday from 32nd Street Naval Station San Diego nearly a month earlier than the scheduled deployment in response to a request from U.S. Central Command for more forces in Iraq.

Before this request, the MEU was scheduled to conduct a typical MEU deployment, serving as a crisis response unit in the U.S. Central and Pacific Commands areas of operation—a mission for which MEUs are renowned. Now that 11th MEU Marines know they are headed for Iraq in support of stability and security operations, they have no doubt they are ready for the task.

"The Marines and sailors of the MEU are really positive. More than 50 percent of them are returning varsity so they've been there before," said Col. A.M. Haslam, commanding officer, 11th MEU.

The veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom say they feel more secure going back this second time.

"We're definitely more confident now than before," said Pfc. Cody D. Finch, a mortarman with Weapons Platoon,

Company C, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. "Everyone's already used to it and knows what they're expected to do."

Although the MEU departed early, that didn't prevent them from finishing their normal training period. In the shortened cycle—4 1/2 months vice 6 months—the MEU obtained their SOC qualification, a feat that shows their readiness and confidence.

Haslam feels this adaptation will help them in the myriad of possible missions they could face.

What's great about the MEU (SOC) cycle is that we are trained to rapidly plan and execute missions, and to work in a fluid environment where

*See Depart, page 2*

## From the Commanding Officer



Dear 11th MEU families and friends,

Now that the 11th MEU is underway and headed to our first stop in Hawaii, we can look back on May 27 as a landmark day. Deploying nearly a month early due to a request for additional forces

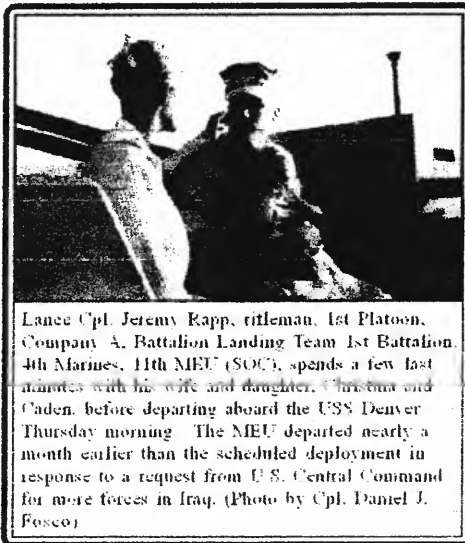
in Iraq from the U.S. Central Command, Marines and Sailors of the MEU successfully completed all preparations—both personal and work related—in time for this new departure date. We also managed to get through the hardest part of leaving—saying goodbye to loved ones and friends. Though this was a sad time, it also was exciting as the journey we have been intensely training for during these past couple months has finally begun.

There are many unique things about this deployment. First, we know where we're going. Since the MEU's typical mission is to respond to any crisis overseas that the President may direct, we usually have no idea where we will be going or what mission we will be called upon to conduct. With this deployment, we know that we will be in Iraq and will be conducting security and stability operations.

Second, we're unsure about the duration of the deployment. While a MEU's deployment is normally six months, we don't know how long we'll be told to stay in Iraq. My guidance to families and friends is to plan for a longer than normal deployment. This is the best mindset to have. If we do come back in six months, then you'll be pleasantly surprised. And if we don't, then you'll be mentally prepared for that situation.

Third, we've brought additional equipment with us. We've been reinforced with additional Humvees and 7-ton trucks. All of these vehicles, in addition to the ones we've always had, are now outfitted with armor. We didn't bring our CH-53E Super Stallion, UH-1N Huey and AH-1W Cobra helicopters aboard ship, but will instead pick up

*See Command, page 2*



Lance Cpl. Jeremy Kapp, titleman, 1st Platoon, Company A, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, 11th MEU (SOC), spends a few last minutes with his wife and daughter, Charisma and Caden, before departing aboard the USS Denver Thursday morning. The MEU departed nearly a month earlier than the scheduled deployment in response to a request from U.S. Central Command for more forces in Iraq. (Photo by Cpl. Daniel J. Fosco)

## Pacific Pride

*Depart, con't. from page 1*

things are constantly changing. It's important to be able to adapt and quickly change your plan," Haslam said. "While the details of our mission are currently being refined, we'll be ready to go. We'll make it happen."

The MEU began their scheduled training in January, practicing for a normal deployment to the Western Pacific and Middle East regions with the Belleau Wood Expeditionary Strike Group. Now with a known mission and location, the MEU tailored their equipment to meet new needs.

The MEU has brought enough High Mobility Multi-wheeled Vehicles and Motor Transportation Vehicle Replacement 7-ton trucks to support the BLT on the ground. All these vehicles have been outfitted with extra armor as well.

But even with all the preparations and confidence of the individual Marines, that doesn't stop the loved ones left behind from worrying.

"I don't want him to go. I'm going to pray for him every moment," said Vivian Lee, 23-year-old fiancée of a departing BLT Marine. "But I know what he has to go do."

The Marines of the 11th MEU are confident in their experience and training to get the job done.

"The deployment will be easier this time because you know from experience what you and everyone around you can do," Finch said with a calm assuredness.



## Operations Security Letter

Dear 11th MEU families and friends,

Now that we are deployed, I'd like to take a moment to talk about some issues that are very important to the 11th MEU family — communications during deployment, operational security, and the role we all play in helping Marines and Sailors stay safe during our time away from home.

In such an advanced information age, communications with family members in the United States has greatly improved from deployments in the past. Not only do we have postal mail, but members of the 11th MEU are fortunate enough to also have e-mail and sailor phones on ship.

While we expect to have these services while on ship, please understand that there will be times when e-mail and the phones will not be available. Once we go ashore, we should also have access to e-mail, though there will be times when it won't work, not to mention that it will take some time to get e-mail hooked up once we arrive in country. There are a couple of reasons why e-mail won't work, technical difficulties or times when we must shut-off these services during an exercise to practice operational security. Because of this, I request that you do not become worried if several days go by and you have not received a call or an e-mail from your Marine or Sailor.

*Command, con't. from page 1*

these aircraft in Iraq. So, our flight deck is a little more spacious than normal, but the ship's hangar deck is a little more crowded with all the extra vehicles.

Now that we're underway, we have begun to make the ship our new home. I have walked around ship and have seen pictures and mementos from home tucked here and there in work and living spaces. While we can't replace the comforts that come with being with our families, your Marines and Sailors remain in good spirits and are keeping busy. One of my priorities is to get the Marines acclimated to warmer weather and the weight of the gear that will be worn while in Iraq. With that in mind, Marines will be working out on the flight deck each day, preparing for the high temperatures we'll find in Iraq. Depending on their interests, Marines and Sailors are also working out in the gym, attending church services, using the ship's library and soon, taking military education classes online. We will continue to do our best to provide as many activities as possible during the transit aboard ship.

By the time this newsletter makes it to your mailbox, we will have stopped in Hawaii to conduct what we call sustainment training, or refresher training. Making the most of Hawaii's weapon ranges and training facilities, our goal is to keep the skills of your Marine or Sailor sharp. Marines and Sailors were also afforded two days of liberty to enjoy the beautiful island of Oahu.

I truly hope everything on the home front is going well and want to remind you that the Key Volunteer Network is there to help and support you during this deployment. They have volunteered and are truly willing and able to assist you in many ways. The Key Volunteer list can be found on page 4 of this newsletter.

We have been doing our best to keep the MEU website ([www.11meu.usmc.mil](http://www.11meu.usmc.mil) or [www.usmc.mil/11thmeu](http://www.usmc.mil/11thmeu) — depending on your server) or the telephone hotline for those who don't have Internet access (1-866-676-0662 or 760-725-0471) updated with the most recent information. Please take advantage of these information tools to get the most recent information on what your Marine or Sailor is doing. Also, now is a very good time to drop letters and care packages in the mail for your Marine or Sailor. Mailing addresses for CE Marines on each of the three ships are included on page 5. Communication with loved ones back home helps make the days go by a little faster, so please keep in touch. Please read pages 2 and 5 for information about what can/can't be said on e-mail and over the phone.

Thank you for the support you continually have provided to your Marine or Sailor. It means a lot.

Semper Paratus

A.M. Haslam  
Col. USMC

## *Pacific Pride*

### FAMILY ASSISTANCE COUNSELING

#### **Message:**

Pre-paid counseling services are being made available to families to support them in coping with the stress of increased deployments related to Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

1. Access is available through MCCS OneSource, a DoD sponsored 1-800 telephone service answered 24/7 by a masters-degree level consultant, or through installation designated family support staff.
2. Service members and their families will be provided the name and telephone number of a licensed counselor in their local community who will provide up to five pre-paid face-to-face counseling sessions per issue within a given year regarding situational, non-medical issues such as readjustment to family and marital life, communication, and parent-child issues.

#### **Questions:**

##### **1. What if the person receiving face-to-face counseling needs more sessions?**

If more sessions on the same issue are needed, the provider will give the person a list of other community resources, such as installation resources that do not charge a fee, such as a family support center or chaplain, TRICARE, or to a provider who may charge a fee. If more sessions are needed for a different issue that has arisen, five more pre-paid sessions will be available.

##### **2. Will the counseling be confidential?**

Both telephonic consultation and face-to-face counseling will be confidential in accordance with current Service guidelines. Those requesting information or counseling will be informed of the guideline before they begin discussion.

##### **3. Can a family member obtain face-to-face sessions without the sponsor's knowledge?**

The legal family member of a service member or guardian of a service member's dependents can obtain face-to-face sessions without the sponsor's knowledge.

For individuals to access, call MCCS One Source  
(800) 869-0278

En Espanol (888) 732-9020  
TDD callers dial (800) 346-9188



#### ***Get answers to any question — for FREE!***

**MCCS ONE SOURCE:** Provides assistance and information 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, by calling the following numbers or accessing the website listed. Degreed, credentialed consultants and specialized research teams are available to answer questions pertaining to everyday issues, financial matters, education and schooling, health and wellness, parenting and child care, relationships, midlife and retirement, and legal issues. Confidentiality is assured. This service has personnel available who can translate over 140 languages; is TTY/TTD accessible; and is on-line accessible for low vision users needing assistive technologies. It is available for Marine active duty service members, Marine reserve service members, family members, and Navy personnel attached to Marine units.

A Marine and family members will have several ways to access services. First, they will be able to do self-help online at [www.mccsonesource.com](http://www.mccsonesource.com). User ID is "marines" and password is "semperfi". If the caller needs more information, or they just want to talk to a person, they will be able to call 1- (800) 433-6868 to speak to a consultant. The consultant is one of 175 individuals who have Masters degrees in Social Work or comparable degrees, certified professionals supported by 50 B.S./B.A. level, researchers who will gather information and respond to queries. The consultant can also provide additional information on the caller's issues, which can include more literature or even an audiotape.

Toll-free CONUS: 1-800-433-6868  
Toll-free OCONUS: 96-001-800-237-42374  
Collect Call OCONUS: 484-530-5908  
TTY/TDD: 1-800-346-9188  
En espanol: 1-888-346-9188  
Online at [www.mccsonesource.com](http://www.mccsonesource.com)  
User ID: Marines  
Password: Semperfi

## Pacific Pride

### MCCS Information

**Jun 5 - Mongoose Bike Stunt Show** - In front of All Seasons Store (Mainside Center). Show times 10am, Noon, 2 p.m. See the world's most talented free style athletes. 760-725-4189

**All New Ribs & Chicken Lunch Special** - All-You Can-Eat Ribs & Chicken lunch buffet every Monday at the South Mesa Club. The menu includes Beef Ribs barbequed in a Special Sauce, Freshly Battered Chicken, Corn on the Cob, Dirty Rice, Baked Beans with Bacon, Corn Bread and Fresh Baked Apple Cobbler. The price is only \$6.50/ \$5.20 with club card. Info 725-2231.

#### SERVICES

**All New Movies Now Two Day Rentals** - Take two! All new release movie rentals at The Zone are now two-day rentals. Also, if you rent a new release on Friday and return it by noon on Saturday you get a \$1 credit. Visit your nearest Zone location today.

**Free Prescription Glasses!** For a limited time, purchase any frames priced \$100 or more, fitted with lifestyle lenses and receive a second pair of prescription glasses absolutely free! The Family Vision Center's two Camp Pendleton locations offer a huge selection of reasonably priced name brand frames and contacts. Eye exams are available on site (Tricare Prime accepted). Call for an appointment today; Mainside Center (760) 385-4030, Pacific Plaza (760) 763-1757.

#### SEMPER FIT

**Summer Bowling Camp at Devil Dog Lanes** - Ages 6-17years. 9am - 4pm. June 21-24, July 26-29, August 16-19. \$80 per session. Call 725-8929 for more information.

**Trail Rides** - The base stables offer trail rides, pony rides, breakfast and dinner rides. Call the stables at 725-5094 for more information.

**MARINE & FAMILY SERVICES** - The following Youth Centers offer weekday fun for kids ages 11-18 from 2-6pm: De Luz Youth Center 725-5608, Wire Mountain Youth Center 725-2102 and San Onofre Youth Center (949) 498-9166.

**Base Libraries offer Pre-School Story Time** - 9:30am Tuesdays at the South Mesa Library, Wednesdays at Seaside Square Library and Thursdays at Patrick J. Carney Library. For more information call 725-5669.

**The Relocation Office offers Camp Pendleton information** that includes a Welcome Aboard package filled with resources available for married and single service members. The Relocation Office is located in Bldg. 13150, room 334. Call (800) 253-1624 or 725-3802.

### What is the Key Volunteer Network?

Key Volunteers provide a communication, referral and support network to 11th MEU families. Appointed and directed by the MEU commander, the volunteers provide command information, problem solving assistance and outreach. By keeping MEU families better informed, establishing a sense of community, and offering resource options in times of need, the volunteers enable the MEU to achieve a higher state of unit readiness.

11th MEU KVN Advisor -- Lynn Haslam (909) 491-0185 Cell: (760) 214-8027

11th MEU KVN Coordinator -- Carolyn Zyla (909) 303-9026 Cell: (909) 719-4538

#### Key Volunteers:

<u>Jeannene Blocker</u>	760-385-0314
Email:	
<u>Bernadette Jarosz</u>	760-806-3368
Email:	
<u>Melissa Johnston</u>	760-385-4826
Email:	
<u>Sherry Metover</u>	760-724-5988
Email:	
<u>Robin Sile</u>	760-430-2744
<u>Stacy Smith</u>	760-798-2570
Email:	
<u>Kirsten Thompson</u>	909-461-0016
Email:	

#### Emergency contact if Carolyn is unavailable

<u>Jessica Zapata</u>	760-967-7345
Email:	cell 760-672-3656
<u>Marley Nelms</u>	760-476-9062
Email:	
<u>Jacque Weede</u>	760-630-0362
Email:	
<u>Stephanie Butler</u>	760-745-7024
Email:	
<u>Angie Evans</u>	949-498-2160
Email:	
<u>Holly Carver</u>	760-430-4179
Email:	
<u>Kelly Ellebracht</u>	760-430-8450
Email:	
<u>Sharon Bell</u>	949-366-6301
Email:	
<u>Georgeanna Wiltse</u>	760-639-4110
Email:	

## Pacific Pride

*OpSec, con't. from page 2*

While services like e-mail and sailor phones allow for instant communication, we must be careful not to pass sensitive information when talking to one another. If I discuss certain information in my letters to you, or if you see information on the website, know that it has been approved for public release by our higher headquarters. Until higher headquarters gives us authority to discuss certain information, Marines of the MEU will not be allowed to discuss the following subject matter with families or friends:

- \* Our operations or missions — current, future, or potential
- \* Location of ships or troops ashore — current, future, or potential
- \* Port visits of the 11th MEU outside of the U.S. — current, future, or potential
- \* Troop movements of 11th MEU personnel
- \* Dates and times concerning the above information
- \* Any other information that may seem sensitive

Higher headquarters will monitor telephone and e-mail traffic sent from ship and ashore, so please make ensure sensitive information is not being passed. We do not want any of our Marines and Sailors to get in trouble for discussing such information.

In order for Marines and Sailors to continue to have these services available, it is imperative that everyone — Marines, Sailors, family and friends — abide by the above guidelines during correspondence. Some MEUs in the past have had problems with operational security violations and thus have had e-mail and sailor phone privileges turned off at times. I hope that we can avoid this from happening.

Also, please be aware of the information that's passed during conversations with friends, acquaintances, neighbors, etc. It is always important to practice good operational security when it comes to the welfare of our Marines and Sailors.

If you have any questions during the deployment, I encourage you to use the Key Volunteer Network. This is an excellent means to keep updated with information concerning the MEU. Also, visit the 11th MEU website at [www.11meu.usmc.mil](http://www.11meu.usmc.mil) for the latest information. For those of you without Internet access, call the 11th MEU telephone hotline at (700) 725-0471 or toll-free at 1-(866) 676-0662. These will be updated as much as possible during deployment to keep friends and family informed of the MEU's activities.

Thank you for your continued support of the 11th MEU family.

Semper Paratus

A.M. Haslam  
Col USMC

## Mail Call

Automatic sortation equipment used by the United States Postal Service makes it imperative that Marines utilize their address exactly as it is listed (to include the UIC and nine digit zip code). Deviation from this address format may result in addresses being unreadable to scanners, resulting in mail delivery delays. The following information will not be shown in, or become part of the mailing address:

- (1) Ship's Name
- (2) Ship's Address
- (3) Geographical Location
- (4) Task Force Designator

### Customs:

Ensure personnel are aware of customs regulations to and from the area of deployment. All parcels sent to, from, or between FPO/APO addresses must bear the proper customs form. All mail weighing 16 ounces or more that bear postage must be presented to a postal clerk at a post office for mailing. A maximum of \$200.00 per day per addressee for personal items and \$100.00 per day per addressee for gifts, may be mailed "Duty Free."

Below are the correct mailing addresses for each unit/ship:

### USS Belleau Wood

GRADE NAME USMC  
11TH MEU (SECTION)  
UIC 42520  
FPO AP 96610-2520

GRADE NAME USMC  
1ST FORCE RECON (SECTION)  
UIC 42552  
FPO AP 96610-2552

### USS Denver

GRADE NAME USMC  
11TH MEU (SECTION)  
UIC 42524  
FPO AP 96610-2524

### USS Comstock

GRADE NAME USMC  
11TH MEU (SECTION)  
UIC 42522  
FPO AP 96610-2522

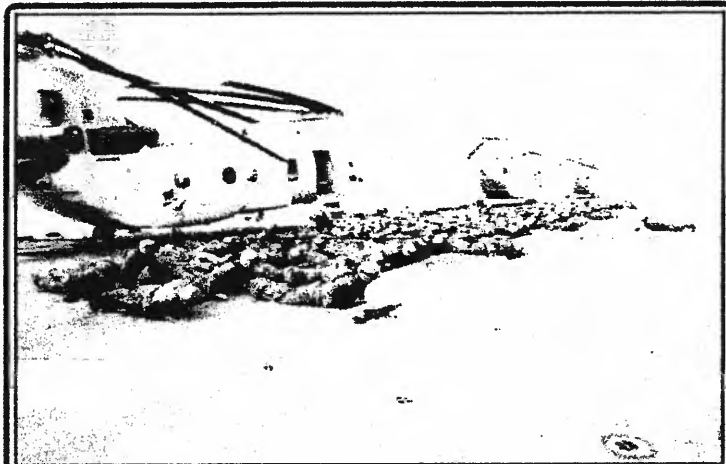


# Pacific Pride

For the Families and Friends of Marines and Sailors of the 11th MEU Command Element



## Photos of ship life aboard the USS Belleau Wood



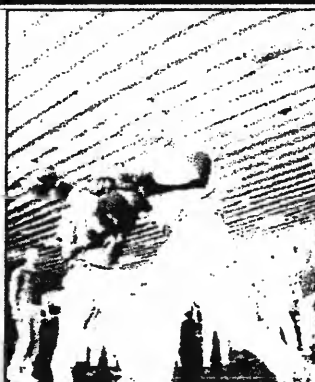
**Flight deck PT**

Photo by Sgt. Daniel J. Foster

ABOARD THE USS BELLEAU WOOD Marines with Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), prepare to do Marine Corps push-ups alongside CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters on the flight deck here, June 23. The flight deck is open for physical training mostly during the morning hours, which is when many units take advantage of the open flight deck to train in full combat gear.

### Marine Corps Martial Arts Program

Photos by Cpl. Daniel J. Foster



ABOARD THE USS BELLEAU WOOD More than 20 Command Element Marines went through four hours of training every morning for two weeks to complete the required training syllabus to receive their gray belt.

### From the Commanding Officer



Dear 11th MEU families and friends,

Greetings from somewhere in the middle of the ocean! We passed through the famous Straits of Malacca a couple of days ago, sailing in-between Singapore and the many islands constituting Indonesia. It won't be long until we sail out of the U.S. Pacific Command area of operations and enter into the U.S. Central Command area of operations. The Marines and Sailors of the MEU are all eagerly awaiting this since we will then be exempt from state and federal taxes!

Sailing west towards Iraq also means warmer, more humid weather. When the seas and winds allow, Command Element Marines are out on the flight deck, running in their combat gear, getting acclimated to the heat and the weight of their equipment. CE Marines are also in the gym lifting weights, in the hangar bay learning the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP), or on the flight deck conducting weapons shoots. Soon the CE will go on a training hike. Yes, as you can imagine, we will be doing numerous laps around the flight deck to get acclimated to the warmer weather and the weight of our gear. We will definitely be ready when we enter Iraq.

Yesterday we enjoyed what the Navy calls a "steel beach," or a barbeque on the flight deck. Even though our plans to have the event outside were foiled by 50-knot winds, we didn't let that hamper the fun. Instead, we just moved the event onto the ship's mess deck and the officer's wardroom. In addition to a meal of barbeque ribs and chicken, hamburgers and hotdogs, and baked beans and corn on the cob, Marines and Sailors were able to participate in karaoke. Later in the day, we were all served pizza. It was definitely the best day's worth of food since we left Hawaii.

See *Command*, page 2

## Pacific Pride

### Command, con't. from page 1

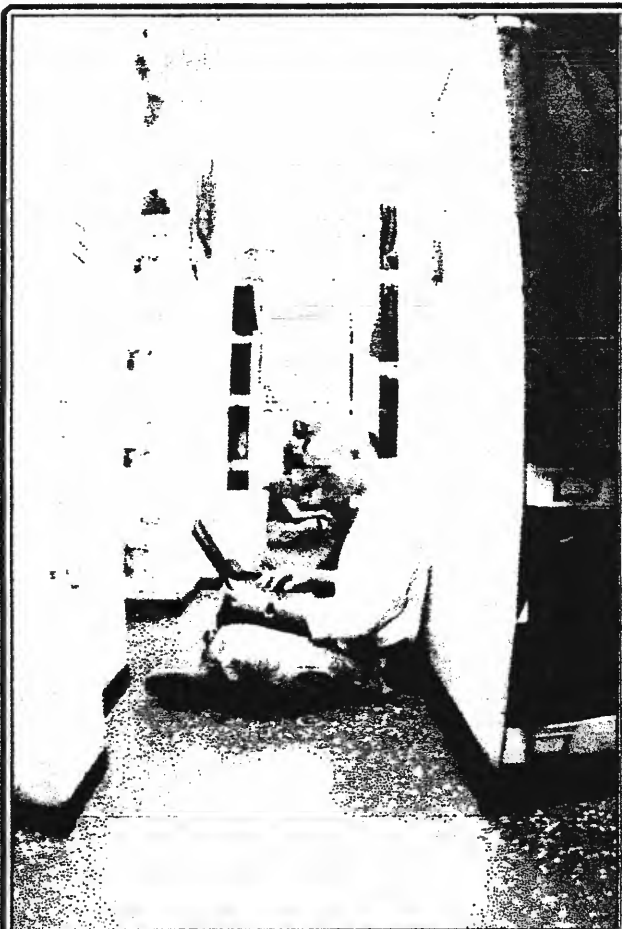
Even though we still have quite a distance to sail before entering the Arabian Gulf, our time aboard ship seems to be flying by very quickly. There is a lot of planning that is currently underway in regard to the offload from ship and our mission in Iraq. We'll be sure to keep you updated.

If you have any questions during the deployment, I encourage you to use the Key Volunteer Network. This is an excellent means to keep updated with information concerning the MEU. Also, visit the 11th MEU website at [www.11meu.usmc.mil](http://www.11meu.usmc.mil) for the latest information. For those of you without Internet access, call the 11th MEU telephone hotline at (760) 725-0471 or toll-free at 1-(866) 676-0662. These will be updated as much as possible during deployment to keep friends and family informed of the MEU's activities.

Thank you for your continued support of the 11th MEU family.

Semper Fi,

A.M. Haslam  
Col USMC



### Marines make a new home in troop berthing

Photo by: Cpl. Daniel J. Fosse

ABOARD THE USS BELLEAU WOOD — Lance Cpl. Billy J. Clark, flight equipment operator with Combat Cargo, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), passes the time in troop berthing by watching a movie on his personal laptop computer here, June 14.

"Marines have to get used to living in close quarters with very little personal space," the Savannah, Ga., native said. "CDs, books and DVDs are a must have for any Marine living down here."



### Steel Beach moves to the messdeck

Photo by: Cpl. Daniel J. Fosse

ABOARD THE USS BELLEAU WOOD — Plc. Victor Cuevas, warehouse clerk, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), spins records during the Navy's "Steel Beach" barbecue party here, June 28.

Five knot winds forced plans to have the event outside. Instead, the event was moved to the ship's mess deck, beneath the mess and the officer's wardroom. Along with a meal of barbecue ribs, chicken, hamburgers, hotdogs, baked beans and corn on the cob, Marines and sailors were able to participate in karaoke.



## Pacific Pride

Several free day and overnight camp opportunities for military children, care packages for deployed, books for deployed servicemembers, other freebies ...

### FREE CAMP FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

Give the kids of our deployed active military families an opportunity. For the summer of 2004, our goal is to send kids from deployed active military families to a summer camp. We will provide scholarships for kids to attend up to a week stay at a summer camp of their choice; Church Camp, Camp Fire, Boys & Girls Club, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.

A summer camp can be a "turning point" in a kid's life. We want to create and allow that opportunity to happen. Our purpose is to provide and God will direct the rest.

When duty calls, someone is left behind, perhaps a spouse and/or a kid. Children are our most precious gifts. We can offer some comfort to our active military parents through our camp scholarship program. A summer camp experience can have an incredible positive influence on a kid's life. It can lead to a life-changing experience and we want to offer the opportunity to our country's deployed active military families who sacrifice so much.

#### Qualifications:

Up to 17 years old

Two references

Military family economies challenged

Child must have a desire to attend a camp

A stressful military family situation (parent in the war, parent terminally ill, parent lost job, etc.)

Personal interview with child & parent or guardian (phone or in person interviews)

Short essay from child and/or parent expressing desire for attending camp.

Register a kid from a deployed active military family

Contact us and we will e-mail you the necessary forms to complete for a scholarship process. [maradah12000@es.com](mailto:maradah12000@es.com)

Website:

### OPERATION PURPLE

Organization that is sponsoring free camp (some or all are day camps) for military children. It is called OPERATION PURPLE, and is thru National Military Families Association ... There are located in numerous locations around the country ...

News articles regarding Operation Purple and their contributors:

and

### Seaworld & Busch Gardens

For those servicemembers who didn't get to take advantage of free admission to Seaworld and Busch gardens last year due to participation in OIF... They have extended things...

### Mood of the topic.

#### Operation Gratitude

AT&T has become the first corporate sponsor of Operation Gratitude by contributing 10,000 AT&T pre-paid phone cards. "I am extremely grateful for AT&T's generosity," said Carolyn Blashek, the founder of Operation Gratitude. "Phone cards are the item most requested by our brave men and women in the military overseas, and AT&T's donation will allow many of them to stay in touch with their loved ones." To have a care package sent to someone overseas, please go to the following website:

### YMCA Camp opportunities for military children

Most of the summer camp programs in your respective areas (mainly YMCA) are gearing up for summer camp registrations. Each and every one of these chapters have scholarships available for children to go to camp, especially for military children who may be feeling the stresses associated with their parent involved with the ongoing war. While each and every request can't won't be provided for, a good majority are thru donations of corporations and generous individuals. Some of these chapters require a "synopsis" of why you think your child may be deserving or could benefit from the summer camp experience, others don't.

Here is a link to the country's YMCA summer camp listings.

..... This isn't charity, it is the community wanting to give something to the children... And if you have checked the cost of send just one child to summer camp for a week, you already know just how expensive these trips can be, and can be out of the reach of some military families. Once you have located a camp that you would like your child to attend, email them a "scholarship request for military child" with your child's information. In these cases, you are responsible for getting your child to the departure point of the camp buses so use caution in picking a camp far from your base.

### Books for Soldiers

They have a website ( ) and basically it is for any branch of service, people who want books sent to their deployed units. Mostly who post are commanders or chaplains. Occasionally you will see guys posting looking for a specific book ... or a commander/chaplain who is worried about their servicemember who is getting no mail. They have the ability to send books anonymously. You send the books to them, and the organization will forward them, if there are security concerns. This group has been written about in the news.

### Operation Childcare

Major child care providers in the country are offering free child care for the children of any returning troops.

## Pacific Pride

### My Little Military Mailbox

Sends free gift package to military children thru donations.  
Go to: [www.military.com/deployment](http://www.military.com/deployment) and then  
go to "SIGN YOUR CHILD UP HERE". Site sponsored by  
military wives.

### Boys & Girls Clubs open doors for military children

Children of all military service members, active duty and reserve components, are welcome through the doors of Boys & Girls Clubs of America everywhere, even if they do not live on or near a military installation. Boys & Girls Clubs of America national president Roxanne Spilletts has urged all clubs to "open their doors" to support the children of military families, particularly those families in which the service member is deployed.

"We have affiliated programs with all military services in 378 youth centers on military bases worldwide," she said.

This outreach particularly targets the children of Army and Air National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve personnel in communities that may not be near a military installation and CYS youth programs on post.

Some local Boys & Girls Clubs will offer free memberships to military children, particularly targeting youth near a military installation. Clubs will adjust their programs to assist military children in dealing with family separations, relocations, and the possibility of an armed conflict involving a parent.

To locate the nearest local Boys & Girls Club, call 1-800-854-CLUB or log on to their Website. For more on deployment and family support programs, see: [www.military.com/deployment](http://www.military.com/deployment)

### Project Homefront

Home Depot Volunteers helping Military Families

### Operation AC

Supported by Many Corporate Sponsors a non-profit Delaware company operating on donations only, sends 110v single phase ice machines to our troops in Iraq as well as various basic items the soldiers request and desperately need.

"It is my hope that we make their existence in Iraq during their deployment as safe and as easy on them as possible given the job they are there to do. Rested Soldiers are more alert and able to perform their duty SAFELY!"

Frankie Mayo - Operation AC



### What is the Key Volunteer Network?

Key Volunteers provide a communication, referral and support network to 11th MEU families. Appointed and directed by the MEU commander, the volunteers provide command information, problem solving assistance and outreach. By keeping MEU families better informed, establishing a sense of community, and offering resource options in times of need, the volunteers enable the MEU to achieve a higher state of unit readiness.

11th MEU KVN Advisor -- Lynn Haslam (909) 491-0185 Cell: (760) 214-8027

11th MEU KVN Coordinator -- Carolyn Zyla (909) 303-9026 Cell: (909) 719-4538

#### Key Volunteers:

Jeannene Blocker 760-385-0314  
Email:  
Bernadette Jarosz 760-806-3368  
Email:  
Melissa Johnston 760-385-4826  
Email:  
Sherry Metoyer 760-724-5988  
Email:  
Robin Sile 760-430-2744  
Stacy Smith 760-798-2570  
Email:  
Kirsten Thompson 909-461-0016  
Email:

#### Emergency contact if Carolyn is unavailable

Jessica Zapata 760-967-7345  
Email: cell 760-672-3656  
Marley Nelms 760-476-9062  
Email:  
Jacque Weede 760-630-0362  
Email:  
Stephanie Butler 760-745-7024  
Email:  
Angie Evans 949-498-2160  
Email:  
Holly Carver 760-430-4179  
Email:  
Kelly Ellebracht 760-430-8450  
Email:  
Sharon Bell 949-366-6301  
Email:  
Georgeanna Wiltse 760-639-4110  
Email:

## Pacific Pride

### Oceanside Chamber of Commerce

The Oceanside Chamber of Commerce's new website now features coupons for active duty military personnel and their families. Just visit the Camp Pendleton Section of the Chamber website and click on "Coupons" on the menu bar on the left hand side of the page. You will have access to numerous coupons for discounted products and services offered by members of the Oceanside Chamber of Commerce. These include discounts on Restaurants, Hotels, Apartments, Carpet Cleaning, Gift Baskets and more. Be sure to visit the site weekly, as new coupons are being added on a regular basis.

### Griffith Park Military Appreciation Day

The Los Angeles Live Steamers Club (LALS) is showing its appreciation of the U.S. Armed Forces by opening its facility at Griffith Park to military members and their dependents, July 10, from 10am - 4pm.

The Los Angeles Live Steamers Club is a private club and not normally open to the public. LALS will provide free tram rides. A hotdog lunch will be available for \$3 at the site, but you are also free to bring in your own food; it's a great place for a picnic! You will also have the opportunity to visit Walt Disney's Train Barn, located within the Live Steamer's facility.

**Date:** Saturday, July 10

**Time:** 10a.m. - 4p.m.

**Location:**

Griffith Park, Los Angeles  
5202 Zoo Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90027

**Admission:**

Free with Military Dependent ID cards  
Free admission is limited to the first 1,000 guests

**Includes:**

Free admission to LA Live Steamer Club facility  
Discount to LA Zoo  
Free admission to the Autry Western Museum



### Reading Buddies Summer Club 2004

#### South Mesa Library Bldg. 200090 Tues @ 0930

29 June 04 Wild Wonders Animal Show  
06 July 04 Mary Beach's Story Theater  
13 July 04 Craig Stone's Magic Show  
20 July 04 Runningpath's Navaho Nation  
27 July 04 Kathy Felker's Puppets  
03 Aug 04 Pacific Animals Productions  
10 Aug 04 Trimble & Friends Ventriloquism

## Mail Call

Automatic sortation equipment used by the United States Postal Service makes it imperative that Marines utilize their address exactly as it is listed (to include the UIC and nine digit zip code). Deviation from this address format may result in addresses being unreadable to scanners, resulting in mail delivery delays. The following information will not be shown in, or become part of the mailing address.

- (1) Ship's Name
- (2) Ship's Address
- (3) Geographical Location
- (4) Task Force Designator

### Customs:

Ensure personnel are aware of customs regulations to and from the area of deployment. All parcels sent to, from, or between FPO/APO addresses must bear the proper customs form. All mail weighing 16 ounces or more that bear postage must be presented to a postal clerk at a post office for mailing. A maximum of \$200.00 per day per addressee for personal items and \$100.00 per day per addressee for gifts, may be mailed "Duty Free."

Your Marine/Sailor's address will follow him/her wherever he/she goes. Below are the correct mailing addresses for each unit ship:

#### USS Belleau Wood

GRADE NAME USMC  
11TH MEU (SECTION)  
UIC 42520  
FPO AP 96610-2520

#### USS Denver

GRADE NAME USMC  
11TH MEU (SECTION)  
UIC 42524  
FPO AP 96610-2524

GRADE NAME USMC  
1ST FORCE RECON (SECTION)  
UIC 42552  
FPO AP 96610-2552

#### USS Comstock

GRADE NAME USMC  
11TH MEU (SECTION)  
UIC 42522  
FPO AP 96610-2522

#### Seaside Square Library Bldg. 51093 Weds @ 0930

30 June 04 Wild Wonders Animal Show  
07 July 04 Mary Beach's Story Theater  
14 July 04 Craig Stone's Magic Show  
21 July 04 Runningpath's Navaho Nation  
28 July 04 Kathy Felker's Puppets \*  
04 Aug 04 Pacific Animals Productions  
11 Aug 04 Trimble & Friends Ventriloquism

#### Carney Library Bldg. 1146 Thurs @ 0930

01 July 04 Wild Wonders Animal Show  
08 July 04 Mary Beach's Story Theater  
15 July 04 Craig Stone's Magic Show  
22 July 04 Runningpath's Navaho Nation  
29 July 04 Kathy Felker's Puppets  
05 Aug 04 Pacific Animals Productions  
12 Aug 04 Trimble & Friends Ventriloquism

# Pacific Pride

For the Families and Friends of Marines and Sailors of the 11th MEU Command Element



## 11th MEU arrives in Iraq

Story by Cpl. Matthew S. Richards

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DUKE, Iraq — Marines and sailors of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) arrived here and in other forward operating bases recently to conduct Security and Stability Operations in the An Najaf and Al Qadasiyah provinces.

To facilitate this mission in the south-central region of Iraq, MEU personnel will operate out of three different FOBs -- Duke, Echo and Hotel -- located outside the major cities of An Najaf and Ad Diwaniyah. The MEU's aviation combat element will operate out of FOB Duke as well as Al Asad Air Base, located west of Baghdad.

A battalion of Army engineers, two platoons of Army military police, an El Salvadorian infantry battalion, and various other units will augment the MEU as they conduct SASO, which includes training elements of the Iraqi National Guard and Iraqi Police.

Earlier this month, the MEU offloaded the ships of the Belleau Wood Expeditionary Strike Group and conducted a week of training in Kuwait before traveling north to the three FOBs by vehicle convoy and military aircraft. The MEU will take responsibility of the two provinces from the U.S.



Arriving in Iraq

Photo by Cpl. Matthew S. Richards

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HOTEL, Iraq — Lieutenant Gen. James T. Conway, commanding general, I Marine Expeditionary Force, welcomes Marines and sailors of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) who arrived here recently. Conway also visited FOB Duke and the Marines there.

Army's Task Force Dragon -- made up of elements of the 1st Infantry Division -- once an official turnover between the two units is complete.

Task Force Dragon assumed control of the area of operations during the last month, relieving elements of the 1st Armored Division and the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, who had been extended twice in Iraq.

The provinces the MEU is taking control of aren't entirely new to Marines. After major combat was declared over, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, conducted SASO in An Najaf, and 3/5 had the same mission in Ad Diwaniyah.

See Iraq Arrival, page 2

## From the Commanding Officer



Dear 11th MEU families and friends,

Greetings from somewhere in the middle of the ocean! We passed through the famous Straits of Malacca a couple of days ago, sailing in-between Singapore and the many

islands constituting Indonesia. It won't be long until we sail out of the U.S. Pacific Command area of operations and enter into the U.S. Central Command area of operations. The Marines and Sailors of the MEU are all eagerly awaiting this since we will then be exempt from state and federal taxes!

Sailing west towards Iraq also means warmer, more humid weather. When the seas and winds allow, Command Element Marines are out on the flight deck, running in their combat gear, getting acclimated to the heat and the weight of their equipment. CE Marines are also in the gym lifting weights, in the hangar bay learning the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP), or on the flight deck conducting weapons shoots. Soon the CE will go on a training hike. Yes, as you can imagine, we will be doing numerous laps around the flight deck to get acclimated to the warmer weather and the weight of our gear. We will definitely be ready when we enter Iraq.

Yesterday we enjoyed what the Navy calls a "steel beach," or a barbeque on the flight deck. Even though our plans to have the event outside were foiled by 50-knot winds, we didn't let that hamper the fun. Instead, we just moved the event onto the ship's mess deck and the officer's wardroom. In addition to a meal of barbeque ribs and chicken, hamburgers and hotdogs, and baked beans and corn on the cob, Marines and Sailors were able to participate in karaoke. Later in the day, we were all served pizza. It was definitely the best day's worth of food since we left Hawaii.

See Command, page 2



## Pacific Pride

*Iraq Arrival, cont. from page 1*

The MEU is comprised of the Command Element; Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment; Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 166 (reinforced); and MEU Service Support Group 11.

The MEU's length of stay is currently undetermined.



### 11th MEU Marine receives Navy Cross in Iraq

Story by Cpl Matthew S. Richards

CAMP FORWARD OPERATING BASE HOFLL, Iraq - A hero is oftentimes thought to be one who overcomes some great obstacle for the betterment of his fellow man. Such legends flow freely throughout our society, especially in the Marine Corps, and their memories offer motivation to the weakest and strongest.

First Sgt. Justin D. Lehew doesn't believe Marines are heroes. "There are heroes in life, but we are not it. We're just Marines," Lehew, company first sergeant, Company C, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), said after recalling the events of a dreadful day over a year ago.

The story of Jessica Lynch was well publicized, but the story of the Marines who came upon her unit's position an hour after the ambush, and the hellish battle those Marines endured that day, isn't as well known.

Lehew, a gunnery sergeant at the time, was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions that day, March 23, 2003. More than a year later and in the same country in which he earned it, Lt. Gen. James T. Conway, commanding general, I Marine Expeditionary Force, personally presented the medal to Lehew on July 24.

"This is something you'll probably never see again," said Conway, to the MEU Marines that witnessed the Navy Cross being awarded. "This is second only to the Congressional Medal of Honor."

Lehew was a platoon sergeant for Company A, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, Task Force Tarawa, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. They were riding their way through Iraq in amphibious assault vehicles.

"I can remember the day pretty vividly," he said.

Just outside of An Nasiriyah, his unit was the foremost unit overtaking the area where 8,000 Iraqi soldiers were thought to be surrendering.

They received a distress call from American soldiers in the area. It didn't make sense to them because his Marines were supposed to be the foremost unit there.

"I jumped on the ground and started asking the Marines if they had seen any soldiers around," Lehew said. "They said they hadn't seen anything."

*Command, cont. from page 1*

Even though we still have quite a distance to sail before entering the Arabian Gulf, our time aboard ship seems to be flying by very quickly. There is a lot of planning that is currently underway in regard to the offload from ship and our mission in Iraq. We'll be sure to keep you updated.

If you have any questions during the deployment, I encourage you to use the Key Volunteer Network. This is an excellent means to keep updated with information concerning the MEU. Also, visit the 11th MEU website at [www.11meu.usmc.mil](http://www.11meu.usmc.mil) for the latest information. For those of you without Internet access, call the 11th MEU telephone hotline at (760) 725-0471 or toll-free at 1-(866) 676-0662. These will be updated as much as possible during deployment to keep friends and family informed of the MEU's activities.

Thank you for your continued support of the 11th MEU family.

Semper Fi.

A.M. Haslam  
Col. USMC

After pushing forward and searching for 2 1/2 kilometers they began to see burnt Army vehicles and after a little further, soldiers began to appear.

"I saw one pop up in the field we were in, then another popped up on the other side waving his arms. Then we saw soldiers popping up all over the field waving their arms," he said.

The Marines just happened to come upon them an hour after the soldiers were ambushed. The Marines did their best to help the injured, two of which were critically injured, while under enemy fire.

"I put my corpsmen with the Army medics, and the soldiers were saying the reason many of them were alive was because of my Marines. I think it was because of their medics doing such a great job," he said. "This wasn't a combat arms unit, but they did what they could for an hour until we arrived."

Lehew then had his Marines help the best way they could. They started "lighting up" the Iraqi infantry so they could help evacuate the injured.

"An (Army) warrant officer came up to me saying he was missing half his soldiers," Lehew said. "That turned out to be the group that was captured including Jessica Lynch."

Wasting no time, the order to press into An Nasiriyah came. While Marine Corps tanks were busy engaging the enemy in the outskirts of the city, the AAVs pushed into the city.

"Our job was to take the southern bridge," he said.

As soon as they moved into the streets a white van with a blue stripe pulled out in front of them and fired a rocket-propelled

*See Navy Cross, page 3*

*Pacific Pride**Navy Cross, con't. from page 2*

grenade. The thin-skinned AAVs swerved, successfully avoiding the RPG. The AAVs were all alone once they arrived at the bridge.

"Once we got on top of the bridge it got quiet for a minute. Then all at once it seemed like Armageddon opened up from all angles of the streets," he said.

There was an Iraqi ambulance that was careening toward the front of the convoy. Lehw fired a warning shot but the ambulance refused to stop, so the Marines opened fire on the cab. But when it stopped, and the Marines searched it, they found six Iraqis clad in black. Then more Iraqis in black began jumping out of cars after careening toward a weapons stockpile under the bridge.

"Swarms of Iraqis started converging on our positions," Lehw said. "There had to have been hundreds."

Many Iraqis started firing RPG's out of windows, doorways and cars.

"They were using women holding babies as spotters," Lehw said. "But we had to hold the bridge at all costs."

Reinforcements for Lehw's unit eventually came — Marine Corps tanks.

"I jumped up on the turret of the tank and peeled off the Marine's earpiece and told him to fire on a building that RPGs were coming out of," he said. "And when I jumped off, no sooner than my feet touched the ground the building was leveled."

It was right next to a mosque that was left untouched.

Lehw ran back to his Marines while under heavy fire the entire time.

"Then I remember our driver, who was from Georgia, said 'Hey look at those guys going the wrong way with their ramp open,'" Lehw said.

It was an AAV from another company whose mission was to take the northern bridge. Its back ramp had been blown open.

"I ran 70 meters to the back of that AAV," he said. "The cargo hatch was blown in."

On the way to the northern bridge, the AAV's unit had stopped for "surrendering" Iraqis who surprisingly ambushed them by turning around with AK-47s. Other Iraqis joined in with RPGs as Iraqi artillery, which had been plotted beforehand, rained down on them.

This particular AAV had tried to come back into the city with casualties to evacuate but an Iraqi with an RPG jumped behind it and fired into its back.

Lehw and his corpsman began to pull out anyone he could. "When I got to the vehicle there was a young doc from Puerto Rico following me," he said. "He said 'I'm here as long as you're here gunny.'"

While still under continuous fire, Lehw and his corpsman were hurriedly pulling bodies and body parts out but they began to lose faith that anybody in the AAV had survived.

"We were about to leave the vehicle. I stepped into the center of the vehicle to gather the weapons and clear the radios when I heard a Marine gasp," he said.

The Marine was underneath the AAV's hatch and was badly injured. The Marine had been reaching for his rifle when the AAV was hit.

"Doc held his head as we ran him back to our vehicle," he said.

That was one of many wounded the two began to carry back. They soon moved them all inside a nearby house to a casualty collection point set up by the battalion executive officer.

There were casualties everywhere and even though the front half of the house was secured they didn't have enough Marines to defend the casualties.

"You could hear Iraqis in the back side of the house," Lehw said. "All I had was

wounded Marines, no weapons. So I helped stabilize their wounds and I ran out to gather up weapons."

After gathering some weapons, Lehw went on a search for Marines.

"I grabbed two of the wounded Marines," he said. "I grabbed an M-16 and racked a round. I said 'If anybody comes through that way, shoot them. If they come this way, don't shoot them.'"

Lehw distinctly remembers a Marine he saw who was blown completely out of an AAV. He hobbled up to Lehw with several pretty bad injuries.

"This kid came up to me and said 'I can still fight gunny,'" Lehw sighed. "So I put a rifle in the kid's hands."

*See Navy Cross, page 4***Telling the tale**

Photo by Cpl. Daniel J. Green

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE DUKE, Iraq**—Navy Cross recipient 1st Sgt. Justin D. Lehw, company first sergeant, Company C, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), recounts the day during Operation Iraqi Freedom when his amtrac unit was engaged in heavy fighting in An Nasiriyah.

Lehw was awarded the Marine Corps' second highest medal for his heroic actions that day.



## Pacific Pride

*Navy Cross, con't. from page 3*

The intense fire never seemed to let up. Lehew knew he had to get all these men out of there.

"I started screaming over the radio net to get a medivac," he said. "Finally we started seeing birds in the air."

He saw the several helicopters overhead and began to set up a hasty landing zone.

"That pilot needs to get a Distinguished Flying Cross because he landed in one of the hottest LZ's with power lines and poles all around," he said.

Then Lehew, his doc and a few other Marines began running casualties "a couple football fields" to the helicopter.

"The last thing I saw was a Marine's feet hanging out the back of the bird," he said.

Lehew and his Marines loaded back in the AAVs, and with the tanks firing to the left and AAV's firing to the right, they sped back out of "Ambush Alley." They headed to the northern bridge to support the other AAV company.

"They had all the advantage points. They were firing so many weapons from the rooftops and streets, it's a miracle nobody died in that convoy," Lehew said.

On their way back, they started seeing burnt up shells of AAV's every hundred yards. They stopped to assist that unit.

After the dust had cleared and the battle was done, Lehew and his men had evacuated 77 casualties from the scene.

He can remember that there were some Marines that all he could do to help them before they were evacuated was to "sit with them, hold their hand and tell them they'd be alright."

A couple days later, around midnight, they were told the Fedayeen were mounting a 2,000-man counteroffensive against them.

"We were very depleted on ammo and chow, but my Marines still had the attitude of 'Bring it on!'" Lehew exclaimed. "I was lucky enough to go through all this with one of the greatest group of Marines ever."

They never had to fight that battle because Marine artillery broke up the offensive before it ever made it to Lehew's men.

Lehew feels the events of that day showed the steadfast courage of this generation of Marines.

"I've heard some say this video game generation is weak, and that they could never live up to the legend of those at Tarawa and such," Lehew said. "These Marines fought more courageously than I could have imagined. Right now, the Marine Corps is the best it's ever been and it will only get better."

He holds no less confidence in his current Marines with C. C. Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, than what he holds for those he went to war with.

"These guys are just as good," he said. "The Marine Corps is built upon the back of the infantry rifleman."

Lehew believes the Marine Corps' greatness comes from Marines pitted in days like this one and the camaraderie that comes from fighting side by side.

*See Navy Cross, page 5*

### What is the Key Volunteer Network?

Key Volunteers provide a communication, referral and support network to spouses of 11th MEU Marines. Appointed and directed by the MEU commander, the volunteers provide command information, problem solving assistance and outreach. By keeping MEU families better informed, establishing a sense of community, and offering resource options in times of need, the volunteers enable the MEU to achieve a higher state of unit readiness. Key Volunteers will pass information as provided by the command to spouses on the phone tree. If you are a spouse and are not on the phone tree, contact your Marine, or e-mail the CE family readiness officer, Capt. Carrie Batson, at

11th MEU KVN Advisor -- Lynn Haslam (909) 491-0185 Cell: (760) 214-8027

11th MEU KVN Coordinator -- Carolyn Zyla (909) 303-9026 Cell: (909) 719-4538

#### Key Volunteers:

Jeannene Blocker 760-385-0314

Email:

Bernadette Jarosz 760-806-3368

Email:

Melissa Johnston 760-385-4826

Email:

Sherry Metoyer 760-724-5988

Email:

Robin Sife 760-430-2744

Stacy Smith 760-798-2570

Email:

Kirsten Thompson 909-461-0016

Email:

#### Emergency contact if Carolyn is unavailable

Jessica Zapata 760-967-7345

Email: cell 760-672-3656

Marley Nelms 760-476-9062

Email:

Jacque Weede 760-630-0362

Email:

Stephanie Butler 760-745-7024

Email:

Angie Evans 949-498-2160

Email:

Holly Carver 760-430-4179

Email:

Kelly Ellebracht 760-430-8450

Email:

Sharon Bell 949-366-6301

Email:

Georgeanna Wiltse 760-639-4110

Email:

## Pacific Pride

*Navy Cross, con't. from page 4*

"Every Marine came into the Marine Corps to fight. They either have something to prove to themselves or someone else," he said. "It's the kids that can't hold their personal life together that win battles. It's the kid the platoon teases, or the kid that his buddies tease because he shoots marksman, that holds off half the Fedayeen. His biggest fear is not that he'll fail, but that he'll let his buddies down. What makes us elite is that we don't want to let each other down."



### Upcoming Events for 11th MEU Families

For more information, contact your Key Volunteer.

#### **Brooks & Dunn & Rascal Flatts Concert**

August 6, 8 PM at Del Mar Beach, MCB Camp Pendleton

#### **Family Swim Day**

August 18, 11:30-2:30 at the San Luis Rey Pool

Lunch will be provided and everyone is welcome to swim!

#### **Scrap Book Session at the KV Center**

August 22 at 2 PM at the KVN CENTER

All welcome. Robin Sife is our Creative Memories expert and will show us a thing or two about scrapping.



### American Red Cross Notification Update:

If you need to send an American Red Cross message to your Marine or Sailor, please tell the ARC representative that your Marine or Sailor is with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit. Please do not state his/her location as this may delay the delivery of the message. The ARC will find us wherever we are!



### **11th MEU takes the reins at FOB Echo**

Story by Gannery Sen, Chago Zapata

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ECHO, Iraq -- The country of Iraq is presently in a state of transformation to a democratic sovereignty as elections loom six months in the future. Now, another change has come into their lives, specifically for the people in the province of Qadisiyah and in the city of Diwaniyah in particular. The Marines have landed -- again.

Marines and sailors from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) took responsibility of the province of Qadisiyah in support of Security and Stability Operations here, July 31.

The MEU offloaded from the USS Belleau Wood, USS Denver and USS Comstock for training in Kuwait on July 7 and traveled by convoy and military aircraft to the FOB here. They are taking over responsibility of the area from the U.S. Army's Task Force Crockett once an official turnover between the two units is complete.

## CE Mail Call

Automatic sortation equipment used by the United States Postal Service makes it imperative that Marines utilize their address exactly as it is listed (to include the UIC and nine digit zip code). Deviation from this address format may result in addresses being unreadable to scanners, resulting in mail delivery delays. The following information will not be shown in, or become part of the mailing address.

- (1) Ship's Name
- (2) Ship's Address
- (3) Geographical Location
- (4) Task Force Designator

### Customs:

Ensure personnel are aware of customs regulations to and from the area of deployment. All parcels sent to, from, or between FPO/APO addresses must bear the proper customs form. All mail weighing 16 ounces or more that bear postage must be presented to a postal clerk at a post office for mailing. A maximum of \$200.00 per day per addressee for personal items and \$100.00 per day per addressee for gifts, may be mailed "Duty Free."

Even though we have offloaded the ships, please continue to use the mailing address your Marine had on ship. Even though we are now on land, the addresses will remain the same. Mail will follow your Marine wherever he/she goes. Below are the correct mailing addresses for each unit/ship:

#### USS Belleau Wood

GRADE NAME USMC  
11TH MEU (SECTION)  
UIC 42520  
FPO AP 96610-2520

GRADE NAME USMC  
1ST FORCE RECON (SECTION)  
UIC 42552  
FPO AP 96610-2552

#### USS Denver

GRADE NAME USMC  
11TH MEU (SECTION)  
UIC 42524  
FPO AP 96610-2524

#### USS Comstock

GRADE NAME USMC  
11TH MEU (SECTION)  
UIC 42522  
FPO AP 96610-2522

"We'll spend approximately 10 days to two weeks showing the 11th MEU everything about the area of responsibility," said Army Maj. Michael N. Davey, coalition commander, Joint Operations Area Saddle, and executive officer of 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. "We'll show them how we conduct operations, maintain accountability of personnel, operations we've conducted, show them strategic places on the ground as well as all the things we're doing to train the Iraqi National Guard and Iraqi Police."

The Division made it clear from the beginning that they were here to maintain stability of the area while the 11th MEU (SOC) moved into the country and prepared to take responsibility for supporting the Iraqi government and the Iraqi people, according to Lt. Col. Eugene N.

*See Turnover, page 6*

*Pacific Pride*

*Turnover, con't. from page 5*

Apicella, executive officer, 11th MEU (SOC). Apicella is serving as the commanding officer's senior representative in the Qadisiyah province.

"The Army is prepared to conduct as long of a turnover as needed to ensure a smooth turn over of military responsibilities in this area," said Apicella.

According to Davey, the Army will gradually step back and allow the MEU to take over operations. There are two steps to the Army's turnover process: the first is what they call "right seat ride," which means the Marines observe how they work; the second is called "left seat ride," where Marines take the wheel while the Army observes and helps out where help is needed.

"It's not a one-day quick change over," Davey explained. "We've been here longer so we have more knowledge of everything that's happened in the recent past."

Davey said there's a large exchange of information, which contributes initially to successful mission completion, until the incoming unit gets into a battle rhythm.

"At the end of that 10-day period, the commander of the 11th MEU and the Army Commander brief the Division General on all the things that were covered for the transfer of authority," Davey explained. "If both commanders feel comfortable with the turnover then the general transfers authority to the MEU and sends the Army back to its parent command."

Army and Marine Corps patrols have been working together for more than a week now, learning from each other.

"So far it's been pretty seamless," said Army Staff Sgt. Earl C. Dean, scout squad leader, Scout Platoon, Headquarters Company, 1-14. "It's the same battle drill, we go over (standard operating procedures) and actually take them out there and show them how we work."

"Everything's gone pretty well overall. The Army's definitely been very helpful," said Staff Sgt. Richard M. Saxton, scout sniper platoon sergeant, Scout Sniper Platoon, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th MEU (SOC). "The Army scouts are well versed with the area and know their job well. We've learned a lot from them through map studies: where the hot spots are, where to go, where not to go, key points around the city and other things to look out for."

However, according to Dean, the biggest enemy the MEU has to watch out for in Iraq right now is complacency. Operations and missions can become commonplace and repetitive, especially if nothing happens.

"Complacency is the number one enemy out here in Iraq," explained Dean. "You can go out on 100 patrols and nothing will happen, but the enemy could be waiting for that one time that you let your guard down and take advantage of it."

According to Davey, the Marines will be facing several challenges during their tour here.

"When Marines were here last time it was a very different environment, different engagement," Davey said. "Now, with the transfer of sovereignty to the new Iraqi government, instead of being able to act independently the Marines are going to have to step back and spend a lot of time mentoring, teaching and coaching the Iraqis."

According to Davey, once sovereignty was transferred to the Iraqi government, the leaders in Baghdad and the provincial governors are now the ones calling the shots. It's their country.

"Marines are just like my infantry soldiers, if something happens we want to act on it right there," said Davey. "We're not able to do that right now. If we do, it makes the Iraqi police and the Iraqi National Guard that much less effective in the eyes of the people."

The Marine's mission is to work with the Iraqi civil and military leadership: governors, mayors, city and municipal councils, police chiefs and the brigade and battalion commanders of the Iraqi National Guard to assist the people of Iraq in maintaining an increasingly stable environment, according to Apicella.

"The entire civil and military leadership of Iraq is organizing, coordinating and building; so it can be tough sometimes for individual governors and leaders to get advice and information from other sources," Apicella continued. "Since we have a solid command and control infrastructure, we can send a question up that chain through the appropriate personnel and get some answers to that governor, civic or military leader to help them do their job."

The people of Diwaniyah are not totally unfamiliar with the Marines. After major combat operations were declared over last year, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, conducted SASO in An Diwaniyah.

"The people of An Diwaniyah very aware of the Marines because they were here before," Davey explained. "So I think there's already a positive relationship built with the IP and ING based on their previous experiences with the Marines."

Although the 11th MEU (SOC) faces several challenges during the transfer of authority from the Army, they are prepared to take them head on.

"We've learned a lot from our Army counterparts and they were more than willing to help us in any way they can," said Saxton. "We're ready to get started."



**Patrol plan**

*Photo by Cpl. Dick Kowacki*

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE ECHIO, Iraq** -- Army Staff Sgt. William A. Ensley, infantry man, Company C, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (left), describes the patrol route to Sgt. Eric J. Backus, javelin section leader, Combined Anti-Armor Team B, Weapons Company, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), here, July 24.



# Pacific Pride

For the Families and Friends of Marines and Sailors of the 11th MEU Command Element



## 11th MEU combat in Najaf: A fireteam's tale

Story by: Cpl. Matthew S. Richards

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE HOTEL, Iraq — Early August, the world watched as Marines and sailors of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) battled against Muqtada al-Sadr and his militia in the opening days of a tough fight in a huge cemetery sacred to the Shia Muslims.**

By August 6, the struggle was well known as it flashed across television sets around the globe, but the story of the men wedged inside this vicious — fight was untouched by the eyes of the world.

These Marines and sailors trained for many months before this day arrived. Infantrymen and corpsmen participated in the battle, along with many other Marines from varying technical specialties. All, however, walked in the footsteps imprinted in history by the endless unsung heroes who fought America's battles before them.

Men like Lance Cpl. Sanick P. Dela Cruz, a twenty-one-year-old team leader from Chicago.

Lance Cpl. Nathaniel A. Ziobro,

a twenty-year-old rifleman from Temecula, Calif. Private first class Ryan D. S. Cullenward, a nineteen-year-old rifleman from Cool, Calif. And Pfc.

Heladio Zuniga, a nineteen-year-old rifleman from Jackson, Mich.

These Marines, only one of which is old enough to buy a beer, all walked away from the battle unscathed and without individual recognition. Their names won't be remembered for their actions that day, except for a lifetime by the men who fought alongside them.

They were just another fireteam with 2nd Platoon, Company C, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th MEU (SOC).

See *Fireteam*, page 2

## From the Commanding Officer



Dear 11th MEU families and friends,

We're as busy as ever during our current phase of operations. There's still a lot to do. It's now time to repair the damage done to An Najaf during combat operations against the Muqtada Militia

and help the people of the city get back to a normal life.

The 11th MEU is picking up where it left off in training the Iraqi National Guard in Najaf. Marines are also conducting presence patrols around Najaf and Kufa in order to identify reconstruction projects and to monitor the progress of civil military projects currently underway.

Projects in the two cities include funds to repair schools, improve conditions at the city's Human Rights Center, and repair critical facilities providing life support services to the local people. Schools are expected to open on time for the beginning of the school year in a few weeks.

Civil Affairs is our main effort and the 11th MEU is making great headway in reestablishing and improving essential and critical services to the people of An Najaf. Buildings, schools and key infrastructure projects get closer to completion as children and teenagers continue to happily greet us when patrols and convoys are in their area.

Marines and Sailors in Ad Divaniyah are picking up the pace there as units return and prepare to continue operations -- training the ING, working on civil affairs projects and supporting the 11th MEU with combat service support.

As you can see, there's still plenty of work to do and the Marines, Sailors and Soldiers of the 11th MEU are digging right in and doing their jobs.

If you have any questions during the deployment, I encourage you to use the Key Volunteer Network. This is an excellent means to keep updated with information concerning the

See *Command*, page 2



**Battle in the cemetery**

Photo by: Cpl. Daniel J. Fosco

AN NAJAF, Iraq — Marines with 2nd Platoon, Company C, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), fight from tomb to tomb against Muqtada Militia entrenched in the Wadi Al Salam cemetery during combat operations in An Najaf, Iraq, Aug. 6.

## Pacific Pride

*Fireteam, con't. from page 1*

They were relaxing in between shifts of guard duty at Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq, when they got the word to saddle up and get ready. They were going into combat to join the ongoing fight.

"It was not really a shock, but we were excited and nervous at the same time," said Dela Cruz, the fireteam's only veteran from Operation Iraqi Freedom I.

They were split at the time of the announcement. Dela Cruz and Zuniga had come back from breakfast when they heard the news. But Cullenward and Ziobro were told as they came back from sitting up all night on the flight line, ready to jump on a helicopter in case a casualty needed to be evacuated.

"We were just coming in after a long night and we were thinking we would get some sleep when they told us to pack our stuff and get on the seven-ton (truck)," Cullenward said.

But they were ready for the action.

"A lot of us were kind of excited to get off guard and kind of do something," Cullenward said.

Zuniga agreed with him.

"Just like he said, I was happy we got to do something," Zuniga said.

The battle had been going on for one day and was all over the news. More important than the politics behind the fighting, they only cared about the battle they were called to join, deep inside that massive cemetery.

They loaded up and rushed to the fight. No sooner had they arrived there than a rocket-propelled grenade flew directly over their heads.

"I heard it go right over our heads and heard the boom right behind us," Cullenward said, mimicking the flutter sound of an RPG in flight.

Except for Dela Cruz, it was the fireteam's first taste of combat and it came as a shock at first.

"I first thought, 'whoa, I'm getting shot at,'" Ziobro exclaimed. "It was kind of funny because the walls are real short and I'm kind of a tall guy."

They joined the rest of the Marines lined up down the road that ran along the edge of the cemetery. The fireteam happened to be on the far right side while the company pivoted on the left. They moved the farthest and the deepest into the cemetery, and were responsible for covering the company's right flank.

"Above all, we knew our responsibility was that flank," Dela Cruz said. "It was only our fireteam covering it."

They took constant sniper fire, mortars and RPGs. They could hardly ever see who was shooting at them.

*Command, con't. from page 1*

MEU. Also, visit the 11th MEU website at [www.11meu.usmc.mil](http://www.11meu.usmc.mil) for the latest information. For those of you without Internet access, call the 11th MEU telephone hotline at (760) 725-0471 or toll-free at 1-(866) 676-0662. These will be updated as much as possible during deployment to keep friends and family informed of the MEU's activities.

Thank you for your continued support of the 11th MEU family.

Semper Fi.  
A.M. Haslam  
Col. USMC

"We had no idea where they were coming from, we just would shoot where everyone was shooting," Dela Cruz said. "Every now and then they'd pop out at us."

This was different from what they had expected.

"I was kind of hoping they'd show their face a little more," Cullenward said as Dela Cruz acted as if he was ducking behind a wall and shooting blindly. "If you're going to shoot someone, show yourself."

They eventually became accustomed to the never-ending, incoming fire.

"After a while you just get used to it," Cullenward said. "You're just standing by a tomb as rounds fly by your head."

At one point they were taking constant sniper fire from a building near the cemetery. The enemy fire ended abruptly, however.

"We started taking fire from a building and the (8 Imm Mortar Platoon) told us they'd been taking

fire all day from that building," Dela Cruz said. "Then all of the sudden the whole building just went boom! Someone had called in an air strike or artillery on it."

Once they took up a defensive position, they continued to receive sniper and mortar fire.

"What (stunk) was we could hear the mortar rounds being walked in on us," Cullenward said. "One landed just to the left side of us and our doc had to go to help a Marine that didn't make it."

Cullenward felt an inner conflict when he thought of all the Marines taking heavy fire.

"You're relieved when it hits somewhere else, but it's difficult because it might have hit someone else," he said.



**Taking cover**

Photo by Capt. Daniel J. Frisco

AN NADAF, Iraq -- Marines with Company C, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), take cover on a street at the edge of the Wadi Al Salam cemetery during combat operations against the Muqtada Milfa in An Najaf, Iraq, Aug. 6.

See *Fireteam*, page 3

## Pacific Pride

*Fireteam, con't from page 2*

Later that day, water began to run low during the hottest part of the afternoon and Cullenward became very dehydrated.

"When we had no water, my tongue felt like paper," he said. "I could just tear it in half."

Dela Cruz did the best he could for the team.

"I tried to rotate them all into the shade while we were fighting," he said.

Once nightfall came the fireteam was still there. They were constantly watching for the enemy and spent a restless night watching and waiting. They each only got an hour of sleep.

"I kept hearing their flags flapping, thinking it was somebody coming," Ziobro said.

The other Marines joked and poked fun at Zuniga because during the course of the night he claimed to have seen two ghosts.

"That cemetery is a spooky place. I swear I saw two ghosts," Zuniga said as the others laughed. "Maybe I was just hallucinating from the heat."

Dela Cruz wasn't worried about ghosts, he was thinking about the fight the next day.

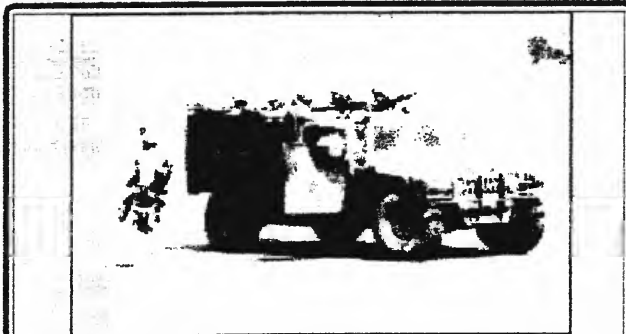
"I didn't want the morning to come," he said. "The only thing I was scared about was one of us getting hurt, and I was worried about Cullenward being a heat casualty."

But morning inevitably came. They didn't stay long that next day. In fact, after the fireteam was tasked as a security element for their company first sergeant, the entire BLI pulled out of the engagement.

They had to run the 500 meters back to their trucks under mortar and sniper fire in full combat gear.

"I was the very last one of our platoon in the seven-ton," Zuniga said.

They lived through the battle that day and fought like Marines, their contribution a small footnote in Marine Corps history.



**Secure the road**

Photo by Sgt. Daniel J. Fox

AN SALAF, Iraq -- Marines with Company C, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), secure a road prior to joining the battle against Mujahida Militia entrenched in the Wadi Al Salam cemetery during combat operations in An Najaf, Iraq, Aug. 6.

### What is the Key Volunteer Network?

Key Volunteers provide a communication, referral and support network to spouses of 11th MEU Marines. Appointed and directed by the MEU commander, the volunteers provide command information, problem solving assistance and outreach. By keeping MEU families better informed, establishing a sense of community, and offering resource options in times of need, the volunteers enable the MEU to achieve a higher state of unit readiness. Key Volunteers will pass information as provided by the command to spouses on the phone tree. If you are a spouse and are not on the phone tree, contact your Marine, or e-mail the CE family readiness officer, Capt. Carrie Batson, at

11th MEU KVN Advisor -- Lynn Haslam (909) 491-0185 Cell: (760) 214-8027

11th MEU KVN Coordinator -- Carolyn Zyla (909) 303-9026 Cell: (909) 719-4538

#### Key Volunteers:

Jeannene Blocker 760-385-0314

Email:

Bernadette Jarosz 760-806-3368

Email:

Melissa Johnston 760-385-4826

Email:

Sherry Metoyer 760-724-5988

Email:

Robin Sile 760-430-2744

Stacy Smith 760-798-2570

Email:

#### Emergency contact if Carolyn is unavailable

Jessica Zapata 760-967-7345

Email:

cell 760-672-3656

Marley Nelms 760-476-9062

Email:

Jacque Weede 760-630-0362

Email:

Stephanie Butler 760-745-7024

Email:

Angie Evans 949-498-2160

Email:

Holly Carver 760-430-4179

Email:

Kelly Ellebracht 760-430-8450

Email:

Sharon Bell 949-366-6301

Email:

Georgeanna Wiltse 760-639-4110

Email:



*Pacific Pride*

# Command Element Scuttle

## S-1 Administration

Now that the fighting in Najaf has stopped, the S-1 section is catching up on all of the everyday paperwork, settling into a routine.

We also moved into our new office; an actual building instead of a tent! Of course, we're in the only *pink* building on the base! It makes us easy to find! The real treat is we have two air conditioning units in our office ... of course, once winter comes I hope they have heat.

Keep the mail coming! Not only do we love to receive our mail, but with the entire postal detachment now under the S-1, we receive *all* the 11th MEU's mail. We're kept busy no less than three times a week receiving and sorting all of the various packages and mail. Speaking of mail, we welcome LCpl Pangelinan and LCpl Johnson to the team; both just arrived in country within the past two weeks.

We remain busy with the various duties aboard the base; mostly standing various guard posts. But we also have our personal time for watching DVDs (they're such a deal out here!), reading books, and PT (we think it's cooling off).

Welcome aboard 1stLt Silva, an augment who has jumped right into the S-1 mix! Congratulations to our newly meritoriously promoted Cpl Chan! And we bid a sad farewell to LCpl Tavon Hubbard, whose life was tragically cut short in a helicopter accident on August 11, 2004. Our thoughts and prayers go to his family.

## Public Affairs Office

Now that combat operations are over, everyone from PAO is on a more normal routine, at least for a little while. During the battle in An Najaf, our two combat cameramen and one combat correspondent went in harm's way on a regular basis and captured some incredible images, many of which were used by news agencies around the world.

Capt. Batson was a spinning tornado, writing media releases, handling embedded media requests, answering media queries and dealing with higher headquarters. I'm pretty sure she survived on Skittles and two hours of sleep a night, and that might be stretching it a bit. I believe she was ordered several times to leave and get some sleep.

Cpl. Kotecki, "Lumberg," left for FOB Echo a few days ago. He was adamant about getting all his belongings and taking pictures of Alpha Company and ING training. Personally, I think he was just desperate to get his homed mask and his Nintendo Advance.

Cpl. Fosco, we're still on the lookout for an appropriate nickname, is here in FOB Duke taking pictures and sweating over the captions (he'll get it ... someday). He's been hitting the gym and running regularly.

Cpl. Richards, "Turbo," has been staying busy in a place called FOB Baker covering the reconstruction and Civil Affairs efforts in Najaf. One of these days he'll be allowed to write the "straight scoop."

Capt. Batson has been hangin' with the MNF-I PAO, embassy PAO and media; shuttling back and forth between FOB Hotel, FOB Baker and Najaf. I think she's probably desperate for them to leave so she can get back to Duke and respond to the hundreds of e-mails she gets every day.

As for me, GySgt Zapata, as always I'm keeping up with the web, processing photos and stories, trying to keep the Marines busy and helping the workaholic Captain out as much as I can (well, as much as she'll let me).

No matter how busy we get, our families are foremost in our minds. We miss you and can't wait to get home.  
The PA Crew

## Staff Judge Advocate

Dear family and friends,

We've been gone now for almost four months and there is plenty of work to keep us busy.

The reason this section will be quite short is because we're processing claims, claims and more claims. Throw in the occasional investigation, detainee and power of attorney and our days are quite full. We might even be able to throw in an hour or two of sleep. However, no matter how busy we get our minds are always with our families and friends back home.

The most important for last ... congratulations to Cpl. Miller and his wife Lisa on the birth of their daughter Leyana Grace Miller.

## Chaplain

### America in Progress

Father Paul J. Shaughnessy, LCDR, CHC, USN

If you look at the back of a one dollar bill you will see the Great Seal of the United States. The seal features the American eagle clutching in its talons both arrows and an olive branch with 13 stars clustered above its head.

Now look at the other side of the seal, on the circle on the left of the dollar bill. Right there, under the eye of God, is a pyramid, but the pyramid is not finished. The designers of the seal did that on purpose. America is a country that remains incomplete, its work never finished. Building a nation of justice and peace is a never-ending task that began over 200 years ago and continues to this day.

Finally, in the words of the great Seal, the building of the American pyramid takes place under the eye of God with the prayer *Annui Coeptis -- May Providence Favor Our Undertaking.*

*See CE Scuttle, page 5*

## *Pacific Pride*

*CE Scuttle, cont'd from page 4*

### **S-2 Intelligence**

Dear family and friends of the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU (SOC),

Greetings from Najaf, Iraq! We trust that this newsletter update finds you all well, and busy easing the kids into the new school year. Out here, we've been extremely busy to say the least. Here's the latest scoop from the S-2 shop:

The Intel shop has hit the ground running, after a couple of weeks in Kuwait acclimating to the heat and training for what they might encounter in Iraq they moved with the rest of the MEU to FOBs Duke and Echo and began to settle in, set up shop and turn over with 1<sup>st</sup> ID Arty.

CySgt Barden continues to "crack the whip" on the rest of his shop, and demands much of his section chiefs. His mood was foul up until about a week ago when he received a choice care package from home, complete with a large shipment of shrink wrapped, stateside Copenhagen! He's been all smiles ever since, and even gave us a day off after almost three months without one! Because of that kind gesture, we took down the picture of him that we hung up in our tent (the one with the horns, pitchfork, goatee, etc.).

The entire HET section breathed a collective sigh of relief when Michigan won its season opener 43-10, and with a freshman quarterback to boot ... there would have been no living with SSgt Karlosh if they had lost. Everyone is hoping that the satellite TV and the microwave popcorn ordered over the internet arrive in time for this Saturday's game with Notre Dame. Go Blue!!!

All is well with the intelligence analysts and fusion cell, albeit busy. Despite the endless reports and briefs that they prepare, they are finally settling into a routine. All of them appreciate all the letters and care packages that you've sent since we departed, and ask that you keep sending more goodies!

As for the Ground Sensor Platoon, Sgt Roberts and the boys continue to work hard at keeping the rest of us safe here in Najaf. They remain vigilant with their guard duties, and spend their free time eating, sleeping, and giving haircuts to the rest of us (Big Rob and J-Reezy hook up a better fade than the girls at Stud Cuts!).

The weather guessers remain hard at work trying to forecast the utterly predictable weather here in Iraq "It's going to be hot, dry, winds out of the northwest, yada-yada-yada." Sgt Coley headed off to Diwaniyah to provide weather support, and hasn't been heard from since. SSgt Mills continues to stay busy with his forecasting duties in Najaf (and honing his Tetris playing skills, sending e-mails home, growing a really bad moustache, etc.).

Imagery and Topo have been staring at their screens non-stop for the last 6 weeks. They've been complaining because they're beginning to lose their tans and seem to have an affliction to direct sunlight ... something about being kept locked up inside all of the time

For a Radio Battalion Detachment update, we turn to Captain Wilcox, and he had the following to say about the team under his command: "The 3<sup>rd</sup> Radio Battalion Detachment is attached to the MEU intelligence section, and is made up of 27 Marines. This detachment has been together for one year, to include training in Hawaii, Calif., and to the present day in Iraq. We are a unique section in that we fall directly under the MEU Command Element and the MEU S-2. However, on any given day, three quarters of the detachment is in support of operations with other units of the MEU such as the BLT, or the MSPF section, and as in our case, sometimes with the Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division in Najaf. We have been very active providing the MEU with various types of intelligence, and have been able to influence successful operations and provide a high level of force protection to the Marines and Soldiers that we serve with. There is much to be proud of about this group of Marines. Their dedication to providing intelligence to the war fighter in many different and challenging environments is remarkable. Nearly a third of the detachment has served in Iraq before this deployment in some capacity. Presently, we are settled in to our temporary environments, keeping safe and busy. And, of course, always keeping our family and friends in our thoughts until we return".

That just about wraps it up here, folks. Until the next newsletter, take care of yourselves, and remember that we love you and miss you all. Keep those care packages coming ... we'll be home as soon as we can!

### **S-3 Operations**

Operations created quite a stir this month with all the activity surrounding the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU. Marines were going left and right as they dispersed to command and control their specialty area.

From the small unit departing the nest of the CE to liaison with the Governor, to the small det handling the large workload at FOB Echo, Capt and Lt Burke training the ING CWO Middleton and team finding "treasures" in every nook and cranny of the Old City and the interior design efforts of Capt Thompson and SSgt Kolek for the force protection of our bases, the activities have been non-stop.

The hope is that if every month can disappear like August did, with the amount of operations and activities that were jam-packed into it, the Operations section will be back in Camp Pendleton faster than it takes to get to the front of the chow line at lunch.

The heat seems to be never-ending as it only seems to get hotter and the flies a little thicker around your dinner plate. The Marines can't wait for the day to arrive when the rivers of sweat that accumulate by walking to chow, dry up and are replaced with days that don't reach 100F.

Mail call still makes the headlines as Maj Nelms and Capt Budde coordinate the air delivery and Capt Kidd and Capt Freeby have managed to recreate themselves as fraternal twins while in

*See CE Scuttle page 6*



## Pacific Pride

*CE Scuttle, cont'd from page 5*

the confines of FOB Duke.

Echo continues to be the hotspot, once the Marines go there no one wants to return to their home FOB, must have something to do with the amenities.

Lance Cpl Metz outdid himself as the AFATDs target tracker and Cpl Curry mastered the art of deciphering riddles at record speed. Lance Cpl Hartman decided that carpentry will be his secondary MOS, having built shelves for the COC and a pull-up bar to keep in shape.

Cpl Wyatt ensured the well-being of S-3 with reminders and the much appreciated chow plate when it was impossible to separate Marine from computer in the thick of things.

Overall, Operations is fine-tuning the day-to-day routine and always finding jokes to make the time pass a little more quickly until we can see the desert of Iraq in the rearview mirror of a HMMWV.

### S-4/Logistics/Supply

**Maj Jarosz is going for a World Record!** Least amount of sleep in one year! But in doing so every hour another gray hair appears, also trying to keep his arms around all the Logistical requirements may have something to do with the new found gray hair.

GySgt Bergquist (AKA Gunny B/SgtMaj worker bee/Jack of All Trades, Master of None) has done a FINE job getting the exchange up and running. In doing so, he also acquired his own little Club MED with his magnificent Bachelor Pad in the PX trailer (which is constantly blaring music and seems to have a disco ball). Appears to be the ONLY Marine in the 4 shop that stays happy (I wonder if it has anything to do with his Club MED).

Capt Smith (AKA Capt Grumpy) is making leaps and bounds in the MEU's movement control tracking, SSgt Cashman (WO select) if you are looking for him just look in the smoke pit or at the coffee pot, he will be in one of the two places. It's been said that he's the reason Capt Smith is so grumpy, Sgt Guerrero? All we know is that he has been doing great things at the EPW detention center.

Here are some of the things that the LOC shop has been doing by individual: Sgt Aquino: Reconciliations with MSC's, sweeping out office once a week, building chart boards, and playing soccer every night. Capt Salas: walking around like a zombie because she doesn't sleep much, and because she is constantly drinking Red Bull, and other "things" the Major has her doing? Staff Sgt Solonio: Arts and Crafts participation, to include finger painting.

Has anyone seen SSgt Brigdon (AKA "Da Butcher")? His father HMCS Zabarte (AKA Da Godfather) has been looking for him day and night. Last known location was the SNCO berthing wearing pink underwear. We have received intelligence reports from a reliable source (cook at the chowhall) that he has joined Recon ... you know how Recon is, you could be only a few feet

from them and not see them. Da Godfather has all his Chief select: slug Hammond (AKA Shrek), slug Cavallo (AKA Papa Smurf), and slug Teel (AKA Grumpy) searching for him. They are on patrols day and night at the berthing areas looking for his long lost son. If you have any information please call: 1-800-DA-BUTCHER

Has anyone seen Hodge chow trucks? If so you may find Capt Horton. His days have been consumed by looking for the location of the Hodge chow trucks.

What is the status of our ICE? That is the biggest question the ARMY has for the MEU S-4 shop!

The Supply section remains in good (but tired, as usual) form. We are not only providing supply support for the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU CE, but also for the entire camp and what seems to be every single unit that comes in and out of the camp.

The SupO, Capt Castellano, works at the COC so we have to put an observation post out during hours of daylight to let us know when he's on his way in. Gunny Miller can usually be found rolling around in "The Gator." Gunny Fletcher is usually reading up on something (currently it's "How to win at Chess").

Sgt Jacobs can be found at the gym pretty much any given time of day. He's making sure that he'll be bigger than any recruit once he's a D.I. Sgt Loftin is nowhere to be found. He's been MIA for a while now. J.K. he's doing good things for us at another camp.

Sgt Christopher has been assigned to guard the front gate of the camp. He will be the only Comptroller in the Marine Corps that can say they manned the gate of a camp in a combat zone.

Cpl "Shakey Jake" (as Gunny calls him) Ellebracht is also doing good things guarding the gate. Cpl Ruiz has become nocturnal due to working nights since we arrived. His fingers are becoming nubs from keypunching so many transactions. Cpl Stevenson (Steve-O) has been busy doing everything under the sun. He has become a jack of all trades.

Lance Cpl Treto (Tito) has become the most popular barber around. The SupO sends everyone that doesn't have a barber to him. I think he likes the attention. Lance Cpl Kelley has stayed busy working and trying not to sweat to death. Lance Cpl Davis (Swizzle Dizzle, Davi, and about 10 other nicknames he's acquired) has also been busy working along side of Lance Cpl Kelley.

On a serious note, Sgt Loftin and Cpl Stevenson received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal on September 1, 2004, for their performance in Hawaii. Each Marine in the Supply section has been working very hard to ensure that the unit and the camp have the supplies they need to survive and work, at all times, in all conditions. They have done an outstanding job.

### S-6 Communications

Wow, another newsletter from Iraq already? It seems like only last year we were in this country writing a newsletter from here for the family back home. Well, I guess it was last year and not much has changed.

*See CE Scuttle page 7*

## Pacific Pride

*CE Scuttle, cont'd from page 6*

Let's see -- where should we start? How about last May? After pulling out of San Diego, we made way to Hawaii for some training and some much needed liberty after a whole week on the ship. After a last chance to relax for a few days, we were off!

Major "Johnny Bravo" Zyla has been leading along with his usual tact and verve. The only issue we have with him is when he uses his favorite Johnny Bravo line: "It must be great being you, looking at me!" Not really, Sir -- sorry.

Captain "Old Dirty" Blocker was promoted to his present rank on July 1 -- long overdue I might add. After nearly 3 years as a 1stLT, he already had the attitude of a Captain; but the pay raise sure was nice!

Master Sergeant "Whip-Cracker" Richard has been keeping the troops out of trouble with his usual panache. Top has been doing a great job making sure that all sections are accomplishing their mission.

The Marines of the JTF det have welcomed their Captain back. Captain "Riddler" Wilson was on a long R&R stint with the advanced party in this desert paradise while the rest of the "six" were on their luxury cruise through the Pacific Ocean. During the cruise, Cpl John "The Butcher" Van earned his name for his outstanding abilities in the barbershop. Cpl Van was meritoriously promoted to his current rank on Sep 2!

Since those joyous days of being at sea with no mission, no responsibility, and no job, the JTF det has put their nose to the grindstone. We have definitely been earning our entry in the annals of history. After a short, one week training exercise in Kuwait, we took the long journey to our new "home" in Iraq. The first week was maintenance intensive, fixing all the stuff that broke during the jaunt here. And we have been extremely busy ever since, setting up a communications network equal to the size of a regimental network. The Marines have worked with the Iraqis, the Army, and numerous civilian contractors ensuring that everyone would be able to communicate back home via e-mail and phones.

Things have calmed down since the peace accord and everyone is doing great, even though Gunny (Warrant Officer Select 4 of Sep 8!) Tomkin has ADD; we started off with 15 Marines and 11 different MOS's, now there are 17 Marines and 1 MOS, one big happy family. I know what you're thinking: "where did the other two come from?" Well, we picked up two foster children from 9<sup>th</sup> Comm, Cpl "Even he can't pronounce it" Silamianos and Cpl Flowers... ah, I mean Flores.

After over 3 months of nothing but work, GySgt Ruiz has finally completed his EKMS inventory. Now, with just the basic day-to-day tasks at hand, he now has time to watch a long awaited movie; unless the "one-day" vacations to other glamorous spots around the cradle of civilization get in the way. Also of note, GySgt Ruiz has decided that his name is no longer "Roo-ez", it is "Ru-Izzz." Hmmm...

The maintenance section has been hard at work, keeping the comm gods happy by making "something" out of nothing. Staff

## CE Mail Call

Automatic sortation equipment used by the United States Postal Service makes it imperative that Marines utilize their address exactly as it is listed (to include the UIC and nine digit zip code). Deviation from this address format may result in addresses being unreadable to scanners, resulting in mail delivery delays. The following information will not be shown in, or become part of the mailing address.

- (1) Ship's Name
- (2) Ship's Address
- (3) Geographical Location
- (4) Task Force Designator

### Customs:

Ensure personnel are aware of customs regulations to and from the area of deployment. All parcels sent to, from, or between FPO/APO addresses must bear the proper customs form. All mail weighing 16 ounces or more that bear postage must be presented to a postal clerk at a post office for mailing. A maximum of \$200.00 per day per addressee for personal items and \$100.00 per day per addressee for gifts, may be mailed "Duty Free."

Even though we have offloaded the ships, please continue to use the mailing address your Marine had on ship. Even though we are now on land, the addresses will remain the same. Mail will follow your Marine wherever he/she goes. Below are the correct mailing addresses for each unit/ship:

### USS Belleau Wood

GRADE NAME USMC  
11TH MEU (SECTION)  
UIC 42520  
FPO AP 96610-2520

GRADE NAME USMC  
1ST FORCE RECON (SECTION)  
UIC 42552  
FPO AP 96610-2552

### USS Denver

GRADE NAME USMC  
11TH MEU (SECTION)  
UIC 42524  
FPO AP 96610-2524

### USS Comstock

GRADE NAME USMC  
11TH MEU (SECTION)  
UIC 42522  
FPO AP 96610-2522

Sgt Boudreau, Sgt Fuentes, and Cpl Kurian have been staying busy and becoming more creative as time passes us by. They are fixing (aka building from scratch) things with Velcro, zip ties, and even lumber.

From the time that we landed, Radio has been accomplishing their mission. It is true that we are under staffed, overworked and under appreciated, but that is what a communicator is! Sgt Guzman and Sgt Pimentel have been on "vacation" with the Maritime Special Purpose Force; Cpl Nichols, Cpl Hodge, and LCpl Walker are attached to Battalion Landing Team 1/4; and Cpl Platt is working with the local military... So the few Marines that are left are not getting much R&R. Additionally, we have Sgt

*See CE Scuttle, page 8*

## Pacific Pride

*CE Scuttle, cont'd from page 7*

Willse working with the MEU XO and LCpl Piper "alone and unafraid" managing a retransmission site. And the understaffed part doesn't end there! We have also provided radio operators/drivers for the MEU CO. Cpl Smith has had this job for a while (and done great at it) but the number of trips he takes has created a need for an alternate. LCpl Toomey has been selected for that responsibility. Neither of these Marines has been available for much radio watch due to their constant driving. That leaves Staff Sgt Page only a handful of Marines to maintain the radio nets at the Combat Operations Center (COC). Sgt Butleigh and Sgt Porter have been providing him great assistance as radio watch supervisors, while Cpl Butler, Cpl Williams, Cpl Stokes, and Pfc Beames have been "making it happen." They can talk about us but they can't talk without us.

Semper Fi from S-6  
Comm 'till it Hertz

### Headquarters Commandant

During the past month, the Headquarters Commandant section has continued to be the tip of the spear, the spark, and the wheel, which turns the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU ... led by MSgt Bonds. Two Marines, Lance Cpl Crouse and Pfc Francis, were assigned to provide support and force protection in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 2. Pfc Francis is counting the days until next month's promotions to Lance Cpl. I told him he still has to be recommended. They've both been doing an excellent job.

During recent weeks, the Headquarters Commandant section has been busy in providing billeting to more than 2,500 Marines, Army, Iraqi Soldiers and Coalition forces. A responsibility we did not particularly cherish, but we accomplished the mission and got it done right, like Marines do!

The section also provided Marines for the Commanding Officer's Personal Security Detail and Convoy Security. They were Sgt Rosario, Sgt Ross, Sgt Almaguer, Sgt Munoz, Sgt Guardado, and Lance Cpl Crouse. Again, those Marines did a great job in providing Force Protection, and ensuring convoys were conducted in a proficient manner.

Speaking of Sgts Munoz and Guardado, they've also done an outstanding job maintaining and keeping the Command Element's vehicles up and running. Not only have they accomplished this feat for the Command Element, they also helped the BUI, MSSG-11, Force Recon and the Army keep their vehicles running as well. More than 40 vehicles and only two mechanics, and they did it on the Midnight shift.

With that said, the Headquarters Commandant section not only provided billeting, Personal Security, Convoy Security and Vehicle Maintenance, we also maintain all the Command Element's weapons. We couldn't accomplish our missions without Lance Cpl Shauer, the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU armorer. Lance Cpl Shauer has done an outstanding job in ensuring our weapons; the .50 cal. SAWs, M16s and 9mm pistols stayed operational! Thanks!

Congrats to the Rosario family. Mrs. and Sgt Rosario had a new-born baby girl. congrats to all Marines and Sailors who had new additions to their families.

Each one of us has done a great job; no wonder the Headquarters Commandant section is called the jack of all trades, and a master of none. We all look forward to our return home and enjoy a well deserved leave break. Holla



## Camp Pendleton Information

### Sight for Students

The Armed Services YMCA offers a program that allows qualified children to receive free eye exams and glasses. To find out if your child qualifies for this program and for help locating a doctor in your area, please call Estella Garrison at (760) 385-4921.

### Free BBQ will Honor and Salute Service Members

Project Hope and The Girls Scouts will hold a BBQ to thank Camp Pendleton military members for their "sacrifice, commitment and courage" September 26 from noon to 7 p.m. at 3<sup>rd</sup> Assault Amphibian Battalion's Common Court Area at Camp Del Mar.

For more information, call Alan Nary at (760) 725-9298.

### Base Theater Movie Schedule

Enjoy a wide variety of FREE near first run movies at the Base Theater. With a concession stand, surround sound, and one of the largest screens in North County. The MCCS theater is located at Building 1330 Vandegriff Blvd. in the 13 Area across from Mamside.

To reach the movie listing by phone call: (760) 725-9217 or via website and

### Housing has new "Auto Attendant"

Base Housing has a new "auto attendant" system that offers the following information:

- Frequently asked questions
- Documents necessary for getting on the waiting list
- Waiting list position
- Estimated waiting times

Base Housing's new phone number is (760) 725-5995

### Help for voters via phone, online

Military voters seeking help on myriad topics relating to voting can contact the Department of Defense Voting Information Center. U.S. Citizens can reach the VIC toll free from 66 countries using the numbers listed on the Federal Voting Assistance Program website. In the United States, call (800) 438-VOTE (8683). Or email the FVAP at

See *Pendleton Info*, page 9

## Pacific Pride

*Pendleton Info, cont'd from page 8*

### Vista Village Spring Festival Street Fair

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday 10am-6pm in Downtown Vista.

- Live Music
- Food Booths
- Arts & Crafts Booths
- Retail Booths
- Amusements for the kids and more!

For more info call: (760) 758-5111

### European Oktoberfest & Craft Faire "On the Street"

Sunday, September 26; 10am-5pm at El Camino Real & Mountain Vista Dr.

- Family Attractions and Games for All Ages Crafts
- Authentic German Band & Dancers
- Authentic German Food & Beverage Garden
- Old World BBQ

For More Information Call:

Encinitas Chamber of Commerce (760) 753-6041

## MCCS

### Marine & Family Services

Children, Youth and Teen Programs' Counseling Services:  
Ways Children, Youth and Teen Programs' Counseling Services can help:

- Learn about typical reactions to deployment, reunion, stress or fear of war.
- Learn about the affects of combat stress on families and youth.
- Learn ways to help youth and families express their feelings in healthy ways.
- Identify at risk behaviors.
- Learn stress management techniques.
- Learn ways to self care.
- Referrals to community support services.
- Learn ways to re-establish and reconnect within your family.

Counselors provide general counseling services and support to military children and their families located within Children, Youth and Teen Programs (CYTP), as well as, in group settings for command driven events.

### Services Offered:

**Individual and Family Counseling:** Counseling is designed to be brief and solution focused. This is provided to families within the CYTP programs and others at the request of command. If it is determined that long term counseling is more appropriate, families will be provided with referrals and help in securing services within the community.

**Group Counseling:** Group counseling is designed in two formats. The first is educational in nature, designed for a large group

setting. The group will explore topics related to military life to include feelings and reactions to deployment, war, reunion and grief and loss. The second format is more therapeutic in nature, where youth will be placed in age appropriate groups of 6-10 and will meet weekly for 6-8 weeks to explore, express and process feelings related to reactions and stresses of military life. **Assessment and Referral:** Counselors are available to meet with youth and families to assess and determine what services may be needed and to provide the appropriate referrals within the community.

**Resource, referral and support services for CYTP families and staff:** Counselors are also available to assist CYTP families and staff with acquiring resources and providing information for referrals and services within the community.

**Counselor Qualifications:** Counselors within the Marine & Family Services, Children, Youth and Teen Program Counseling Services are state licensed therapists. They may hold a license in Marriage, Family Therapy, Clinical Social Work, or Psychology.

"Everyone, including children, feel stressed during times of crisis and uncertainty. If your child seems to need help beyond what is normally available at home or school, please contact CYTP Counseling Services or seek outside professional help." For more information call (760) 725-8519.

### All Military Unit Yard Sale

MCCS will be sponsoring an "All Military Unit Yard Sale" in the Main Exchange parking lot. The event will take place from 0900 to 1330 on 16 October 2004. Participants are restricted to military units only, battalion and squadron level, independent commands stationed on Camp Pendleton.

The purpose of the event is to assist military units with their fundraising efforts. **Units will keep all proceeds from the yard sale.** MCCS will coordinate the event and provide at no charge tables, canopies and chairs. Transportation of yard sale items to and from the event is the responsibility of the individual command.

Unit logo items, clothing, furniture, electronic equipment, and toys are preferred. Food items are restricted to baked goods, assorted non-alcoholic beverages and snack items. Raffles and BBQ's are not permitted. Units are also allowed to use dunk tanks, Astro Jumps and similar games provided "Release From Liability" forms are completed for all non-military customers.

Allotted selling spaces will be 10' x 20' and will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. Each selling space will be provided with one 10' x 10' canopy, two tables, and four chairs. We will try to accommodate units needing more than one space, and additional tables and chairs depended on number of units participating.

For more information or to reserve a space, contact Peie Miranda, 725-5003/5041/5242. Spaces must be reserved by 12 October 2004.



# Pacific Pride

For the Families and Friends of Marines and Sailors of the 11th MEU Command Element



## Marines of 11th MEU do have leisure

Story by Cpl. Matthew S. Richards

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE DUKE, Iraq** — The sun is fierce here and long hours of patrolling in the dust filled town of An Najaf, Iraq, leave the Marine encased by a transparent layer of powder. A sweat-drenched flak jacket and helmet drop to the floor with two numbing thuds, sending more dust particles shooting through the surrounding air. Another Marine finally rests inside a wind beaten green tent — one graciously filled with the cool respite of air conditioning.

The day was long, like many others, but there are more to come. Lance Cpl. William E. Hartman, operations clerk, Command Element, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), returns from another

arduous day providing security out in town. This one, like many others, the day began as the sun came up and ended long after the sky slowly bruised from warm orange to deep blue.

After shedding his gear, Hartman jumps in a cleansing shower and then goes to swallow a hot meal. His feet hurt and his body is tired. He knows it's all going to happen again tomorrow while he crawls in the rack, slips on



**PSD takes volleyball tournament**

Photo by Gunner Sgt. Chago Zupan

Captain F.J. Bill Thompson, MEU force protection officer, Command Element, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), spikes the ball during a volleyball tournament here. The MEU commanding officer's Personal Security Detail took first place, the Army's 153rd Engineers took second and the MEU S-4 team took third.

his headphones and closes his mind to everything but the band The Grateful Dead now playing in his ears. This is an almost daily practice for him, and he uses it to get by.

It's just his way of winding down from a strenuous day and preparing for the next. Many other Marines of the MEU have their own unique means of relaxation and fun after work.

"They (The Grateful Dead) help me get to sleep at night, and most of

*See Leisure, page 2*

## From the Commanding Officer



Dear 11th MEU families and friends,

We've been working hard to help the Iraqi people in An Najaf and Al Qadisiyah provinces and the results are showing. So far, more than 250 reconstruction or refurbishment projects have

been completed or are currently underway, totaling nearly 10 million dollars in both provinces combined. Funding for all projects comes from the MEU's Commander's Emergency Response Program, which is allocated by the U.S. Congress.

These projects are addressing damage done during fighting in Najaf. However, the majority of projects are restoring rundown infrastructure in the two cities, a result of decades of neglect of the Shia people under Saddam Hussein's regime. Projects are improving conditions in public education, essential services (water, sewage, electricity, parking, etc), governance, public health and the economy.

In addition to these projects, we are busy making solatia, or condolence payments, to Najafis who experienced property damage of their home or business, injury, or death of a family member during August's fighting. We have paid more than 5,800 Iraqis approximately 3.7 million dollars. These payments are creating goodwill and building trust between us and the locals.

Citizens of both provinces are also currently registering for the January elections. So far, everything is running smoothly and we are happy to see the Iraqi people moving one step closer to taking charge of their country and their future.

We also recently celebrated the Marine Corps' 229th birthday with the traditional ceremony and birthday meal of steak and lobster (see CO's Birthday Message on page 11).

Marines at FOB Echo in Diwaniyah will be moving at the end of the month, turning over control of Qadisiyah province to the Polish military.

*See Command, page 2*

## Pacific Pride

*Leisure, con't. from page 1*

their songs are happy. So, if I listen to them at night when I go to sleep I'll be thinking of a song in the morning and that makes the day better," Hartman said.

Most Marines use their leisure time to escape -- to catch a momentary break from their work. But they don't do anything that gets in the way of their job. For most, it's just a way to keep from getting burnt out on the stress that can accompany one on a deployment.

Corporal Dave R. Ford, network administrator, Command Element, claims that he "definitely" spends more than half his spare time glued to a video game of some kind. He owns two different game systems out here, borrows another occasionally from the MEU Chaplain's office, and even has more games on his personal computer.

"It helps time pass easily and it helps me get through the deployment," Ford said.

However, he doesn't hoard the game play to himself. He'll drop his game to let in another player at any time. So, the environment around his rack can be solemn with his quiet concentration or filled with yells of jubilation where one Marine conquers another in one of the many games. He plays most types, everything from first person shooter, role-playing, strategic and different sports games.

"He'll play anything he can get his hands on," said Cpl. Sylvester McKinney, network administrator, Command Element, as he stepped in front of Ford's screen to see what he was playing.

Ford also points out that the games do more than just pass the time for him. He says they help cope with his helter skelter work schedule that often causes him to get sleep at infrequent intervals.

"The schedule I work doesn't allow me to keep a consistent sleep schedule. So, if you stay up and pass the time playing and go to sleep when you're tired it helps to keep a consistent schedule," Ford said.

Video games aren't for everyone though. Just across the tent from where Ford was busily punching his controller, Cpl. Matt Herring, network administrator, Command Element, was silently focused on one of the many books he has read during this deployment. He was reading under a warm, incandescent glow complementary to the cool blue emitted by Ford's screen.

"If I can find a good book, I'll read it," Herring said. He estimates that he's read more than 10 during this deployment.

*Command, con't. from page 1*

I am sure they Polish soldiers will continue the great work we have started. As a result of this move, Command Element Marines at FOB Echo will be moving to FOB Duke, or will move to the province of Karbala. The Polish military's move to Qadisiyah Province, and our move to Karbala Province, is part of a restructuring of forces effort currently underway in Iraq.

As a result of this move, homecoming will still consist of two main bodies, but the first one might be a little smaller than initially anticipated. Below is a general time frame of what we think homecoming will look like. As we all know, these dates are not 100% guaranteed and can change depending on current events.

**Advance Party:** Middle of January (small contingent of Marines who will prepare for the arrival of the rest of the MEU)

**Main Body 1 & 2:** End of January, mid to end of February

**Rear Party:** Beginning of March (small contingent of Marines to load our equipment on commercial ships before flying home)

I will be sure to update you with information when I get it. I understand how difficult it is for families (as well as Marines/Sailors) to have dates change, and I want to do everything I can to make this process easier for anyone.

Thank you for your continued support of the 11th MEU family.

Semper Fi,  
A.M. Haslam  
Col USMC

Mostly, the books come from a floating library that circulates the MEU in a hand-me-down system.

"Once I read them, then it makes no sense to let them sit around. I give them to other people who want to read them," Herring said. "It doesn't really matter to me where they go once I've read them."

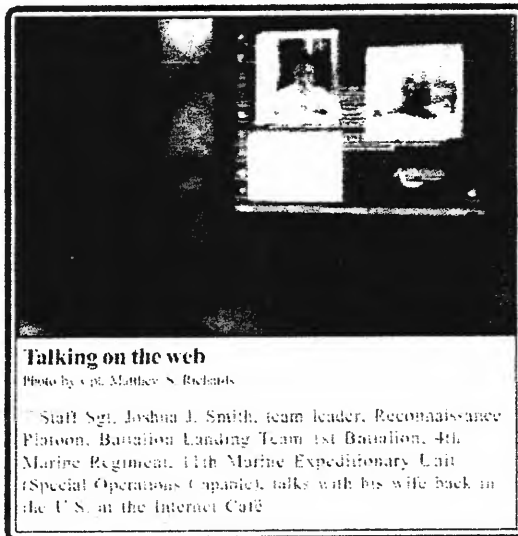
Ford added that he acquires many of the video games he plays the same way. But a central location for this swapping of entertainment comes from the MEU Chaplain's office where many hovering books, movies and games rest momentarily before landing in the hands of another person seeking their refuge.

Lance Cpl. Sinclair L. Harrell, administrative clerk, Command Element, finds sanctuary in the plethora of movies surprisingly available to the Marines and sailors deployed with the MEU.

"It kind of helps escape the day and enjoy someplace else for a while," he said.

His time off is divided between resting on his rack watching

*See Leisure, page 3*



### Talking on the web

Photo by Cpl. Matthew S. Richards

Staff Sgt. Joshua J. Smith, team leader, Reconnaissance Platoon, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), talks with his wife back in the U.S. at the Internet Cafe.



## Pacific Pride

*Leisure, con't. from page 2*

movies with his six-inch screen personal DVD player on his chest and many hours in the gym. He works out almost 10 hours a week, but it's just to be in better shape by the time he gets home. It's not to look better for his wife who, nonetheless, is "still going to make me take out the garbage."

The asylum he seeks from the monotony of a daily routine is mostly speckled with dreams of spending time with his daughter, who was born while he was in boot camp. And he jokes that he's been gone so much that she won't be able to recognize him.

Instead of the more obvious thoughts of home, one of the peculiar aspects of the Marine Corps and deployments are the unordinary hours one might work. For instance guard duty is most oftentimes different from the normal hours a civilian works during daylight.



**Video games help pass the time**

Photo by Cpl. Matthew S. Rodarik

Corporal Dave R. Ford, network administrator, Command Element, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), plays a video game in his tent here to pass the time Oct. 27.

The Noncommissioned Officers of 81mm Mortar Platoon, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th MEU (SOC), are standing guard here and are "lucky if we get a day a week off," said Sgt. Justin D. Sperry, squad leader, 81mm Pl. Their weekly schedule consists of a 24-hour shift as sergeant of the guard, another 24 hours on the quick

reaction force, then eight hours at the FOB's entry control point and then usually three days where they have two four-hour shifts on a guard tower. That means eighty-hour workweeks are a normal occurrence.

"See this dent in my rack?" rhetorically asked Cpl. Joseph M. Pervich, mortarman, 81mm Pl., referring to how he spends his time off.

But they still have their entertainment as well. They even pooled together money to buy a TV for their tent from the soldiers the MEU relieved. Incredibly, one TV among the tent full of men doesn't create any problems with deciding what to watch. They trickle in at such individual and infrequent rates that no one

*See Leisure, page 4*

### What is the Key Volunteer Network?

Key Volunteers provide a communication, referral and support network to spouses of 11th MEU Marines. Appointed and directed by the MEU commander, the volunteers provide command information, problem solving assistance and outreach. By keeping MEU families better informed, establishing a sense of community, and offering resource options in times of need, the volunteers enable the MEU to achieve a higher state of unit readiness. Key Volunteers will pass information as provided by the command to spouses on the phone tree. If you are a spouse and are not on the phone tree, contact your Marine, or e-mail the CE family readiness officer, Capt. Carrie Batson, at [carrie\\_batson@11meu.mil](mailto:carrie_batson@11meu.mil).

11th MEU KVN Advisor -- Lynn Haslam (909) 491-0185 Cell: (760) 214-8027 [lynn\\_haslam@11meu.mil](mailto:lynn_haslam@11meu.mil)

11th MEU KVN Coordinator -- Carolyn Zyla (909) 303-9026 Cell: (909) 719-4538 [carolyn\\_zyla@11meu.mil](mailto:carolyn_zyla@11meu.mil)

#### Key Volunteers:

Jeannene Blocker 760-385-0314

Email: [jeannene\\_blocker@11meu.mil](mailto:jeannene_blocker@11meu.mil)

Bernadette Jarosz 760-806-3368

Email: [bernadette\\_jaros@11meu.mil](mailto:bernadette_jaros@11meu.mil)

Melissa Johnston 760-385-4826

Email: [melissa\\_johnston@11meu.mil](mailto:melissa_johnston@11meu.mil)

Sherry Metoyer 760-724-5988

Email: [sherry\\_metoyer@11meu.mil](mailto:sherry_metoyer@11meu.mil)

Robin Sile 760-430-2744

Stacy Smith 760-798-2570

Email: [stacy\\_smith@11meu.mil](mailto:stacy_smith@11meu.mil)

#### Emergency contact if Carolyn is unavailable

Jessica Zapata 760-967-7345

Email: [jessica\\_zapata@11meu.mil](mailto:jessica_zapata@11meu.mil) cell 760-672-3656

Marley Nelms 760-476-9062

Email: [marley\\_nelms@11meu.mil](mailto:marley_nelms@11meu.mil)

Jacque Weede 760-630-0362

Email: [jacque\\_weede@11meu.mil](mailto:jacque_weede@11meu.mil)

Stephanie Butler 760-745-7024

Email: [stephanie\\_butler@11meu.mil](mailto:stephanie_butler@11meu.mil)

Angie Evans 949-498-2160

Email: [angie\\_evans@11meu.mil](mailto:angie_evans@11meu.mil)

Holly Carver 760-430-4179

Email: [holly\\_carver@11meu.mil](mailto:holly_carver@11meu.mil)

Kelly Ellebracht 760-430-8450

Email: [kelly\\_ellebracht@11meu.mil](mailto:kelly_ellebracht@11meu.mil)

Sharon Bell 949-366-6301

Email: [sharon\\_bell@11meu.mil](mailto:sharon_bell@11meu.mil)

Georgeanna Wiltse 760-639-4110

Email: [georgeanna\\_wiltse@11meu.mil](mailto:georgeanna_wiltse@11meu.mil)

*Pacific Pride*

*Leisure, con't. from page 3*

is hardly in the tent together at any one time.

"Whoever is standing here just puts something in and we just walk in at sometime and watch," said Cpl. Michael S. Bachicha, mortarman, 81mm Pl. "It's on all the time with everybody in and out all the time."

The tent is dark but for the glow of a comedian creating chuckles around the few Marines in the tent that are actually awake. When they're not watching movies or comedians, the Marines play a lot of football video games together.

"Except for people like me that don't touch the thing because I can't play," Sperry said making fun of the fact that he always seems to lose when he plays.

Although, not everybody can win, there's one place on the FOB that everyone seems to be able to handle. Recently, the Marines of the MEU constructed an Internet Café. Within days of it opening Marines wait anxiously in line for a chance to talk to friends and loved ones around the world on Web Cameras, and they sigh reluctantly when their number is called and their turn is up.

Marines spend their half hour on the Internet to catch up on current events or just to find out what's going on back home.

"Since it's getting close to the holidays people feel obligated to contact home," said Lance Cpl. Fernin Treto, supply clerk, Command Element, on his way out the door when his shift was up.

Sergeant Luis D. Almager, police sergeant, Command Element, spent a lot of time helping to put the Internet Café up and -- as if he can't get away -- was surfing the web there himself. He estimates that more than 150 Marines and sailors use the 20 different computers a day.

"It's like your own little bubble. In that 30 minutes you feel like you're not at work anymore," Almager said.

All the Marines of the MEU don't spend their spare time glued to a chair and fixated on a screen of some kind. Intelligence Marines of the Command Element are just one unit that band together to compete in various sports tournaments around the FOB.

"It helps us take our minds off the daily schedule and it

builds camaraderie and teamwork," said 1st Lt. Daniel R. Myers, reconnaissance and surveillance coordinator, Command Element.

Fifteen or so Marines from Intel were up late in the evening one night for a volleyball tournament and are ready and signed up for a flag football tournament coming soon.

"It gives the Marines a chance to do something that isn't so serious. It ultimately refreshes them so they can focus even better on their work," Myers said.

Groups of Marines and sailors can be seen scattered all over the FOB playing football, frisbee, soccer, basketball, volleyball or just running together. Organized tournaments, however, are the product of one man on base. Chief William C. Hammond, religious programs specialist, Command Element, arranges a gamut of different tournaments just to lift every one's spirits.

"I like to bring some kind of enjoyment to them," Hammond said.

He has all kinds of tournaments planned. Everything from horseshoes, spades to a strongest man and woman competition.

The volleyball tournament was the first experiment of such kinds of organized revelry.

"It really paid off. There are around 50 people out there most of the night," Hammond said.

Myers mentioned how he heard his Marines talking about it for days afterward saying "it was one of the more fun things they've done out here."

It's Hammond's own drive to provide fun to Marines and sailors of the MEU that motivates him to pack a schedule full of interesting events.

"It makes me feel better to give them something to do. Boredom can sometimes make people complacent," he said.

The chapel is also stockpiled with

ways for Marines to "vent without venting too much," he added.

With more than a thousand books, movies and CD's that anybody can check out, the chapel is a common ground for Marines to come searching for reprieve. That's not even counting the abundance of board games and the estimated 2,000 pounds of care packages handed out.

So, it's a difficult task to find a Marine or sailor strolling around the FOB without anything to occupy him or herself. It's definitely harder to find than anything to do. ■ ■ ■



**Reading and relaxing**

Photo by Cpl. Mark A. S. Richards

— Corporal Matt Herring, network administrator, Command Element, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit  
 — Special Operations Cumbler, sits in his tent here quietly reading.



*Pacific Pride***Command Element Scuttle****S-1 Administration**

It's been more than five months since we departed the shores of San Diego. We have all been through our own ordeals. As our deployment starts to come to a close and planning for our travel home begins, Marines are starting to look forward to their own homecoming.

1stLt Silva and Sgt Garcia have been added to SJA along with Cpl Chan. We never realized how many claims could be paid to the people of Najaf. Now with the S-1 Marines constantly FAPed out to different areas of responsibility, administrative work has become more hectic. With his expertise in numbers, Lance Cpl Harrell seems to have the accountability of each Marine in the MEU completely under control. Also, we still have our 0121, Lance Cpl Arnold, around to take care of diary needs of all Marines.

Mail is running smoothly with the new system; a convoy runs once a week and the working parties aren't nearly as painful. We also have a fairly new postal clerk on deck, Cpl Pangelinan. Sgt Lerna now has a full shop to run with three postal Marines. Cpl Rodriquez is still running around from camp to camp accompanied by Lance Cpl Johnson making the Marines happy by taking care of their postal needs.

Sgt Redhead has rejoined the shop at Duke (he's been living the good life at FOB Echo). We're all happy to have our motivated sergeant back and we're sure he also looks forward to getting back into the swing of things in the administrative field, and of course working again with his motivated shop and leaders, Gunnery Sgt Starks and Capt Johnson.

We have the dates of our return, but we are all aware that with the Marine Corps everything is subject to change. So as we start making plans for the day we return, we know we need to remain focused as there is still work to be done here in Najaf. Saving Iraq one school and one solatia payment at a time.

**Public Affairs Office**

Hello again from Iraq. The Public Affairs shop has been keeping busy, as you can probably see from the 11th MEU webpage. We've been writing stories, taking pictures and keeping on top of things. The big news from us is that we have to say good bye to two outstanding Marines -- our combat camera crew is leaving. Cpl. Kotecki and Cpl. Fosco will be checking into the 1st Cav Div in about a month or two. It's just not going to be the same without them.

No more masked avenger, no more long drawn out "uuuuuuuuuhhhh"s. It'll be hard to get used to not having those two clowns around.

They worked hard and produced some excellent photos during this deployment. They both have their quirks -- their strengths and their weaknesses but they've both done a great job. They will be missed.

**Staff Judge Advocate**

We've been very active running claims for battle damage repairs. We are still working nonstop on claims and other legal issues. We have been reinforced with and are glad to have Capt Tipon and Cpl Chan working to help us out. We want to wish our families safe and happy holidays. They are loved and missed and we look forward to seeing them.

Maj Walters and Cpl Miller

**Disbursing/Finance Office**

Since leaving San Diego on May 27th, we have come together to become a great team. Although there are only four of us, we are still able to handle any pay situation; from taking helicopters from ship to ship while out at sea, to taking helicopters and convoys in Iraq. We have been very busy in the closing months of our deployment going through an average of more than \$3 million per month, with paying not only Marines but also soldiers, Army National Guardsmen, sailors and helping aid the city of Najaf in reconstruction contracts and its residents through grievance payments.

Our incredible team consists of a pay and a travel technician, Cpl's Gaspar Erosa and Gabriel Cudal, disbursing chief Staff Sgt Christopher Tompkins, and OIC, 1st Lt Roger Ibarra.

1st Lt R. Ibarra

**Chaplain**

"Those who wish to come after me must deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow me. For those who wish to save their lives will lose them, but those who lose their lives for my sake will find them. What profit would there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life." -- Matthew 16:21-27

Violin-makers of old used to personally select the wood they would use to make the instruments. It was noted by the craftsmen that wood from the north side of the tree was the best. The north side was the side that the fiercest windstorms beat and beat upon the trees. Craftsmen maintained that wood from the north side was stronger and more resilient; such wood made an instrument that was richer in tone, timbre, and beauty.

On many evenings when the storms came and wild wind blew, the trees would groan under the violent gusts. But the violin-maker would smile and state: "The trees are simply learning to be violins."

The trees of the wood are symbols for hard-to-embrace words: that in dying we become something greater, that in letting go of the fleeting and passing we become richer. In the suffering we endure we become stronger, in the failures we experience we become wiser.

If we are true to God's call to discipleship, we will find ourselves embracing values that run counter to what our culture

See CE Scuttle page 6

## Pacific Pride

*CE Scuttle, cont'd from page 5*

honors. For example, when we take the lead in asking someone to forgive us. When we put aside our own needs and wants for what is best for our family, community, and nation. The question we have to ask ourselves is will we take up our cross, not out of sense of self-loathing or pessimism, but out of a sense of conviction and hope that the demands of the cross will result in the life and love of the Easter promise."

### S-2 Intelligence

Dear family and friends of the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU (SOC),

Good evening, and hello again! Since our last newsletter, operational tempo at the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU has dropped off some, and the Marines of the S-2 shop have had a chance to catch their breath (for the moment). Here's the latest and greatest from the subsections of the Deuce:

The Intel Marines continue to stay hard at work. All of us continue to man our shifts and stay on top of the things going on around us. We all received some good news in the past week. We finally have some dates to look forward to. Some of us will be going home sooner than others, as they are moving on in their Marine Corps lives or onto civilian life. We have already lost Cpl Robertson back to the civilians as he has already departed this place we call FOB Duke. We are soon to lose Capt Sile, Sgt Ramirez, Staff Sgt Walz, and Staff Sgt Geinert also. The rest of us will stay back and finish the job laid out for us and then be home between February and March.

The Topo Marines, Sgt Perez and Lance Cpl Anderson, continue to stay busy building and improving products, up to this point they have built and printed 1,000s of maps to support everything from the battles in Najaf and Fallujah as well as supporting the rebuilding efforts in the Najaf and Qadisiyah provinces. They continue to support anybody that comes along to include the SLABEIs and the Army.

Our imagery guys continue their nonstop support also; answering all those questions like can I get an image of this? Can you make it clearer? Can you make it bigger? Can we see it from a different angle? And so on. Sgt Ramirez is soon to depart for greener pastures in Virginia leaving Staff Sgt Bell to fend for himself. We wish Ram all the best.

The analysts continue their hard work at trying to build that picture and make it clear so that everybody understands what is going on in our area of responsibility as well as what is happening around us. Sgts Hurst and Clark with the help of Cpl Moudido continue to try and answer all of those questions that our higher ups and subordinates ask us. They in turn keep Sgt Bautista busy updating the web pages and keeping the systems up and running.

Our weather guys are at wits end at the moment trying to figure out what the weather is going to do tomorrow without having to change what they just said 5 minutes prior. We have quite a bit of rain in the last two weeks and it has been giving the guys some fits as they had gotten used to "Hot and Sunny," as a

forecast. Staff Sgt Mills continues to hold the fort down while Sgt Coley supports operations in Diwanayah. Cpl Larrabee tries to keep a handle on the Linguists and Cpl Casasola lets us all sleep well at night knowing that he is out on the guard post keeping watch.

As mentioned previously we have already lost Cpl Robertson from the GSP Det. In the meantime Sgt Roberts continues to keep the VIPs safe as part of the PSD while Sgt Smith and Cpl Sherman keep the rest of us safe on their guard duties.

The 11<sup>th</sup> MEU HET team has been keeping busy, and most of our guys are scattered to the four winds. Staff Sgt Bobeck and Sgt Rossington are keeping it real out in Diwanayah, and Staff Sgt Walz will be heading home soon, as he's chosen to exit stage left and try his hand at civilian life again. As for Wild Bill Kardosh, he remains in Najaf on "business" with the support of Staff Sgt Geinert and Sgt Hagedon. He says he's working hard, but those of us that know him best will tell you that he's hardly working! Bill is just loving his beloved Michigan Wolverines, as they're now 8 and 1 with two more games left in the season. Go Blue!

The Radio Battalion detachment continues to press on with intelligence support to the MEU S-2. With four teams doing round the clock operations for months on end, we are looking forward to heading home in February to sunny Hawaii, where we left nearly a year ago. The training has paid off, and we are proud to have been able to have added to the security of the MEU and contribute to daily operations. It continues to be a pleasure to serve during this time, and to be part of history as the Iraqi government and populace gains their foothold.

Everybody here is looking forward to getting home as soon as they can, and a couple are trying to find a way home a little faster. Our goal is to bring everybody home safe to their loved ones. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and know that it's not a train, that there is still a long road till we get to that light.

Well, that's about it for here, folks. We're all looking forward to coming home, and we can't wait to be back with you, our loved ones. Take care!

### S-3 Operations

Marines remained busy in the S-3 shop as we changed focus from war fighting to restoring and rebuilding local towns in Najaf and Diwanayah.

Marines over at FOB Echo were occupied handing out backpacks to local schoolchildren as part of a civil affairs project to bring needed school supplies to the youngsters. This provided an opportunity for the Marines to interact and experience some of the culture in Iraq. Additionally in Diwanayah, S-3 Marines are frequently finding themselves out on convoys surveying sites that need restoration, or adding an extra pair of eyeballs on a convoy with the secret squirrel intel Marines. Wherever they find themselves, they are seeing different parts of Iraq and doing things beyond the usual scope of their jobs back in Camp Pendleton.

See *CE Scuttle*, page 7

## Pacific Pride

*CE Scuttle, cont'd from page 6*

On FOB Duke, S-3 Marines are also assisting in civil affairs projects out in town, going out on convoys and observing the Iraqi children that scurry to the side of the road and wave enthusiastically when we drive by.

The Marines find time to unwind from a hard day at work, by participating in volleyball games, playing a friendly game of Spades, putting together a soccer game or just hitting the gym in hopes of discovering a new muscle group before they head home.

The rain has finally arrived, and with the cooler weather, the battle of the heater has officially begun in the COC.

Creative ways to stay entertained are introduced every week as the Marines look forward to heading home, but they remain dedicated to completing their mission in Iraq and setting the Iraqi people up for success.

### S-4/Logistics/Supply

Maj Jarosz has been busy with all the engineering projects, camp improvements and everything else that is going on. He is still refusing to sleep because he loses the bubble on what is going on with everything. Will the late nights ever end? He is doing well and I think that he will be very well prepared to relieve his wife of the triplets when he returns home for a few days/weeks. I'm sure that his wife is looking for a break.

Well J (Gunnery Sgt Bergquist AKA Gunny B) have been doing well. Everyone in the section has everything under control and is making my job very easy. I still have to pull rabbits out of a hat every now and then with the last minute changes that come up. The only real problem now is that we have so many SNCOs and our only NCO is on the CO's PSD all the time. Who am I going to get to take the trash out and do the section's laundry? Junior SNCO up! Sorry! I do have a question: because of our late departure can I stay and be the ADVON for our next deployment? Never mind I didn't get any sea time on this deployment so I will try again next year.

Capt Salas has been busy going out to An Najaf participating on the Solatia payments, and scenic trips. She is continuing to stay busy working with the Maintenance Management Chief, Staff Sgt Aquino, and the Ammo Chief Staff Sgt Solorio.

Staff Sgt Solorio has found a new friend — Cpl Elliott (Army). The two of them are keeping up on their shooting skills. Staff Sgt Solorio is keeping the Marine Corps' tradition and kicking the Army's butt. They are in training for the 2005 Play Station II Olympics.

Newly promoted Staff Sgt Aquino says he doesn't feel any different due to the fact that he is still doing the section's laundry. He is currently busy processing claims (a NEW job he acquired) for Solatia payments so he's staying busy.

Capt Smith, AKA Capt Grumpy, is getting even more gray hair (if that is possible) working diligently on our redeployment. He has secured Staff Sgt Cashman, AKA Skater, a spot out of here as early as possible in order to get him out of the way and actually

be able to get some work done. He has decided that he loves this place so much that he is willing to come back for round three.

Staff Sgt Cashman (where has he been? Check his rack) can usually be found acting busy and getting ready for UBS. He pretends to PT daily and, when he can show up to work on time, usually doesn't do anything, hence the early flight home and the extra gray hairs on Capt Grumpy's head. He decided to drop his pack and run for the border. I'm sure he'll be nice and warm when he reaches Virginia. We told him that the weather there is beautiful in February and for some reason he believes us. We are all looking forward to not having to hear him complain about how cold it is getting here (in the high 80's low 90's during the day).

Sgt Guerrero (is he even still here?) has been kept busy winning the hearts and minds of Iraqi children by handing out soccer balls and candy on an almost daily basis. We believe that he has found new love in a few Iraqi women and states that he doesn't want to leave this beautiful country.

### S-6 Communications

You can talk about us, but you can't talk without us!

The S-6 staff is doing well. I've heard that the last newsletter caused a buzz with Johnny Bravo's call sign. Anyone not familiar with the character from Cartoon Network should check out <http://www.tv.com/johnnybravo/> for a little background. In short, Johnny Bravo is muscular, meat headed, big haired fella. Now that you know a little about who Johnny Bravo is, I hope you can see the similarities between our fearless leader Major Zyla and Johnny Bravo.

Captain "ODB" Blocker has realized that 7-ton trucks are indescribably more comfortable than HMMWVs (Humvees). He learned this on a recent day trip to another base to pick up some supplies. Other than that, ODB has been driving his desk most of the time, managing the comm networks and stuff like that. He can be heard in his off duty hours muttering the phrase "Stupid SYSCON... That was a *good idea!*" No one has been able to figure out what he's talking about, though.

Master Sgt Richard didn't like being called "whip cracker," so in an attempt to console him, we'll change his call sign to "I used to work with *that person*." There's not an incident or story told in this MEU that Top can't interject that he knows someone involved somehow. And even though we're poking fun at that trait, it's really a good thing, because it reminds us that the Corps is a small, close knit family, and if you stick around long enough you will know just about everyone in your field.

Since the last newsletter there have been more than a few changes around the platoon. Cpl "Eyebrows" Flores and Cpl "Can't pronounce his name" Silamianos are back aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., with 9th Comm Bn. Their replacements from the Comm Bn are Lance Cpl "Cheeks" Yang and Lance Cpl "I won't stop talking" Sweringen. They have been doing okay. On the lighter side (and I do mean lighter), Gunnery Sgt "A.D.D." Tomkin was selected for the rank of Warrant Officer. We don't know whether we should offer our congratulations or our condolences -

*See CE Scuttle page 8*

## Pacific Pride

*CE Scuttle, cont'd from page 7*

take your pick. We have also had a few Marines promoted within the ranks. They were Sgt "Moose" Gaston and Sgt "Thinks he's Irish" Garcia. The new NCO's are Cpl "What did you say?" Simons and Cpl "You didn't tell me" Ford. It gets better. Two Marines were awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal. Cpl "MacGyver" McDonald and Cpl "Big Bear" McKinney. Cpl Machida's wife had a bouncing baby boy. We didn't get any cigars for the occasion because Cpl Machida was "being frugal." Yeah, right. Capt "Wants-to-be-Swoll" Wilson is still leading his Devil Dogs the only way he knows how: around in circles. Fortunately, the Marines are there to take care of him and set him on the straight path time and again.

The Marines are doing tremendous work on our Forward Operating Base. We have started to run cables and wires into the newly renovated COC to provide continued internet services and phones for the Command Element and 11th MEU as a whole. Our Marines have also been part of the civil affairs operations for the people of An Najaf. We are also making sure that the "Super Big Giant Booming Voice in the Sky" (also known as the SGBVS, or as "that damn loudspeaker!") is in place and ready to be used if needed. Also, as you all know, there ain't no party like a working party. Sorting mail, escorting local nationals, or just policing up the area are tasks that drain our manpower daily. In addition, through the tireless efforts of the Data Devils, the Segovia (Space Link Internet Cafe) tent is off the ground and running and is a big hit with the residents of the FOB. We have also... wait a minute, let me stop there. For a little while there you would think the S-6 are the only ones working on this base!

The Radio and Maintenance sections have been working hard, as well. The team has been busy with their regular watches, the never-ending requirement for working parties, and basic day-to-day tasks. In addition to all that, Staff Sgt Boudreau and his techs have awed and amazed the masses by installing radios and other electronic systems in vehicles -- then taking them out and moving them to different vehicles. Then the put more stuff in those vehicles. When there's no room for anything else to go in a vehicle and put more systems in it! Why do they do all this, you might wonder? Well, the short answer is because they are told to. The long answer is ... because they are told to! The radio operators also have had their share of additional tasks. Staff Sgt Page and Sgt Burleigh have been doing a great job bringing the team back together. Cpl Nichols returned from "B" Company, only to be assigned to the FCI. Now he is downtown working with Sgt Wilse and Cpl Ortega ... again. Cpl Walker (newly promoted, I'd like to add) has returned from Alpha Company. Cpl Hodge is back from Charlie Company, too. The only Radio operators out now are Sgt Pimentel and Sgt Guzman, who are with HQ Company, and Pfc Beames, who replaced Cpl Walker at Alpha Company.

There is so much more I could write about, but I'll let the Marines save some stories for when they get home to you all!

S-6  
OUT

*CE Scuttle, cont'd on page 9*

## Great American Smokeout Nov. 19

### A Reason to Quit

Commentary by Gunnery Sgt. Glenn Holloway  
Marine Corps News Chief, Headquarters, Marine Corps

Dear Smokers, You stink!

You stink from your mouth. You stink from your hair. You stink over here. You stink over there. You stink from your clothes. You assault my poor nose. The nicotine and tar, they cling to your car, and you stink, stink, stink wherever you are. Your hands and your houses, yes, they stink, too. And your kids go to school smelling like poo.

Doused with your spritzes and splashed with colognes, your sweet, syrupy stink just keeps pressing on. Your valiant attempts to mask the foul smell make no more of a dent than an ice cube in Hell.

You stink in the mornings; I've smelled you at night. The smell won't wash off try as you might. You stand in commuter lines pouring smoke from your nostrils that digs in our lungs with gray prying tendrils. It claws at our faces and tears at our eyes; that smoke from your habit does terrorize.

I know some of you hate me for saying what's true, but take it from me I was one of you. I smoked and I smoked. I longed for the pleasure of an after lunch "nail, like a pirate" treasure. I smoked and I coughed and I fouled up the air, until I grew tired of my own stinky hair.

So I quit, yes I did. I put down those cancer sticks I'd smoked since a kid. It was hard at first, to throw in the towel, and my body freaked out with tobacco withdrawal. I sat all alone pondering my dilemma, hoping all smokers would get emphysema. But, Ah! Now it's over I want them no more, especially when I see their cost at the store.

Now I just wish that you too would quit, and not look at me like some hypocrite. You stink. I'm telling you when you come up beside us with your hacking old coughs headed fast toward bronchitis. Put out that smoke, that pipe or that stogie, you'll never be cool as Hepburn or Bogey.

Besides, they stunk too, just like an old bog and the funk from their mouths was like a nasty green fog that settles around you and chokes off your breath -- it sent its owners straight toward their deaths.

Just stop for two months, you'll see what I mean, the air that you breath will be sweeter and clean. You'll then be able to smell all the smokers, who smell just like we did, those poor stinky jokers. You'll notice one day while in the elevator, a stinky office worker who breathes like Darth Vader. You'll be stuck with her as you ride to your floor and you'll pray to God that he'll open the door.

Join me, people, as I send out the call to stop all this smoking once and for all.

Put down that Zippo, give it a think, 'cause until you do ...

Dear Smokers,  
You Stink!

## Pacific Pride

CE Scuttle, cont'd from page 8

### Headquarters Commandant

**Master Sg. Kevin Bonds** -- Another day, another summer, another monthly news letter, which means another month has passed and we're another month closer to getting back to our loved ones.

During this past month, the Headquarters Commandant Section has been busy making sure the necessary functions get taken care of so the 11th MEU can truly be "The Pride of the Pacific." Speaking of Pacific, it's now what they call the rainy season.

First, I am proud to say congrats to the newly promoted Staff Sergeant, and Lance Corporal in the Headquarters Commandant Section, Staff Sgt Munoz, and Lance Cpl Francis. I guess Francis was recommended after all.

My police Sergeants, Sgt Ahnaguer and Lance Cpl Francis have been busy with billeting Marines and Navy Seabees. Sgt A. and Lance Cpl Francis also had a hand in building what we call the "Segovia Tent," which is a tent filled with computers. Next, they will help in providing phones in that tent so Marines can call home. I think they are excited about that one.

The PSD has been busy providing security every day, and when they're not providing security, they're on the range training. Like Sgt Rosario, the PSD team leader always says -- "If it ain't raining, we ain't training."

The Motor T section, which was working nights, decided to go back to working days. I told them they went from being vampires, to soaring with the eagles.

Our armorer, Lance Cpl Shauer has been busy doing monthly inventories and going out to the ranges when the PSD team trains. Lance Cpl Shauer also went up for the Corporal board, but failed to win due to some keen competition.

This month was filled with a lot of drama, case in point: the rainy season is upon us and it's flooding everywhere. We, being the 11th MEU, had our first barbeque at Camp Duke, a huge success, even with the scattered showers.

Speaking of competition, we also established the 11th MEU flag football team; it will be interesting to see how well we compete.

Finally, we recently celebrated the Marine Corps Birthday with a traditional ceremony. Happy Birthday Marines, past and present, wherever you are.



### POSTAL SERVICE SETS OVERSEAS 2004 HOLIDAY MAILING DATES

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Postal Service today made available its 2004 Holiday Season recommended mailing dates for delivery to military overseas APO/FPO addresses and international destinations by Saturday, Dec. 25, based on economical air and surface transportation.

To be certain of timely delivery of holiday greeting cards and packages, the Postal Service recommends mailing by the following dates. Since Hanukkah begins Dec. 8, mailing dates should be adjusted accordingly.

Military Mail Addressed To	First Class Mail Letters/Cards	Priority Mail	Parcel Airlift Mail (PAL) <sup>1</sup>	Space Available Mail (SAM) <sup>2</sup>	Parcel Post®
APO/FPO AE Zips 090-092	Dec 11	Dec 11	Dec 4	Nov 27	Nov 13
APO/FPO AE Zips 093	Dec 6	Dec 6	Dec 4	Nov 27	Nov 13
APO/FPO AE Zips 094-098	Dec 11	Dec 11	Dec 4	Nov 27	Nov 13
APO/FPO AA Zips 340	Dec 11	Dec 11	Dec 4	Nov 27	Nov 13
APO/FPO AP Zips 962-966	Dec 11	Dec 11	Dec 4	Nov 27	Nov 13

<sup>1</sup> PAL: A special service providing air transportation for parcels on a space-available basis. PAL is available for Parcel Post® not exceeding 30 lbs. in weight or 60 inches in length and girth combined. The applicable PAL fee must be paid in addition to the regular surface rate of postage for each addressed piece sent by PAL service.

<sup>2</sup> SAM: Parcels paid in Parcel Post® postage rates are first transported domestically by surface and then to overseas destinations by air on a space-available basis. The maximum weight and size limits are 15 lbs. and 60 inches in length and girth combined.

#### Military Address Tips

- Use the service member's full name (with or without rank or rating), military organization or unit, and APO/FPO address.
- Do not include the country name in any part of the address.

Programs that allowed the general public to send mail addressed to "Any Service Member" are no longer available.

## *Pacific Pride*

### Camp Pendleton Information

#### Santa Comes to The Library

Where: City of Carlsbad Dove Library  
Gowland Meeting Room & Schulman Auditorium

When: Friday, December 17, 2004

Time: 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Description: All Ages ... come get your picture taken with santa and enjoy some holiday activities.

For more information call: 602-2047

#### Mission Christmas Faire

Date: Nov. 20-21

Time: 9am - 4pm

Location: Mission San Luis Rey

Details: This event will have over 150 booths of arts & crafts and food, as well as entertainment and a children's area. Snow will be there on Saturday only. Santa & Mrs. Claus will be there on both days starting at 11am.

Sponsored by the Oceanside Chamber of Commerce.

For more information, contact the Chamber at (760) 722-1534.

#### Toys for Tots Motorcycle Benefit Ride

Date: Nov. 20

Time: 9am - 11:30am

Location: Harbor Parking Lot #1

Details: Parking lot # 1 is used as a starting point for a motorcycle benefit ride in support of the US Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Drive.

Sponsored by the Goldwing Road Riders Assoc. Chapter CAIN.

For more information contact James Pratt at (760) 722-2797.

#### Live Nativity

Date: Dec. 10-11

Time: 6:30pm - 9pm

Location: Martin Luther King Jr. Park (4300 Mesa Drive)

Details: Four scenes of Nativity with live characters and animals for the public to come and view.

Sponsored by the Del Oro Hills Community Church.

For more information, contact the Church at (760) 439-1272.

#### Community Christmas Meal

Date: December 11

Time: 11am-2:30pm

Location: Parking lot at corner of Seagaze & Dilmar

Details: The meal portion of this event will be held at Calvary Chapel, located at 625 Seagaze. At the parking lot, the event will continue with live music, used clothing give-away, face painting and a bounce house for the kids.

Sponsored by Grace Chapel of the Coast.

For more information, contact Grace Chapel at (760) 754-2974.

#### Parade of Lights

Date: December 11

Time: 6pm - 9pm

Location: Oceanside Harbor

Details: Parade of decorated boats will be cruising the waters of the inner harbor.

Sponsored by the Oceanside Yacht Club.

For more information, contact the Yacht Club at (760) 722-5751.

#### Toys for Tots Golf Tournament

Date: Dec. 3

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Location: Camp Pendleton Marine Memorial Golf Course

Cost: Entry fee is \$35 for E-5 and below, \$40 for E-6 through O-3,

\$45 for O4 and above and \$50 for DoD civilian employees or guests.

Details: This year, Pendleton's HMLA-775, MAG-46 Det A is hosting the tournament. All proceeds benefit Toys for Tots.

If you're interested in playing in the tournament or for more information call Staff Sgt. Leighton at 760-763-5943 or Sgt. Lee at 760-725-8270 or email

### **NEW CALIFORNIA LAW: Tax Changes Affecting Non-California Military Personnel Could Mean More Money For You**

Governor Schwarzenegger and the California Legislature have enacted a state law that may benefit non-California resident Marines and Sailors who filed California tax returns. The law conforms California's tax code to the Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act. It prevents California from using a non-resident member's military pay to increase tax liability. This law allows servicemembers to amend their California tax returns for the 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 tax years in order to reduce the amount of tax owed for those years.

#### Example:

Husband is a Marine from Florida whose only income for 2003 is \$15,000 from his military pay. Wife is a California resident who made \$5,000 dollars from her part-time job in California. Prior to the change, California used the couple's total income (\$20,000) to determine the tax liability. For 2003, they would have owed \$291 to the state of California.

With the new law, the tax liability for this couple is based only on the resident-wife's California income of \$5,000. They now owe \$50. They can file an amended California return and expect a refund of \$241.

VITA, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Office, offers FREE TAX PREPARATION services, including assistance with filing amended returns as described above. If you are a non-resident servicemember and you filed a California return jointly with your spouse, you may be able to file an amended return to get a refund. VITA tax preparers are trained to help you with this. In order to file an amended return, **you will need** to bring the



## Pacific Pride

*Pendleton Info, cont'd from page 10*

following to VITA:

**1) BOTH your Federal and California tax returns for the applicable tax year(s). This means the entire return including any schedules.** If you do not have a copy of your returns, you can request one from the IRS or the State of California by filing the appropriate forms. VITA personnel cannot provide copies of your tax returns prior to 2002. For 2002-2003 we can only provide copies if you filed through our office. To request your Federal return, file IRS Form 4506.

( <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f4506.pdf> ). To request a copy of your California tax return, fill out Form 3516 ( <http://www.ftb.ca.gov/individuals/fac/yr/615.html> ).

**2) Military ID for you and your spouse.**

**3) Social Security Card for you and your spouse and any dependents.**

**4) All W-2's for you and your spouse.**

VITA is located on Mainside in Building 1687, on the opposite side of Vandegrift Blvd. from the Marine Corps Exchange. From Vandegrift Blvd. turn onto 11th Street. Make a left onto "C" Street, and then a right onto 7th and park in the gravel lot. Our hours are:

Monday: 0800-1600

Tuesday: By appointment only. To make an appointment, call 725-2518.

Wednesday: 0800-1600

Thursday: By appointment only

Friday: 0800-1600

For additional information, please see VITA's website at <http://www.pendleton.usmc.mil/vita-home.htm>.

### Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP)

#### The Marriage Enrichment Workshop

Whether engaged, Newlyweds or married 30 years, this Workshop is for you!

The Marine Corps Family Team Building staff and your chaplains have teamed up to offer you a truly out-standing program known as "PREP" (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program).

This program has proven so effective in recent years that it has been featured on 20/20, 48 Hours, Oprah, and in many articles of the printed media.

#### PREP is for you if

- You're involved in a close relationship such as seriously dating, an engagement, or a marriage;
- You want romance and passion in your marriage;
- You'd like to be able to talk together as friends;
- You'd sometimes like to shut out all of life's hassles and just be together;
- You're determined to knock down those communication walls that creep up with time and stress.

PREP offers a fresh approach. It is basic and straightforward. The

*See Pendleton Info, page 12*

### 11TH MEU (SOC) Commanding Officer's 229TH Birthday Message

On the occasion of the 229th birthday of the United States Marine Corps, I offer all of you, and your families, my heartfelt best wishes on this day so special to all Marines. Words cannot adequately express the immense gratitude I have experienced for the teamwork, dedication, and sacrifices that you and your families have made in the last year as we prepared for deployment and as we now fight for freedom alongside Iraqis on this day.

We all pause to recognize those, brother and sister Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines amongst us who have fallen or been injured. You and our injured and fallen comrades have distinguished yourselves at dress right amongst the most famous of Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in history.

You have written yet another golden chapter in the proud history of United States Marines, Soldiers and Sailors. No matter what tasks we have been assigned or what timelines we've had to meet, you have been there, ready to go, ready to fight, ready to server your country's call and each other.

Your families have been unbelievably supportive throughout.

There is no higher, more noble action that can be demonstrated by each of you than that which you are already carrying out and continue daily. Your actions have helped to bring life where there was only death, health where there was rampant sickness, healing where there was only the prospect of pain and suffering. I stand here humbled at the endless reservoir of esprit-de-corps and brotherhood that emanates from every man and woman I've had the pleasure of serving beside.

I do not know exactly how much longer we will be tasked to continue to execute our current duties, or what the future holds. No matter what lies ahead, I am confident you will continue to distinguish yourselves with honor, once again reaffirming that marines are eternally capable, and that you will continue to do what is right and just.

To the Soldiers and Sailors who serve now, and have served and sacrificed with us, we are grateful for your brotherhood and are pleased to have you by our side as a part of the 11th MEU family.

I wish all of you and your families the best for the upcoming year. I charge each of us to take a moment also to remember those amongst us who have gone before, those of our brothers and sisters who are recovering from injuries, and their families who support them and carry their flame forward, along with each of us. I am immeasurably proud of all of you and I will always be so. Happy birthday Marines.

Semper Paratus,  
Colonel Anthony M. Haslam

## Pacific Pride

*CE Scuttle, cont'd from page 8*

workshop and the materials teach couples the skills they need to nurture a lasting love. Couples spend most of their time in special discussions or practicing skills. Key topics include expectations, commitment, fun, forgiveness, friendship, feeling understood and sensuality.

PREP is NOT therapy, and is unlike anything to which you have been exposed. No encounter group or sharing of personal concerns, no dry psychobabble . . . simply thrilling insights into a more loving, growth filled relationship!

PREP begins with teaching effective communication skills, then address problem resolution strategies that work, how to discover the hidden issues in every relationship, and then move into forgiveness, fun, friendship, and sensuality.

### Questions Couples Ask About This Enrichment Workshop:

• We're doing pretty well; why should we attend a Marriage Enrichment Workshop?

All of us can improve our skills when it comes to loving the most important people in our lives. Every couple starts off their relationship committed to make it work. Unfortunately, many of us simply do not know HOW to accomplish a healthy and fulfilling marriage. The difficulty is not knowing what to do to make that happen! PREP can provide concrete strategies and tools to build a rewarding marriage.

• Will we be expected to tell a bunch of strangers what our problems are?

No. This is not group therapy; it is an educational and practical application opportunity to learn what works in marriage (and what makes marriage work). It's not necessary that we share those short-falls with the group. Your confidentiality is important to us and will be protected.

• Why would commands give people time off to attend a Marriage Enrichment Workshop?

\* They really do care about your family relationships;

\* If you become more effective at open communication while knowing how to keep discussions from escalating into arguments, it will benefit the workspace as well as at home; and

\* Participating in this Workshop is a huge boost to family readiness and tranquility.

• Is this a religious program?

Not at all, although the Bible is a tremendous source of wisdom about how relationships can thrive. No religious nor denominational teachings are included in "Marriage Enrichment, the PREP Approach."

• Enjoying the good times: More than "Don't Worry, Be Happy," learn the secrets of keeping business from crowding-out the fun in your relationship.

• Viva La Difference! Gain fresh insights into why men and women see life so differently. You'll leave with a whole new appreciation for who you are -and whom you love.

• Danger Signs: Learn the danger signs that can lead to marital discord and eventually breakdown of the relationship. Discover

how to express your concerns constructively and how to examine hidden issues or expectations that can build so quickly in a marriage.

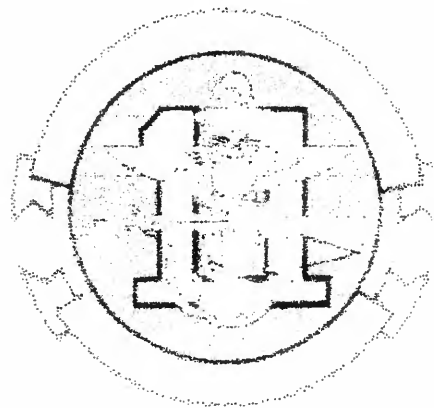
Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program  
Marine Corps Family Team Building (MCFTB)

Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program is now being offered at the Religious Development Classroom, Bldg 1344. This one-day workshop is for you! Whether engaged, newlyweds or married 30 years, learn strategies that will help you build and/or enhance a wonderful relationship! Come laugh and learn as we share the tremendous joy of connecting. For everyone wanting to be understood, PREP is a simple yet effective tool to bring insight and closeness to your relationship. Your marriage or relationship can be an oasis of acceptance and appreciation. Camp Pendleton's Chaplain's Corp facilitates this course of instruction.

19 October 2004	19 April 2005
16 November 2004	17 May 2005
01 December 2004	21 June 2005
18 January 2005	19 July 2005
15 February 2005	16 Aug 2005
15 March 2005	20 Sep 2005

For reservations and information please, contact MCFTB at 760-725-2335.

To register for this FREE opportunity, call Marine Corps Family Team Building at (760) 725-2335.







**Item 3**

# Stories PAO

11th Marine Expeditionary Unit  
Story and Photos







webmaster

11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos



11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos



webmaster

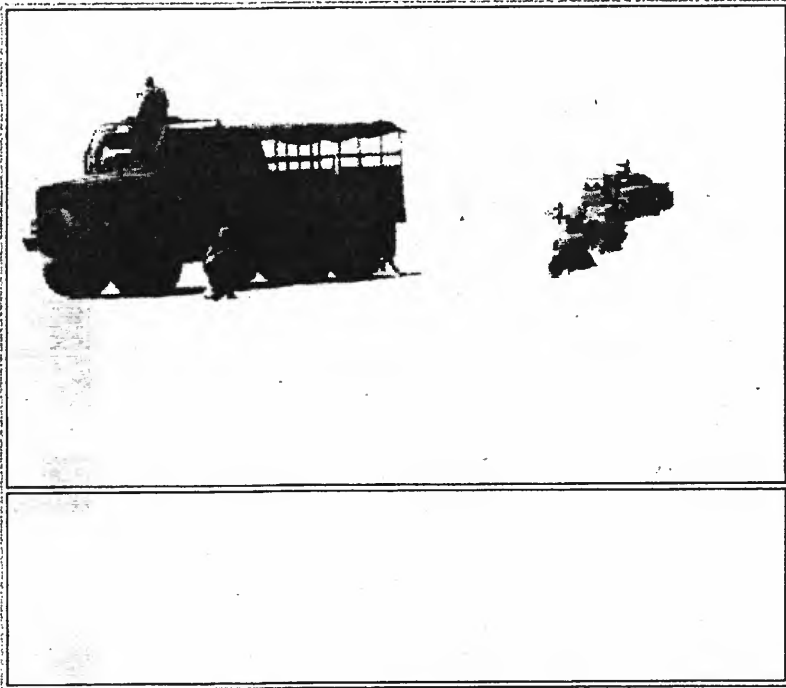
11th Marine Expeditionary Unit  
Story and Photos





11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos



11th Marine Expeditionary Unit  
Story and Photos



11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos

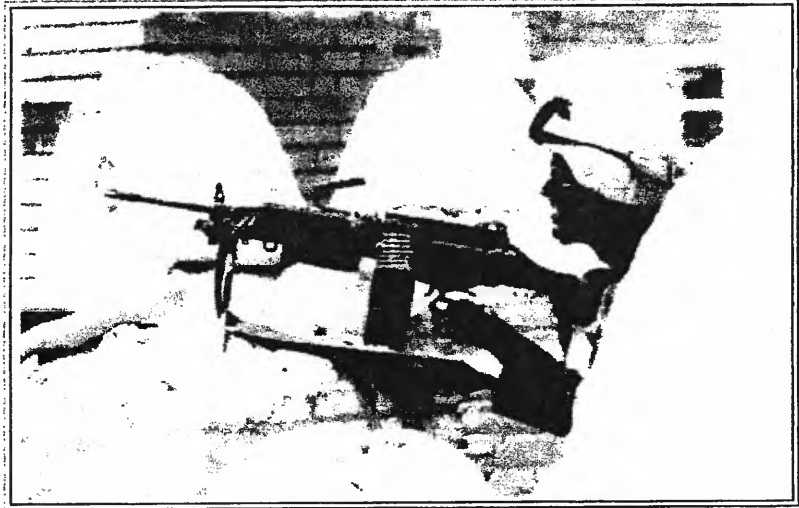


11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos



11th Marine Expeditionary Unit  
Story and Photos



wehmarstar

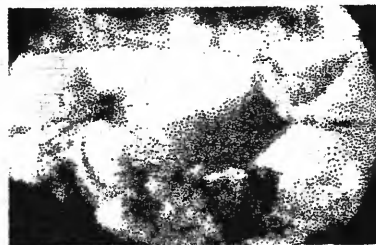
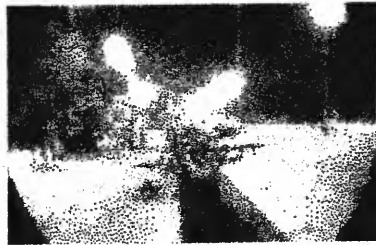
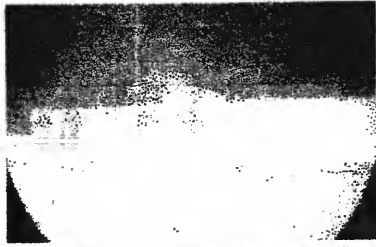
11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

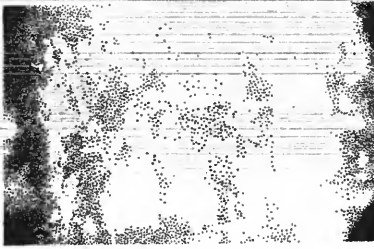
# Story and Photos



11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos







11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

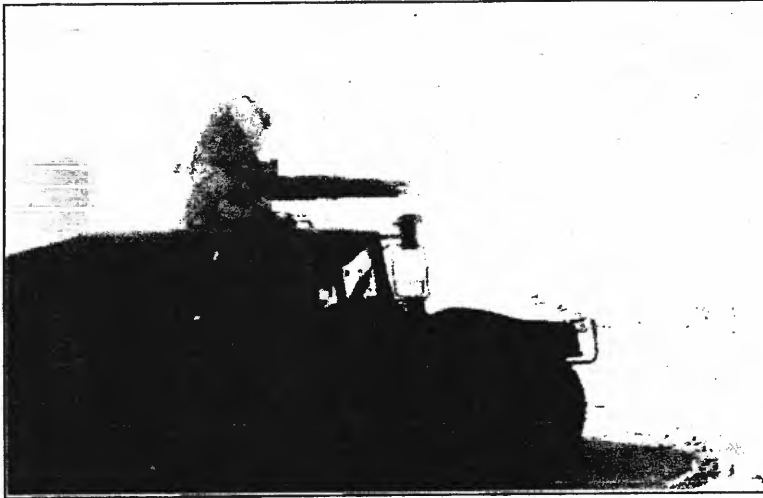
# Story and Photos





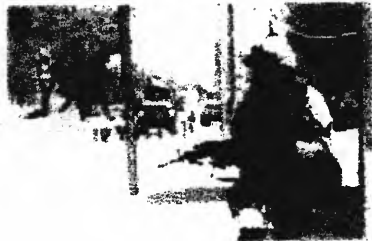
11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

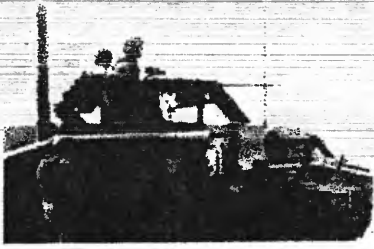
# Story and Photos



11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos

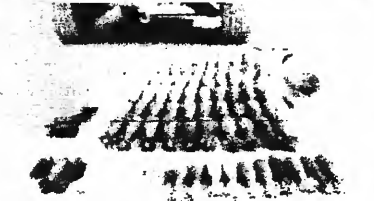


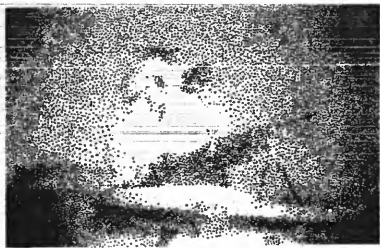




11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos







11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos

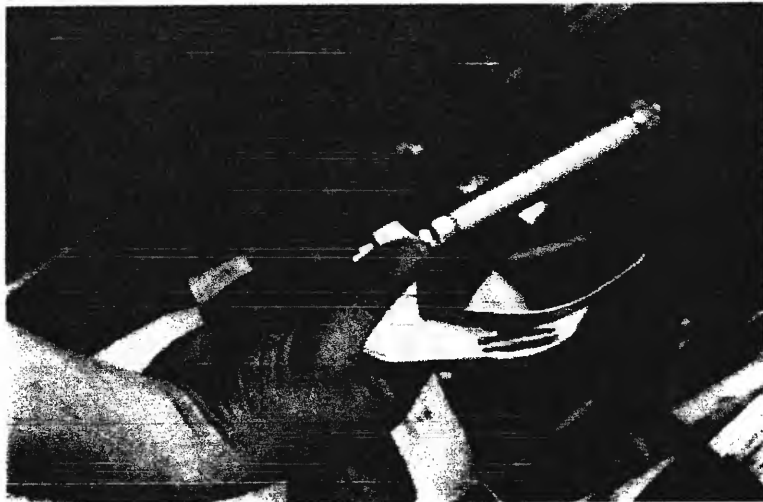




11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

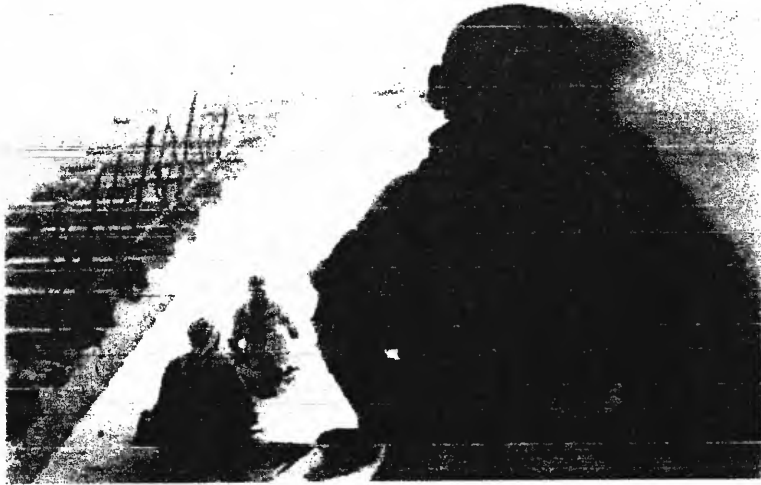
# Story and Photos





11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos





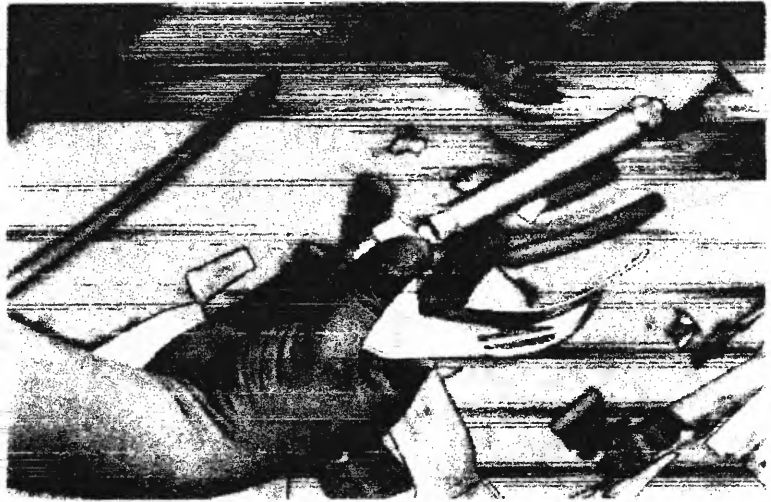


11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos







11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos

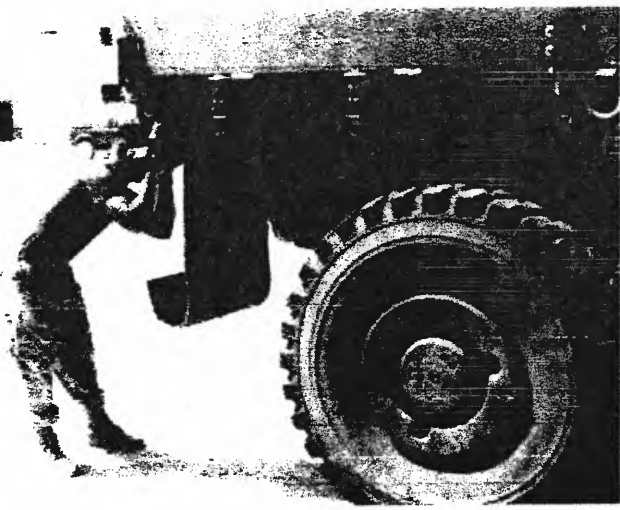


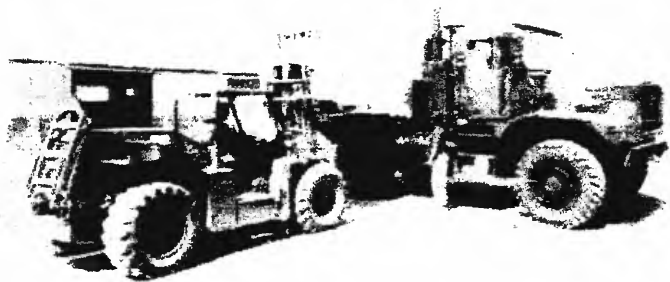
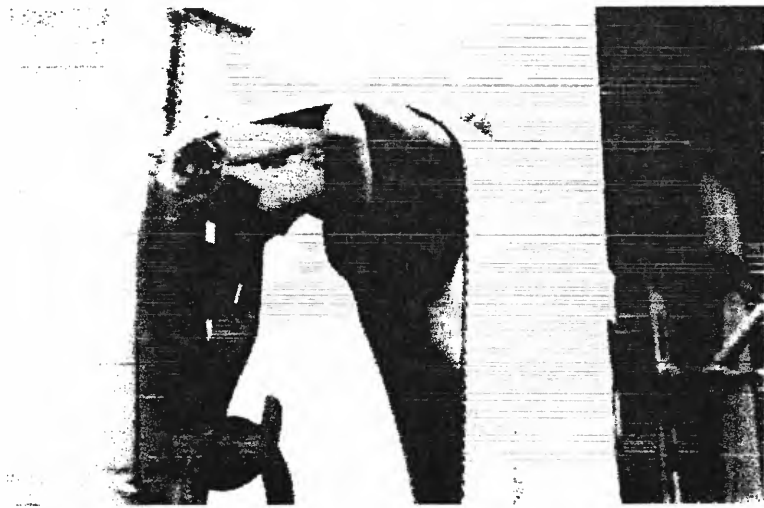
11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos



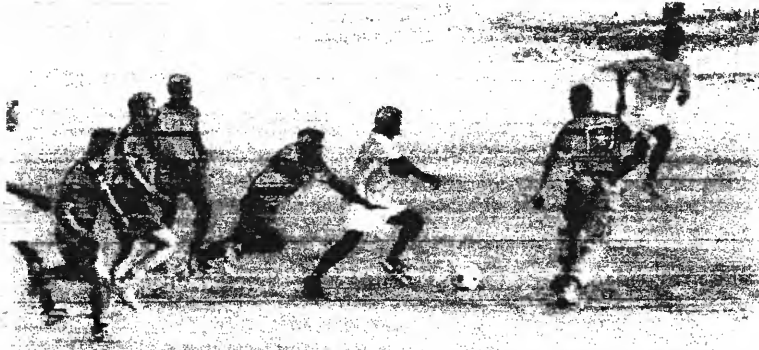


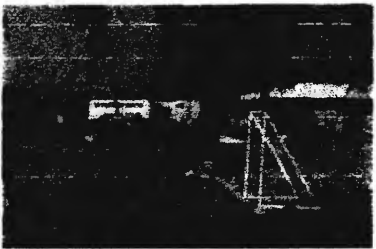




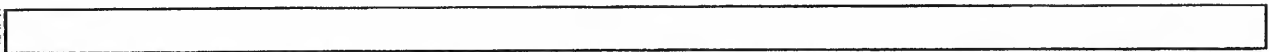
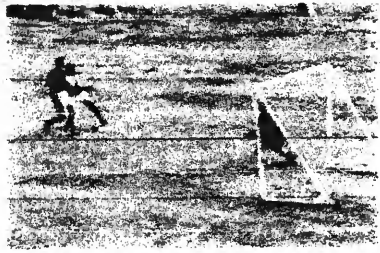
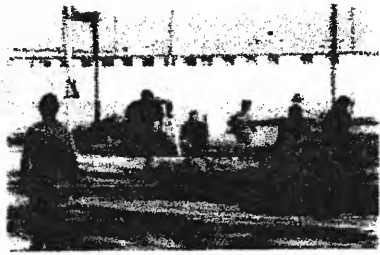
11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos









11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos





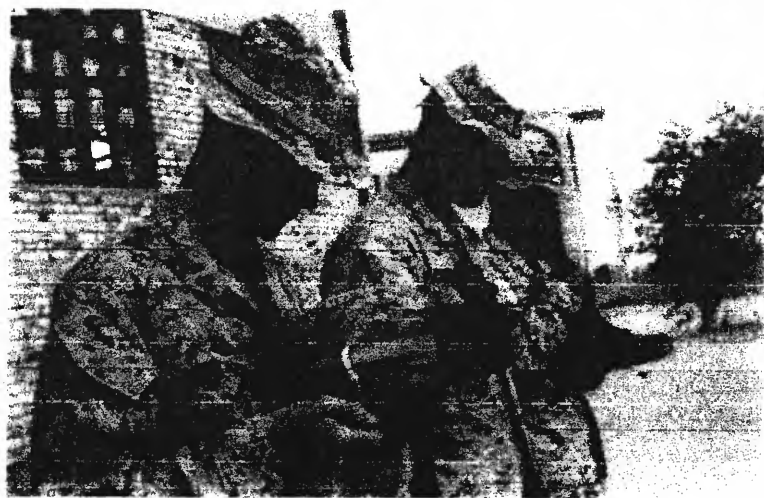
[Empty rectangular box]

11th Marine Expeditionary Unit  
**Story and Photos**



11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos





11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos







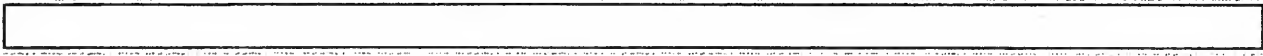








11th Marine Expeditionary Unit  
Story and Photos



11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos



11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos









[Redacted text block]

11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos





11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos

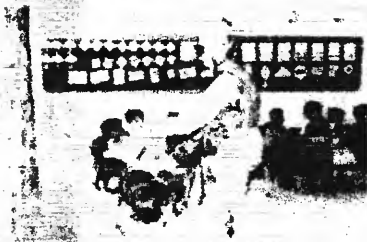




11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos







[Empty rectangular box]



11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos



Faint, illegible text at the top left of the page.



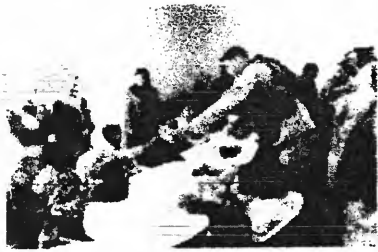
A long, empty rectangular box at the bottom of the page, possibly a placeholder for a caption or a signature.

11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos







11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos





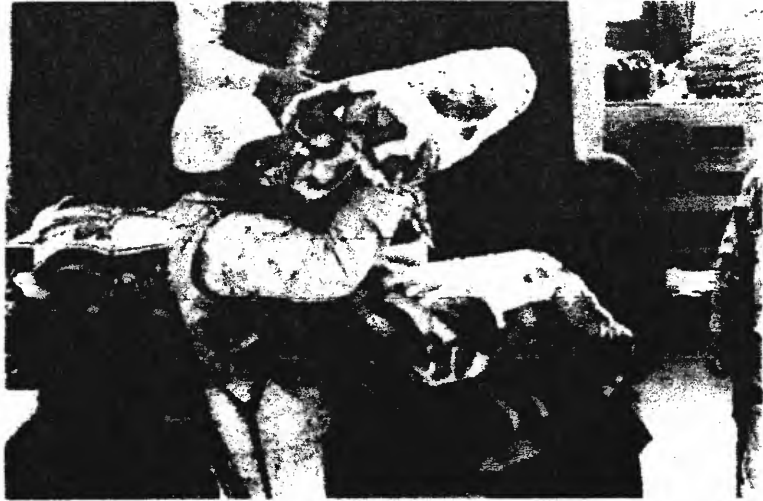






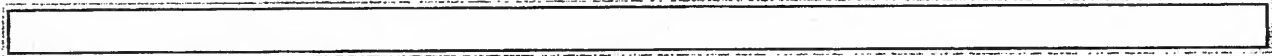
11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos









11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos



11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos









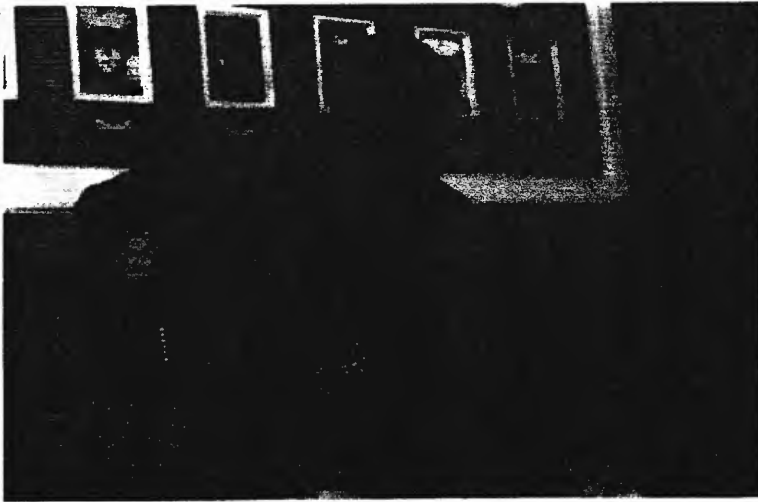
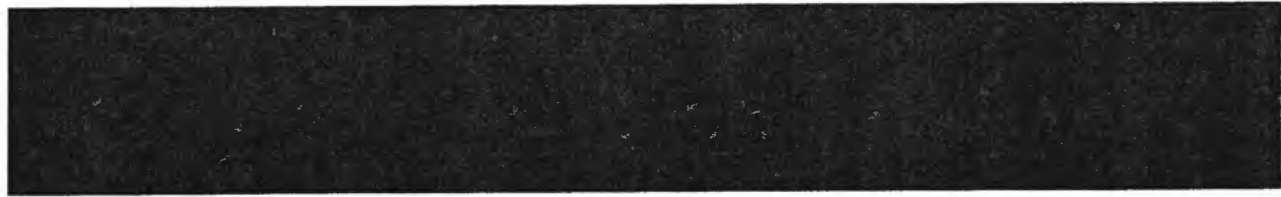




11th Marine Expeditionary Unit

# Story and Photos





**Marine honors fallen warriors with music**

AN NAJIB... night... in an... too late... battle... his song... his friends... battles

Station... Pfc. Terry... clerk, Headquarters and Support

Company, Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Expeditionary Unit, Special Operations Capable, works at a desk... processing paperwork dealing with the daily activities of the unit.

the... that... with...

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

## 11TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT NEWS RELEASE

Headline: Marines of 11th MEU do have leisure

Marine Corps News Story By: Cpl. Matthew S. Richards

CAMP FORWARD OPERATING BASE DUKE, Iraq – The sun is fierce here and long hours of patrolling in the dust filled town of An Najaf, Iraq, leave the Marine encased by a transparent layer of powder. A sweat-drenched flak jacket and helmet drop to the floor with two numbing thuds, sending more dust particles shooting through the surrounding air. Another Marine finally rests inside a wind beaten green tent -- one graciously filled with the cool respite of air conditioning.

The day was long, like many others, but there are more to come. Lance Cpl. William E. Hartman, operations clerk, Command Element, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), returns from another arduous day providing security out in town. This one, like many others, the day began as the sun came up and ended long after the sky slowly bruised from warm orange to deep blue.

After shedding his gear, Hartman jumps in a cleansing shower and then goes to swallow a hot meal. His feet hurt and his body is tired. He knows it's all going to happen

again tomorrow while he crawls in the rack, slips on his headphones and closes his mind to everything but the band The Grateful Dead now playing in his ears. This is an almost daily practice for him, and he uses it to get by.

It's just his way of winding down from a strenuous day and preparing for the next. Many other Marines of the MEU have their own unique means of relaxation and fun after work.

"They (The Grateful Dead) help me get to sleep at night, and most of their songs are happy. So, if I listen to them at night when I go to sleep I'll be thinking of a song in the morning and that makes the day better," Hartman said.

Most Marines use their leisure time to escape -- to catch a momentary break from their work. But they don't do anything that gets in the way of their job. For most, it's just a way to keep from getting burnt out on the stress that can accompany one on a deployment.

Corporal Dave R. Ford, network administrator, Command Element, claims that he "definitely" spends more than half his spare time glued to a video game of some kind. He owns two different game systems out here, borrows another occasionally from the MEU Chaplain's office, and even has more games on his personal computer.

"It helps time pass easily and it helps me get through the deployment," Ford said.

However, he doesn't hoard the game play to himself. He'll drop his game to let in another player at any time. So, the environment around his rack can be solemn with his quiet concentration or filled with yells of jubilation where one Marine conquers another in one of the many games. He plays most types, everything from first person shooter, role-playing, strategic and different sports games.

"He'll play anything he can get his hands on," said Cpl. Sylvester McKinney, network administrator, Command Element, as he stepped in front of Ford's screen to see what he was playing.

Ford also points out that the games do more than just pass the time for him. He says they help cope with his helter skelter work schedule that often causes him to get sleep at infrequent intervals.

"The schedule I work doesn't allow me to keep a consistent sleep schedule. So, if you stay up and pass the time playing and go to sleep when you're tired it helps to keep a consistent schedule," Ford said.

Video games aren't for everyone though. Just across the tent from where Ford was busily punching his controller, Cpl. Matt Herring, network administrator, Command Element, was silently focused on one of the many books he has read during this deployment. He was reading under a warm, incandescent glow complementary to the cool blue emitted by Ford's screen.

"If I can find a good book, I'll read it," Herring said. He estimates that he's read more than 10 during this deployment.

Mostly, the books come from a floating library that circulates the MEU in a hand-me-down system.

"Once I read them, then it makes no sense to let them sit around. I give them to other people who want to read them," Herring said. "It doesn't really matter to me where they go once I've read them."

Ford added that he acquires many of the video games he plays the same way. But a central location for this swapping of entertainment comes from the MEU Chaplain's



office where many hovering books, movies and games rest momentarily before landing in the hands of another person seeking their refuge.

Lance Cpl. Sinclair L. Harrell, administrative clerk, Command Element, finds sanctuary in the plethora of movies surprisingly available to the Marines and sailors deployed with the MEU.

"It kind of helps escape the day and enjoy someplace else for a while," he said.

His time off is divided between resting on his rack watching movies with his six-inch screen personal DVD player on his chest and many hours in the gym. He works out almost 10 hours a week, but it's just to be in better shape by the time he gets home. It's not to look better for his wife who, nonetheless, is "still going to make me take out the garbage."

The asylum he seeks from the monotony of a daily routine is mostly speckled with dreams of spending time with his daughter, who was born while he was in boot camp. And he jokes that he's been gone so much that she won't be able to recognize him.

Instead of the more obvious thoughts of home, one of the peculiar aspects of the Marine Corps and deployments are the unordinary hours one might work. For instance guard duty is most oftentimes different from the normal hours a civilian works during daylight.

The Noncommissioned Officers of 81mm Mortar Platoon, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 11th MEU (SOC), are standing guard here and are "lucky if we get a day a week off," said Sgt. Justin D. Sperry, squad leader, 81mm Plt. Their weekly schedule consists of a 24-hour shift as sergeant of the guard, another 24 hours on the quick reaction force, then eight hours at the FOB's entry control point and

then usually three days where they have two four-hour shifts on a guard tower. That means eighty-hour workweeks are a normal occurrence.

"See this dent in my rack?" rhetorically asked Cpl. Joseph M. Pervsich, mortarman, 81mm Plt., referring to how he spends his time off.

But they still have their entertainment as well. They even pooled together money to buy a TV for their tent from the soldiers the MEU relieved. Incredibly, one TV among the tent full of men doesn't create any problems with deciding what to watch. They trickle in at such individual and infrequent rates that no one is hardly in the tent together at any one time.

"Whoever is standing here just puts something in and we just walk in at sometime and watch," said Cpl. Michael S. Bachicha, mortarman, 81mm Plt. "It's on all the time with everybody in and out all the time."

The tent is dark but for the glow of a comedian creating chuckles around the few Marines in the tent that are actually awake. When they're not watching movies or comedians, the Marines play a lot of football video games together.

"Except for people like me that don't touch the thing because I can't play," Sperry said making fun of the fact that he always seems to lose when he plays.

Although, not everybody can win, there's one place on the FOB that everyone seems to be able to handle. Recently, the Marines of the MEU constructed an Internet Café. Within days of it opening Marines wait anxiously in line for a chance to talk to friends and loved ones around the world on Web Cameras, and they sigh reluctantly when their number is called and their turn is up.

Marines spend their half hour on the Internet to catch up on current events or just to find out what's going on back home.

"Since it's getting close to the holidays people feel obligated to contact home," said Lance Cpl. Fermin Treto, supply clerk, Command Element, on his way out the door when his shift was up.

Sergeant Luis D. Almaguer, police sergeant, Command Element, spent a lot of time helping to put the Internet Café up and -- as if he can't get away -- was surfing the web there himself. He estimates that more than 150 Marines and sailors use the 20 different computers a day.

"It's like your own little bubble. In that 30 minutes you feel like you're not at work anymore," Almaguer said.

All the Marines of the MEU don't spend their spare time glued to a chair and fixated on a screen of some kind. Intelligence Marines of the Command Element are just one unit that band together to compete in various sports tournaments around the FOB.

"It helps us take our minds off the daily schedule and it builds camaraderie and teamwork," said 1st Lt. Daniel R. Myers, reconnaissance and surveillance coordinator, Command Element.

Fifteen or so Marines from Intel were up late in the evening one night for a volleyball tournament and are ready and signed up for a flag football tournament coming soon.

"It gives the Marines a chance to do something that isn't so serious. It ultimately refreshes them so they can focus even better on their work," Myers said.

Groups of Marines and sailors can be seen scattered all over the FOB playing football, frisbee, soccer, basketball, volleyball or just running together. Organized tournaments, however, are the product of one man on base. Chief William C. Hammond, religious programs specialist, Command Element, arranges a gamut of different tournaments just to lift everyone's spirits.

"I like to bring some kind of enjoyment to them," Hammond said.

He has all kinds of tournaments planned. Everything from horseshoes, spades to a strongest man and woman competition.

The volleyball tournament was the first experiment of such kinds of organized revelry.

"It really paid off. There are around 50 people out there most of the night,"

Hammond said.

Myers mentioned how he heard his Marines talking about it for days afterward saying "it was one of the more fun things they've done out here."

It's Hammond's own drive to provide fun to Marines and sailors of the MEU that motivates him to pack a schedule full of interesting events.

"It makes me feel better to give them something to do. Boredom can sometimes make people complacent," he said.

The chapel is also stockpiled with ways for Marines to "vent without venting too much," he added.

With more than a thousand books, movies and CD's that anybody can check out, the chapel is a common ground for Marines to come searching for reprieve. That's not

even counting the abundance of board games and the estimated 2,000 pounds of care packages handed out.

So, it's a difficult task to find a Marine or sailor strolling around the FOB without anything to occupy him or herself. It's definitely harder to find than anything to do.

## 11TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT NEWS RELEASE

Headline: 11th MEU holds down Fallujah rear

Marine Corps News Story By: Cpl. Matthew S. Richards

ABU GHRAIB, Iraq – While several 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit units joined the 15,000 servicemember sweep of Fallujah last month, Marines and Sailors of the MEU were also committed to ensuring the security and stability of the assault's back door here.

Task Force Blackhorse, comprised of elements from Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, pushed here from An Najaf, Iraq, just before the main assault started. The task force's Company B, Combined Anti-Armor Team A, Scout Sniper Platoon and Explosive Ordnance Technicians relieved Company L, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, who went to join the main assault. Task Force Blackhorse assumed operational responsibility of the towns of Kandari and Nasar Wa Salam, and immediately began conducting security and stability operations.

During the turnover, they were told it would be difficult to keep the area as it was when they arrived.

"We were told 'if you can maintain the status quo you'll have exceeded our expectations,'" said Capt. Samuel H. Carrasco, task force commander.

Since they found them, the cities aren't the same -- they're better. After conducting more than 120 patrols, 13 platoon reinforced raids, a company reinforced cordon and search of the entire town of Kandari, attacks by improvised explosive devices have diminished. Attacks on locals have reduced and numerous enemy personnel have been detained or killed. But most importantly they insured that the 1st Marine Division did not have to worry about their rear supply routes and communications during the fight, according to Carrasco.

The areas of Kandari and Nasar Wa Salam were essentially built up during the 1980s by Saddam Hussein. He began moving displaced Shias to the areas -- in the middle of the Sunni triangle, where Sunnis dictate the majority of the insurgency effort -- to be regulated by his Sunni regime at the time. But now the Shias make up the majority of the Iraqi National Guard and Iraqi Police in the area and find themselves policing the Sunni dominated insurgency.

Upon arriving, Blackhorse found itself flung into a full-fledged counter insurgency in Al Anbar province. They came from An Najaf where local authorities are taking control and peace is prevalent.

"If we learned anything in Najaf, it was how to work with the local authorities," said 1st Sgt. Joe Morales, company first sergeant, Co. B. "Coming over here, it's like a power vacuum."

So they set out on the security and stability mission in an area where many anti-Iraqi forces operate frequently. Carrasco equates their approach in the area to that of the

Old Chicago Police Department of the 1920s. They commenced to "walk the beat" instead of isolating themselves in mounted patrols.

"Back then everybody knew who the cop was. He befriended the people who appreciated his presence and he knew who to keep his eye on," Carrasco said.

Marines went on regular foot patrols knocking door to door, talking to people. Everyone in the task force worked together patrolling six to nine times a day.

"We're constantly out there. We'd try to find out what they needed, what we could do for them and what they could do for us," Morales said.

In one instance, insurgents blew a main water line. Blackhorse was immediately in the area delivering water to the people affected by this attack.

"The people out there can see what we do and they see the insurgents offer them nothing but violence," Morales said.

With their actions, they developed a base of allies within the local populace. The task force now has a good idea of who's on whose side.

"We're verifying key leaders who are pro-Iraq-- we realize the secret to their success is to cooperate with coalition forces," Carrasco said.

Blackhorse members conducted joint patrols with the ING and IP and conferred with the city council and local religious leaders to improve the situation.

This committed hodgepodge of pro-Iraq forces pursued the insurgents -- whether they presented themselves directly in a firefight or indirectly with IEDs and mortars -- "relentlessly," according to Carrasco. Blackhorse was proactive, forcing the insurgents to be reactive.



While out on the "beat," IEDs were their biggest threat. Just finding them when they're out and about is like "plugging a dike that's constantly sprouting holes," said Morales.

EOD conducted 75 missions, rendering safe or destroying 12 IEDs, conducting 25 IED post-blast investigations, and destroying 278 items containing a total of 613 pounds of explosives.

So, with raids and cordon and searches the task force went out to get the bad guys marking them and sending them backpedaling.

"Now, instead of reacting to the enemy we found ways to make the enemy react to us," Morales said.

All kinds of the insurgents' attacks in the area decreased and Blackhorse found that the majority of the Iraqis out here "just want to live their lives," according to Carrasco. It's a small minority who ruin it for everyone else.

"The only way they can get us is if they sucker punch us," Morales said. "And the only way they can do that is if you're acting like a sucker."

Carrasco and Morales are proud of their Marines, who performed as the professionals they are.

"When we go out we're winning the hearts and minds of the people, but at the same time, at the drop of a dime, we're ready for a gunfight if needs be," Morales said.

"We don't feel we could have a better company of Marines doing this."

Carrasco commends his Marines on their excellent judgment.

"The decisions they exercised (here) have been superb and they make me proud every time I see and hear them," he said.

While working hard and being out for long hours at a time, Marines still found a way to keep up morale.

Corporals David H. Garrett and James M. Ramsey, both scout snipers with Scout Sniper Platoon, still found a way to enjoy themselves despite a schedule packed with erratic missions.

They chatted with their wives online, made constant trips to the gym nearby and wrestled around for fun. They still joked and laughed even with the ongoing missions all around them.

Morales was surprised he noticed this among his Marines.

"Even with the holidays coming up, I've got all kinds of Marines volunteering to stick around here to see the mission is done," he said. "And even with everything going on around them, everybody seems to get their movies and workouts in, and morale is still high."

## 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)

11th MEU (SOC) assumes responsibility of Karbala province  
Story by Gunnery Sgt. Chago Zapata

CAMP LIMA, Iraq -- The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) assumed operational control of Karbala province from the Polish-led Multi-National Division Central South (MND-CS) during a ceremony here, Dec. 21.

The move came as part of a realignment of forces in southern Iraq. MEU Marines relinquished responsibility of Al Qadisiyah province last month to Polish MND-CS forces.

"Understanding of the current situation by both sides, Marines and Polish soldiers helped make the turnover of the area easier," said Polish Lt. Col. Krzysztof Radonski, commander, 2nd Battle Group, 1st Brigade Combat Team, MND-CS. "We are very lucky that such a good unit is taking over responsibility from us."

According to Lt. Col. Eugene N. Apicella, executive officer, 11th MEU (SOC), the MEU's mission in Karbala is to support the Interim Iraqi Government just like in Najaf province and to support security services.

"By support I mean through our own active security patrolling and, more importantly, working closely with the (Iraqi police) and (national guardsmen) to build upon their capabilities," Apicella explained.

While in Karbala province, MEU Marines, soldiers and sailors will conduct security patrols; train, equip and work with leadership in the 401st Battalion, 50th Iraqi National Guard Brigade, and police force; and conduct civil military operations in their area of responsibility southwest of Baghdad.

According to Apicella, recent events such as Sunday's car bomb show that Karbala has an existing security infrastructure and a police force that's doing its job. When the car failed to stop at a traffic checkpoint, Iraqi police fired upon the vehicle causing the premature detonation of the bomb by either the driver or the impact of the machine gun's fired ammunition. Regardless, the premature detonation prevented even more casualties from occurring.

"As we saw recently with the Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device that was used against the peaceful people of Karbala, IPs interdicted the vehicle bomb that was being brought in the city," Apicella said. "Although it was a tragic loss of life to the IPs and civilians affected, it was a good sign that there are IPs out there doing their job. They stood their ground and ultimately kept the bomb from getting through."

MEU forces will work with the local government on civil affairs projects to improve conditions in the following sectors: public education, essential services (water, electricity, parking, etc), governance, public health, the economy and general quality of life.

"The Marines face several challenges in Karbala province. They must support the election process, help local authorities establish new laws, fight against groups who set up mines and Improvised Explosive Devices and, most importantly, maintain peace and stability in the area," said Radonski. "We are proud we were allowed to meet and work together with a unit which has such great combat traditions."

Getting to know the people of Karbala province is a high priority, according to Apicella.

"Like any new area of operations, when you come into it you have to get to know the people both from the civil leadership side and the military," said Apicella. "Getting to know them, helping them get to know us and building mutual respect between the various elements is important so that you can conduct smooth operations and training, and support their efforts to move forward in the pursuit of happiness."

MEU Marines assumed control of the An Najaf and Al Qadisiyah provinces on July 31, 2004 and relinquished control of Al Qadisiyah province to MND-CS forces on Nov. 30.

Apicella said that the 11th MEU had a large advantage in Karbala -- many of the Marines from (Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment) were here last year during Operation Iraqi Freedom I and are no strangers to the city.

"The Marines have a very good reputation in Karbala from OIF I," Apicella said. "I think that will facilitate a pretty rapid integration between the civil military functions in Karbala and the Coalition's ability to support that structure."

11TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT NEWS RELEASE

Headline: Life and companionship in the air

Marine Corps News Story By: Cpl. Matthew S. Richards

AL ASAD, Iraq – Rows of Marines and sailors, fully clad in gear, walk in file toward the everlasting thudding blades of a CH-53E Super Stallion. They're headed home, to another base or occasionally into the thick of battle somewhere.

They step aboard and sit down on the green, foldout benches. That resemble the cots most sleep on out here. They buckle up and watch the ground shrink below them and the horizon endlessly approach; they stare at the inside of the helicopter's metal core avoiding nausea, or gently nod off to sleep for a brief rest during the flight.

Eventually the helicopter lands and they must all file out the same rear entrance they came in to whatever their duty calls them toward. The flight crew of the helicopter either picks up more passengers or cargo or heads home for the night. Whichever the case, another day of this practice will eventually fall away and the crew prepares for the next.

For the crew chiefs, the day begins two hours before they are scheduled to take off. They start with the first of many checks of the quality of the aircraft. It's essential that the "bird" is safe to fly.

"It goes through a lot of eyes to be safe. It's flying you know," said Lance Cpl. Rob Bedford, crew chief, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465, attached to Medium Marine Helicopter Squadron 166 (Reinforced), 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable).

The maintenance control section of the squadron does most of the work between flights. They are the "nerve center" of the unit, Bedford said. They constantly compile and update a discrepancy book for each helicopter. The crew chiefs screen the book in that time before the flight in order to know what to expect from the bird.

"If there's anything in the book, it's just minor stuff," Bedford said. "Nothing major otherwise we wouldn't fly it."

While the crew chiefs are busy with the bird's quirks and particulars, the pilots either have already gotten a detailed brief three hours prior to the flight or are still in the process of getting it. They meet the crew chiefs at the flight line an hour before the flight.

After giving a summarized brief on the flight to the chiefs, they conduct the preflight check. That's where a pilot and a crew chief check over different areas of the helicopter and the other two go over the discrepancy book.

Finally, the blades start churning 15 to 20 minutes before the flight for the final test to make sure nothing is wrong before takeoff.

"Rarely will anything be wrong but if there is we'll have to roll to the backup," Bedford said.

The backup helicopter goes through the same screening process as the primary one at the same time, only it's checked by two other pilots not scheduled to fly at that moment.

Even if hardly ever is a bird unfit for flight, they take a lot of care and treatment.

"They're like people. If you treat them bad they're going to break," Bedford said.

But by this time, given the bird is good to go, they're ready for the flight and they take off.

Now begins the symphony composed of mechanical being and human harmony.

The helicopter aircrew commander, the pilot that signs for the helicopter, has the final say in any issues in the air, but most decisions are made communally.

"In the aircraft, at that point in time, we make decisions collectively," said Cpl.

Jon D. Hicks, crew chief, HMM-166. "Nine times out of 10, they won't do things unless we're all comfortable with them."

Of course, the pilots are slated with the task of actually flying the bird, and are in the very front of the bird with no visibility to all views but their own. All else -- such as mechanical issues, loading and offloading cargo and the views hidden to the pilots -- is in the hands of the crew chiefs.

"Communication is the most important parts when we're in the air," Hicks said.

Constant chatter passes through headsets connected on each of the crew. They work as one in many issues like weapons deployment, all cargo issues, and landing and picking up a load by rope and hook. A lot of the time the pilots, who can't see all around the bird, will have to rely on the vocal guidance of the crew chiefs in increments of feet and giving direction.



"Visibility is always a big factor in the teamwork," Hicks said.

This close cooperation in occasional instances where there is a definite aspect of life and death can cause a sense of camaraderie between the team.

"There's always the professionalism and tradition of the Marine Corps there, but it's a little different when you're in a life and death situation," said Maj. James V. Longi, CH-53E Super Stallion pilot, HMM-166.

Implying just the opposite, Longi joked with Hicks that the pilots were the heroes who accomplished everything and deserved all the glory. Mission essential prattle on the radio high in the sky is strewn with such jokes over quiet music. The choice of such music is friendly argued over, but the entire crew cannot help but recognize the indispensable efforts of all members of the team.

"I'm not a NASCAR fan, but I can equate it to that. The crew chiefs are the pit crew that goes everywhere with us," Longi said. "We couldn't do it without them."

Once the mission is over and the bird is where it is to stay until the next, the crew does one final check over it before gassing it up for the next day. They then sit around for another joint effort: the debrief.

"Everyone has a voice in the debrief," Bedford said.

The town hall style conversation is meant for all to express how they felt the flight went. With so many moving parts, the crew prepares for the next mission by telling what they thought went well and critiquing each other on what they feel could have been done better.

Another day and, most times, a few missions are also finished. They head home for the night or early morning to come back the next time for another unsung part in the Corps.