



II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward)



FAMILY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2013



COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

Maj. Gen. W. Lee Miller



As we move into the final three months of our deployment I want to wish you happy 238th Marine Corps Birthday and happy holidays. I know the challenge of families being apart can seem tougher during the holiday season and I thank you once again for your commitment and support in keeping things going for us on the home front.

Our mission is going very well here. Throughout the fighting season the Afghan National Security Forces have proven they are able to take the fight to their enemies and the truth is the Taliban and other insurgent groups simply cannot stand toe-to-toe against the ANSF who have begun seizing the initiative, moving out from their bases and checkpoints to maneuver rapidly and disrupt the insurgent efforts. Public confidence in the Afghan National Army, Police, and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan continues to grow here as they prove able to provide security, stability, and governance.

Our success is due to the professionalism, adaptability and tireless effort of your Marines and Sailors and our Coalition partners - and to each of you who support us from home.

This success comes with a price. We've been fortunate so far and our combat losses and injuries have been low across the Coalition here, but for the first time during this deployment, a U.S. Marine from II MEF(FWD) was killed in action. Lance Corporal Christopher O. Grant, 20, of Richwood, Louisiana, died October 20 while helping ensure the safety and security of his fellow 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment warriors. Please keep his family and friends in your hearts and prayers throughout the holidays ahead.

Each of us here remains committed to succeeding in our mission and returning home safely to our families. I couldn't be more proud of the men and women under my command or those of you back home who make it possible for us to provide the people of Afghanistan with an opportunity to choose a future in freedom. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to the success of our mission. We'll be home soon.



SERGEANT MAJOR

Sgt. Maj. Paul Berry



Family and Friends of II MEF (Forward),

Hello from Afghanistan! Well the weather here in Afghanistan has finally cooled off, and we are well into football season. The Marines and Sailors have stayed on course through the hot summer and they are making history. The amazing support from back home is critical and it is truly appreciated.

I would like to remind everyone about the Deployed Spouses Ball. This is a great event and I ask that all spouses attend if they can. This deployment is drawing to an end and the person you meet at the Ball may be a new friend for life.

The holiday season is almost upon us. Keep in mind mail will be much slower due to winter weather and a large volume of boxes being sent to Afghanistan. Every Marine and Sailor enjoys every box that is sent and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. That little piece of home really matters during the holidays.

Please stay in touch with our Family Readiness Officer. The "word" can and will change often and staying connected to the II MEF (FWD) Combined Family Readiness Team will make things go smoother. Thank you and Semper Paratus.

FAMILY NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2013

FROM THE COMMAND

COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

SERGEANT MAJOR

COMMAND MASTER CHIEF

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

FROM THE HOMEFRONT

FAMILY READINESS OFFICER

UPCOMING EVENTS

FROM THE FRONTLINES

MARINE TURRET GUNNER, PG. 6

MARINE ACHIEVES CHILDHOOD GOAL, PG. 12

NAVY'S 238 BIRTHDAY, PG. 13



Follow us on Facebook

[facebook.com/regionalcommandsouthwest](https://www.facebook.com/regionalcommandsouthwest)



www.iiimeffwd.marines.mil

II Marine Expeditionary Force (Fwd)

Commander

Maj. Gen. W. Lee Miller

Sergeant Major

Sgt. Maj. Paul A. Berry

Command Master Chief

Master Chief Petty Officer
Kelly A. McNulty

Chaplain

Cmdr. Patrick W. Smith

Family Readiness Officer

Michael E. Cline





COMMAND MASTER CHIEF

Command Master Chief Petty Officer Kelly McNulty



Greetings Navy and Marine Corps Team!

The month of October was a great month as we celebrated the Navy's 238th Birthday. We started our celebration the day before with a motivating 5K Fun Run. It was a sea of blue and gold runners as far as the eye could see. Our Marine Corps, Air Force and Army brethren showed up in droves and showed great support for the run, thank you. On our Navy Birthday we conducted a small ceremony with cake and a special guest speaker, Captain Andrew Johnson, the RC (SW)/II MEF FWD surgeon, who revived our pride as Navy Sailors. Thank you sir! It was a great day for all the Sailors in RC (SW) and across the Navy. This month we also selected our newest RC (SW)/II MEF FWD Sailors of the Quarter. Congratulations to all of these outstanding performers:

- Senior Sailor of the Quarter – HM1 Federico M. Sanchez
2-215 Brigade Advisor Team
- Junior Sailor of the Quarter – HM3 Brodmon Drakeford
Task Force Belleau Wood
- Blue Jacket of the Quarter – HN Aaron Berryman
Task Force Belleau Wood

Next month we will celebrate the Marine Corps Birthday. Happy birthday to all the Marines, it is truly an honor to serve with each one of you. I want to wish everyone attending one of the various balls and celebrations back home a safe and enjoyable time. Take care of each other back there and make good decisions! As the weather gets cooler, I know that autumn is here and it's time to break out the cold-weather gear and holiday decor. I wish you all a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving, and I know that every Sailor and Marine wishes they could be home and share this time with you, but please know that we are motivated to complete our mission here and bring everyone home when the time is right. As always, thank you for all the support!

Out of Control

Elijah became afraid and immediately ran for his life. (1 Kings 19:3)

A while back, I was counseling someone and he began to weep. He said " I'm depressed and my wife is sad because she doesn't trust me anymore." "Why not?" I asked. "Because I struggle with my temper. I've never raised a hand toward her, but I've thrown a few things across the room and had to go outside and cool off, but I'm not sure if that has anything to do with depression. It sounds more like an anger problem. I told him that depression takes on different forms. I then asked him if he was afraid of not being in control? He said yes, not being in control is a big problem for him and his biggest fear. I told him that can certainly lead to depression.

You know nothing depresses or demoralizes like fear. In the Bible, in the book of 1 Kings, there was a vicious queen named Jezebel and she wanted the prophet Elijah dead. Elijah had been speaking out against her policies and even publicly challenged her and her administration. Along the way, God displayed his power in a very public and supernatural way that supported and encouraged Elijah. However after this event, Jezebel was very embarrassed and angry and she ordered her troops to find and kill Elijah. Now Elijah should have stood tall and trusted God, but instead Elijah became very afraid because he saw that the situation was out of his control. Elijah ran away.

Sometimes an outward sign of depression and fear is anger, especially a tendency to be short with people. You might feel that you can never let your guard down, so you are annoyed most of the time. Some folks display their temper by lashing out at the people around them, being manipulative or subtly belittling others.

But while Elijah forgot God's power, God never forgot Elijah. As Elijah ran for his life, God sent an angel to provide for him. The angel told Elijah that "the journey will be too much for you" (1 Kings 19:7).

You are on a journey, and at some point you will probably encounter depression. It may be a mild sadness, or a powerful combination of fear and anger. Recognize that the journey is too much for you alone. You need other godly people and the power of God to see you through. Retraining your brain and starting new habits to respond differently to fear and anger is a long process. But you won't believe how good it can be on the other side.

The Bottom Line

If you struggle with anger, get help NOW. The battle is too much for you on your own.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Cmdr. Patrick Smith



FAMILY READINESS OFFICER

Michael Cline

II MEF (FWD) FAMILIES,

Several exciting and informative events are coming up this month. Please take the time and read about the Deployed Spouses Ball, Return and Reunion Workshops for spouses, and the warrior transition process you can expect your Marine or Sailor to go through when they return.

WARRIOR TRANSITION FOR MARINES/SAILORS RETURNING FROM DEPLOYMENT

I receive inquiries of what our Marines and Sailors are expecting when they return from deployment. All returning Marines and Sailors should be briefed while overseas through the administration branch, usually II MHG FWD Administration.

Here are the guidelines being followed by the receiving unit (II MHG) onboard Camp Lejeune:

- Each person receives a Warrior Transition Package.
- Personnel are given the immediate 24 HOURS OFF, proceeding from arrival (Time starts when they arrive at II MHG, aboard Camp Lejeune).
- In the Warrior Transition Package it states when the first event will begin (usually when the first full workday begins).
- A timeline is provided in the package that outlines all events for the next 5 working days.
- Upon completion of the timeline events, the Marine/Sailor is authorized a 96-HR pass (4 days off), or can go on annual leave (which must be approved by II MHG). Annual leave is discussed at the Welcome Aboard Brief given by the II MHG H&S Company Commander. Each Marine or Sailor will work his/her own annual leave.
- Marines and Sailors can take a 96-HR pass and then return to their parent commands (unit they were originally from PRIOR to deployment) and go on annual leave, but they must work that out with their parent commands.

As a Spouse or Parent, I know this can be confusing. This is especially true if you are traveling out of state to be at your Marine or Sailor's Homecoming. Just remember that he/she will have 24 hours off at the outset, and then will be required to start their Warrior Transition. Ensure you communicate with your military sponsor so you will have a better idea of when you will be able to spend that quality time together and be a family again!

UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENT: DEPLOYED SPOUSES BALL
DATE: 16 NOVEMBER 2013
TIME: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
REMARKS: Tickets are on sale for \$25 at Marston Pavilion (910-451-1521/3375) or Paradise Point Officer's Club (910-451-2465 Option #2). Please specify your food choice of Chicken/Beef, Tuna Steak, or Veggie Plate/Gluten-Free at purchase. Attire is Formal/Cocktail Dress w/favorite boots (optional) and there will be a Ball Ceremony, Commandant of the Marine Corps Message, II MEF FWD Commanding General Message, messages from those abroad, as well as live music and dance. Open to all Deployed Spouses. Come on out and enjoy!! CHILD CARE IS FREE!! Heroes 1 will be providing Free Child Care. Ensure you call the Heroes 1 Manor CDC at (910) 450-4078/4079. Please ensure your children are registered with Child Youth and Teen Programs (CYTP) prior to the event.
This night is your night to relax and enjoy the festivities of a Marine Corps Ball Ceremony and recognition you as a family unit provide so we can have those "Boots on the Ground"!

RETURN AND REUNION WORKSHOPS FOR SPOUSES

This workshop is designed to explain, through interactive activities, what can be expected during the homecoming and the reunion process. During the workshop, tips are provided that will help Spouses during this time. Topics covered include communication, deployment stress, re-integration, expectations and the return of intimacy.

EVENT: RETURN AND REUNION WORKSHOPS (DAYTIME SCHEDULE)
DATE: 5 NOV 2013 / 3 DEC 2013 / 7 JAN 2014 / 4 FEB 2013
TIME: 10:00 – 11:30 AM
REMARKS: Free childcare is provided. Please RSVP with your FRO.

EVENT: RETURN AND REUNION WORKSHOPS (EVENING SCHEDULE)
DATE: 19 NOV 2013 / 10 DEC 2013 / 21 JAN 2013
TIME: 6:30 – 8:00 PM
REMARKS: Set up for Deployed Spouses who work during the day, or have schedules that do not allow participation during the daytime hours. Free childcare is provided. Please RSVP with your FRO.

DAYTIME WORKSHOPS CHILD CARE INSTRUCTIONS

CYTP will gladly support your requests for childcare for these events. In this paragraph I will identify the what, where, and when families will need to receive childcare on the date requested. Below is the information for the day time R&R briefs.
Dates/Times Requested: 10:00-11:30 AM on the following dates: 21 OCT 2013, 5 NOV 2013, 3 DEC 2013, 7 JAN 2014, and 4 FEB 2014

Where Childcare will be provided:
Hourly (or daily) childcare is on a first come first service basis. Families will call the CDC to make their reservations (any CDC). When calling the center families should identify themselves as attending the "II MEF FWD Return & Reunion". This childcare will be applicable to hourly childcare on Camp Lejeune only. A family attending this event enrolled in a full time program will not receive a credit to the "full time" program fees. To allow for drive times the childcare will include approximately an hour before and after the times listed below. Please encourage families to call early and make reservations. Families can call as early as one month in advance of the event date to make a reservation.

CYTP Registration:
Children must be registered with Children, Youth, and Teen Programs (have a white card) before childcare can be provided. Registration will be completed with Resource & Referral Office (R&R), which is located in the TT II CDC, Bldg. TT 113 Iwo Jima Boulevard Tarawa Terrace. The phone number to contact R&R is: (910) 450-0553/54/55, Mon-Fri from 0800-1630. Bring child's shot records to complete the registration process and a copy of the most recent medical physical (if available).

EVENING WORKSHOPS CHILD CARE INSTRUCTIONS:

CYTP Registration is the same, but Brewster Child Development Center is the ONLY CDC providing Child Care for the event. Below is the Free Child Care information:
Below is the information for the evening R&R briefs.
Dates/Times Requested: 1830-1930 on the following dates: 19 NOV 2013, 10 DEC 2013, and 21 JAN 2014

The Brewster CDC will support this request. Families will call Brewster CDC to make reservations at (910) 450-8467, no later than 72 hours in advance of the event date and for children between the ages of six weeks through 12 years old.



MARINE TURRET GUNNER SHARES CONVOY EXPERIENCE FROM AFGHANISTAN

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY
CPL. PAUL PETERSON

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan - Cheek nestled against the stock of his machine gun ... He hoped the man would heed his warning.

Lance Cpl. Kevin Dunseith, a Blue Point, N.Y., native and turret gunner with Combat Logistics Regiment 2, Regional Command (Southwest), called out a possible threat shortly after his convoy halted along an isolated desert road in southern Helmand province, Afghanistan.

A motorcyclist made a sudden turn toward his vehicle and failed to halt its approach on the convoy's flank when Dunseith waved for him to stop. Now the two met eye to eye as the man dismounted his bike and took a package off the back.

"It's a huge burden," said Dunseith. "You have to make sure you make the right choices and follow the rules of engagement. It's a big responsibility, but I like it."

Dunseith was the rear gunner and last line of defense for a large convoy conducting a patrol between Camp Leatherneck and Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, Sept. 29 to Oct. 2. The dusty, jarring ride passed through empty landscapes pockmarked with wadis, dried out riverbeds capable of trapping even the Marines' large trucks.

"It gets tiring," said Dunseith, a Marine reservist out of New York City. "It's uncomfortable. You're legs are tired. It's really hot, and you get tossed around easily. The dust kills you. You can't really breathe."

He wrapped his face in a scarf for protection from the worst dust clouds and shielded his eyes with a pair of protective sun glasses. Like a modern cowboy, Dunseith rode the bucking vehicle by flowing with the motion.

The metal turret walls provided protection for the price of a few good bumps.

"You force yourself to do it," he said. "You want to take a break as much as possible, but you have to do what you have to do. It's a very important job. That keeps me going."

He finally managed to halt the motorist and convinced him to place the package on the ground. The relief in his voice was palpable as the convoy finally pushed on with the mission.

The space below Dunseith's turret represented more than a crew compartment, and his position as gunner meant more than a job. His Mine Resistant, Ambush Protected vehicle was his shelter and home on convoys.

The crew was his family.

"It's necessary to protect everybody," he said. "It's cool to be part of the crew. We try to keep the same guys and the same guys and the same truck. You get to know everybody even better because you're stuck in there for days at a time."

Dunseith volunteered to deploy with other Marine reservists from New York. The rigorous working hours strain of responsibility forged a bond amongst his teammates over the past three months.

The work pace with CLR-2 resulted in a mission nearly every week for the rear-guard trio. They passed the time sharing stories about home and teasing each other.

"They're loopy," he joked. "I'm probably the wackiest one out of them."

Dunseith joined the Marines after visiting a recruiter with some of his friends back in New York. He felt the lifestyle seemed a good fit with his personality.

"I grew up in a pretty quiet town," said Dunseith, who brashly referred to his deployment as a vacation. "I was never inside. I was always outdoors getting lost in the woods. There was just something I liked about it. It's



about going on an adventure. I never liked sitting still."

His love for adventure hasn't made the deployment easy. Far from it.

It took a while for him to adapt to the climate in Afghanistan and his role in the turret. A single shift behind the gun often lasts longer than an average Americans' work day. There are no breaks.

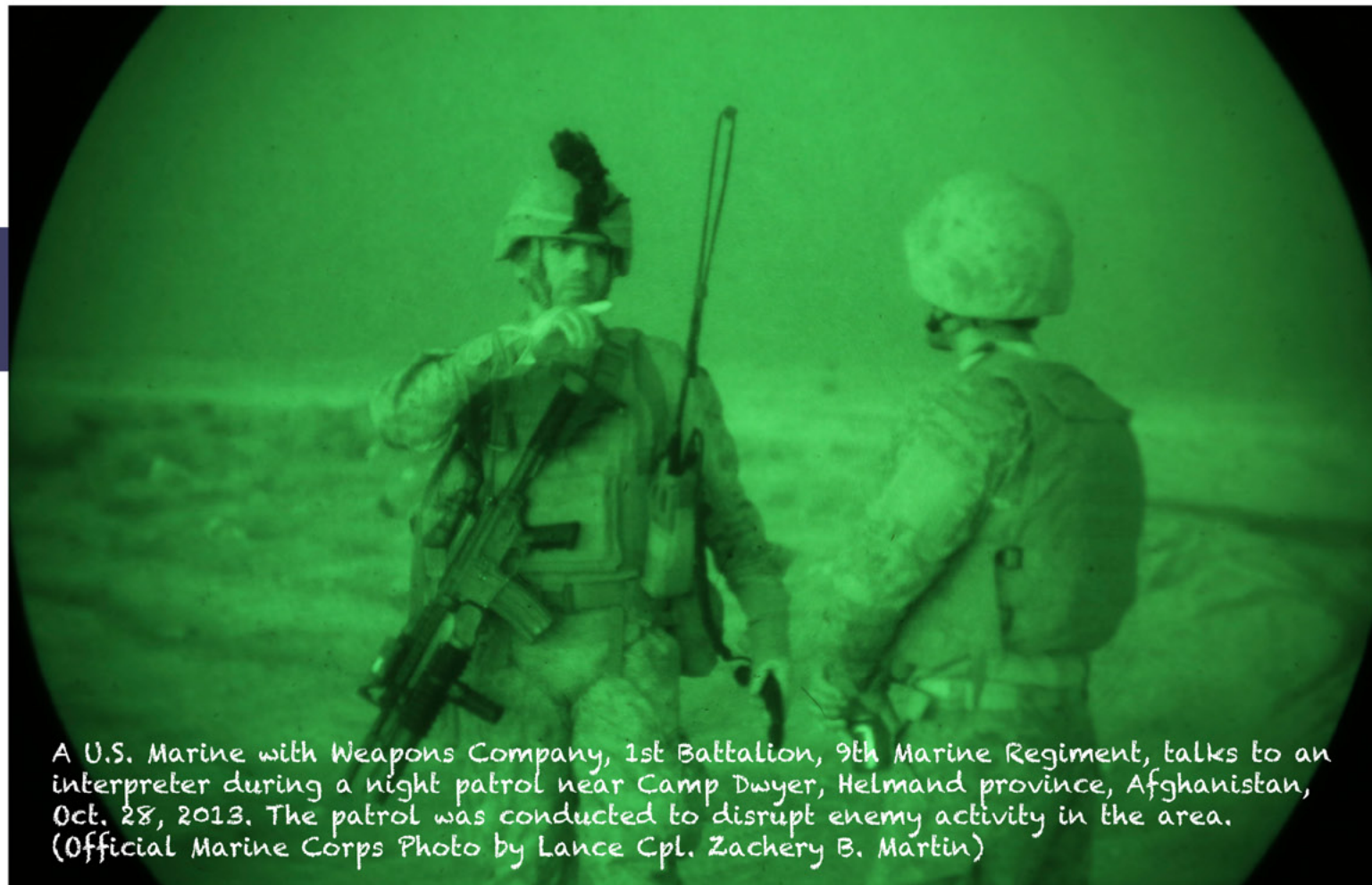
A bottle of water and a smooth patch of road are about as good as it gets until the convoy stops.

At night, the crew alternates guard duties while the others sleep inside the truck.

"It's cramped, but you get so tired you eventually fall asleep," said Dunseith. "Even though it's not the best sleep, all you need is a little rest so your body can recover for the next day ... It's not bad."

Dunseith said he prefers to be on missions. In spite of the stress and exhaustion, it gives him a chance to see Afghanistan and makes the time go faster.





A U.S. Marine with Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, talks to an interpreter during a night patrol near Camp Dwyer, Helmand province, Afghanistan, Oct. 28, 2013. The patrol was conducted to disrupt enemy activity in the area. (Official Marine Corps Photo by Lance Cpl. Zachery B. Martin)



Cpl. Michael Horzath, an assaultman and dog handler, serving with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, conducts the baseball training exercise with his improvised explosive device detection dog Sgt. Ssuzie here, Oct. 16, 2013. Horzath, 22, from Kalamazoo, Mich., uses the obedience drill to teach Suzie to only move to the area designated. (Photos by Cpl. Corey Dabney)

THIS MONTH IN PHOTOS



U.S. Marines with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment prepare to go on a mission at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan. The mission was conducted to disrupt enemy operations in the area. (Photos by Sgt. Eric Wilterdink)

1st Lt. Seth Deaton (3rd), Lt. Col. Steve Schmid (1st), and Capt. Pedro Rodriguez (2nd) pose for photos following the 2013 Marine Corps Marathon Forward at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan Oct. 27. (Photo by Sgt. Bobby J. Yarbrough)



Runners stretch prior to the start of the 2013 Marine Corps Marathon Forward at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Oct. 27. More than 300 runners participated in this year's marathon. This is the fifth year a satellite marathon has been held at Camp Leatherneck. (Photo by Sgt. Bobby J. Yarbrough)



Marine achieves childhood goal, becomes a tanker

Story and photos by Cpl. Corey Dabney

As a young boy, Matthew Moores would spend hours playing with tanks, driving around small toy soldiers on the floor of his home in Newark, Delaware.

Moores said growing up he had a fascination with tanks, specifically the M1A1 Abrams tank. He promised himself he would one day have a tank to call his own.

After graduating high school from the Charter School of Wilmington in 2002, Moores decided to pursue his childhood dream and join the Marine Corps. Moores said he was hesitant to join at first because he was told he couldn't enlist directly into a tank unit.

"I remember sitting in the recruiter's office and he asked me what job I might like," said Moores. "I immediately said I want to be a tanker, but he said I couldn't join as a tanker. He said I would have to join as combat arms."

Moores decided to roll the dice and went to recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island with only the possibility of becoming a tanker. Moores said his wish was granted after he graduated boot camp and his drill instructor told him he was going to Fort Knox, Ky., to become a M1A1 Abrams tank crewman.

"I could have jumped for joy," said Moores, who is now a corporal. "It was like my dreams were coming true."

Moores said he studied hard and learned as much as he could while at school because he wanted to know as much about the tank as possible. He graduated at the top of his class.

Lance Cpl. Jesse "Cheddar" Robson, the loader in Moores' tank crew, said Moores is very knowledgeable and motivated about his job. Robinson said Moores desire to learn about tanks and his enthusiasm is why he is "the best gunner in the battalion."

Robson, a 20 year-old native of Buffalo, N.Y., said whenever he has a question about tanks he goes to Moores because of his experience.

Moores gained a majority of his experience on his first deployment as an attachment to the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit off the Libyan Coast in 2011.

Moores is currently on his first deployment to Afghanistan and has gained an even greater appreciation for his job.

Moores said a few months ago he and his tank crew were escorting a convoy when an insurgent detonated an improvised explosive device while his tank "Iron Maiden" was passing over it.

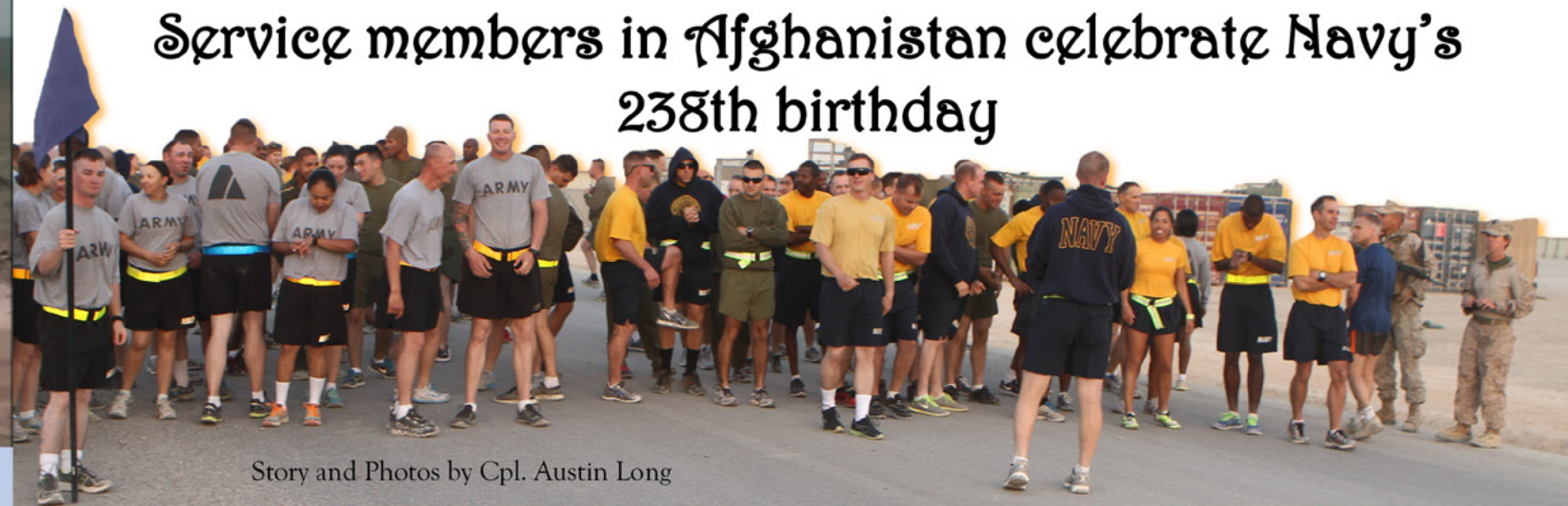
"It actually shocked me when we triggered the IED, but I had to ensure everyone was safe in the tank," said Moores. "After I know everyone was safe, I was kind of heartbroken because I knew that my tank was going to be out of commission for a while."

Moores said he is on his second tank, which he fittingly named Mulligan, but added the Iron Maiden will be back in the fight soon after some repairs. He also said hitting the IED simply reinforced his love for the tank.

"I will continue to be a tanker and work with these awesome machines," said Moores. "I have always loved tanks and honestly I think I always will."



Service members in Afghanistan celebrate Navy's 238th birthday



Story and Photos by Cpl. Austin Long

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan - Service members celebrated the Navy's 238th birthday at the town hall on Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Oct. 13.

The ceremony featured a cake-cutting ceremony, a video covering naval history and the singing of 'Anchors Aweigh.'

In 1972, the late Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, the Chief of Naval Operations from 1970 until 1974, authorized recognition of Oct. 13 as the official Navy birthday.

This year's theme for the celebration was "Defending America with Pride since 1775." The celebration reflected on key events in naval history since its establishment by congress.

"The Navy is not different from the other services. We love our history and heritage as much as they do," said Command Master Chief Kelly McNulty, the Regional Command (Southwest) command master chief. "Today, we celebrate 238 years of sacrifice throughout our history by sailors and Marines through past wars and battles."

Captain Andrew Johnson, the RC (SW) surgeon and the guest speaker, spoke about the history and traditions carried on since the Navy's beginning.

"The key part of the birthday is passing on our history and heritage to preserve that tradition and knowledge," said Johnson. "We're not just celebrating our service to country or to the Navy, but where we come from, the sailors who came before us, the sailors coming after us and those who gave their lives."

The cake cutting and passing of the first piece from the oldest sailor present to

the youngest represented the passing of knowledge, history and past traditions. The oldest sailor present, Lt. Cmdr. Philip King, the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing chaplain, passed the first piece of cake to the youngest, Petty Officer 3rd Class David Huezo, a corpsman with Combat Logistics Regiment 2.

"The Navy birthday is awesome," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Marshall, RC (SW)'s training petty officer. "There's a lot of history and tradition behind it. Every time I go to a ceremony, I learn something new."

The video featured Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan W. Greenert and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Mike D. Stevens giving thanks to sailors for their service. They also addressed key points in naval history from the commissioning of the U.S.S. Constitution in 1775 to the Navy's service in Afghanistan.

McNulty said she hopes everyone who attended took away an understanding of history and tradition. She said a constant emphasis is put on the Navy's history because it is important to know what's been done before so improvements can be made.

"It's important to know our past, so we can grow in order to stay number one," said McNulty. "It is up to senior leadership to pass on the knowledge, history, and traditions so we can maintain superiority as the greatest naval fleet in the world."

The Navy also hosted a 5k fun run Oct 12 to celebrate the birthday. All service members and civilians working on Camps Leatherneck and Bastion were invited to participate.

