

THE BLUE DIAMOND

The official newsletter of 1st Marine Division



BLT 2/1 returns from 11th MEU WESTPAC

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. - Marines with the Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit returned to Camp Pendleton, California, Feb 24. The 11th MEU completed a 7-month deployment to the U.S. 5th Fleet and 7th Fleet areas of operation.

The 11th MEU, along with the Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group, deployed July 25 and participated in multiple exercises with regional host nations in both U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Central Command, where the MEU served as a reserve force supporting contingency operations while also supporting Operation Inherent Resolve.



Marines and Japanese soldiers kick off Iron Fist 2015



MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – U.S. Marines with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit stood alongside soldiers of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's Western Army Infantry Regiment to kick off Exercise Iron Fist 2015 during an opening ceremony aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 26, 2015.

Exercise Iron Fist 2015 marks the 10th anniversary of the amphibious training partnership with the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force to enhance United States Marine Corps and JGSDF interoperability, develop the Self-Defense Force's amphibious capabilities and build military-to-military relationships between the two forces. [Click here to read more](#)

Blue Diamond: A 74-year legacy

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. - Marines, sailors and veterans of the 1st Marine Division honored the division's 74th anniversary during a battle colors rededication ceremony aboard Camp Pendleton, California, Jan. 22, 2015.

Major Gen. Lawrence D. Nicholson, the commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, fastened 25 streamers to the battle colors. The streamers signified the many campaigns, expeditions, battles and decorations presented to the division since its establishment. Each streamer was presented to Nicholson by a veteran and a junior Marine from the 1st Marine Division. [Click here to read more](#)



1/1 Marine awarded Purple Heart



MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. - Georgia Liaison Team 10 was setting up aerial surveillance in Afghanistan when they came under attack. For one Marine providing security, the incoming enemy rocket would damage more than just the terrain.

Sergeant Michael V. Hall II, a field radio operator with 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, received the Purple Heart Medal for wounds sustained in action in Afghanistan, November 2013. He was awarded the medal at a ceremony here, Feb. 11. [Click here to read more](#)

7th Marines conducts embassy reinforcement training

LOS ALAMITOS RESERVE CENTER AND AIR STATION, Calif. - Marines with Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, conducted embassy reinforcement training on Joint Forces Training Base Los Alamitos, California, from Feb. 8–13, 2015.

The training exercise was a part of Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force – Crisis Response – Central Command 15.2 Certification Exercise (SPMAGTF-CC-CR 15.2), which took place aboard several locations across Southern California, Arizona, Nevada and Idaho from February 9–14, 2015.

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BLT 3/1 enhances squad tactics, prepares for upcoming deployment



MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Marines with Kilo Company, Battalion Landing Team 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, began squad tactics and maneuver training aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 25, 2015.

Kilo Co.'s two-weeklong training focused on enhancing their combat skills and learning to work as a cohesive unit in preparation for their upcoming deployment as part of the ground combat element for the 15th MEU.

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Perspective is everything for San Antonio Marine leader

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – The Marines that comprise the MEU are the first responders to crises around the world. Success is reliant on young Marines dedicated to performing the majority of tasks. However, this would not be possible without exceptional senior leadership throughout the MEU.

Gunnery Sgt. Arthur Abrego Jr. believes actions speak louder than words and takes a hands-on approach to mentoring his Marines. The 28-year-old from San Antonio believes Marines gain a better perspective on what it means to be a Marine by having a strong leader they can emulate.

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3/5 Machine gunners refresh their skills at Division Schools



MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. - Machine gun sections with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, began a refresher course on machine gun nomenclature, optics and operations aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 2, 2015. The fire command and control class is conducted the first week of the three-weeklong course and is vital to the foundational skills of the Marines

"Knowledge and skill are perishable without continuing training and practice," said Cpl. Gabriel Espinoza, a squad leader for Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine and instructor for the course. "We like brilliance with the basics."

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2/7 Marines Cross-Train on the Range

CENTRAL COMMAND - The range was on the edge of the base's defensive perimeter, atop a plateau overlooking the compounds. In the opposite direction, flat desert sand and rock as far as the eye could see. Through the breeze and swirling dust, two truck-sized targets could be seen in the distance about 1,200 meters away.

A group of Marines and sailors from Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Central Command, drove out to the range in the Central Command area of operations and conducted a live-fire exercise aimed at cross training members of the company on various weapons systems, Jan. 6, 2015.

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