



# SEMPER FI SOUND OFF

The newsletter of the Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group

Spring 2011

## From the President

As many of you may know, the "Fight'n Fifth Marines" are the most decorated Regiment in Marine Corps history and we here in Dana Point are fortunate enough to have the 5th MAR as our Adoptive Unit. With this honor and distinction goes an enormous amount of responsibility, commitment, and community outreach. Without a doubt, and has been said by many Marines and civilians alike, Dana Point has risen to the challenge and created a Support Organization, which in terms of its service and outreach plus its many other attributes, is among the best in the Nation. It is because of you and your support, we as a group have collectively become so successful and recognized. Congratulations on making our Support Organization, after 3 1/2 years in its current structure, what it has become today. Job exceptionally well done!



Here are the reasons you have put so many smiles on our Marines', spouses, and kids faces:

- Provided \$1,000's to meet Emergency & Family needs
- Sent over 2,000 Care Packages overseas
- Made Marine Corps Birthday Ball Tickets affordable to our younger troops and participated in a gown exchange where over 600 gowns were collected from our generous community so that each 5th MAR woman could be Cinderella for the day
- Offered Holiday Gifts to needy families, contributed to the Christmas Party for our Headquarters Company
- Improved the 5th MAR Park & Picnic Areas, Martial Arts/ Fitness Center, and Chapel

These tangible and intangible forms of outreach are things we have done. Needs of our 5th Marines are ongoing and a work in progress. There will still be family emergencies, care packages to be sent, and capital improvements to be made. Likewise, your continued outreach and participation will always be needed and your donations of time, talent, in-kind gifts and financial resources are greatly appreciated.

Thank you for being there at every turn for our 5th Marines and their families.

*Semper Fi With Respect & Gratitude*, Pete Hammer, President

## 5th Marine Regiment Change of Command



March 31st was a bittersweet day for our highly decorated Regiment, our Support Group, and the City of Dana Point. We bid farewell to **Col Willy A. Buhl** and welcomed a new Commander, **Roger B. Turner Jr.**

As is always the case in the history of the "Fighting Fifth", there was great fanfare and tradition with the Marine Corps Band serenading the guests, Color Guard, and marching battalions.

The passing of the Regiment's battle colors, delivered by Regimental **Sergeant Major Ernest K. Hoopii** to the outgoing Commanding Officer, and in turn presented to the new Commander, symbolized the formal transfer of command.



The passing of the Battle Colors



We welcome Col Turner, his wife Carole and their two sons Alec (14) and Max (10)

## Whale Festival Parade & Block Party

The 5th Marines were well represented in the Whale Parade with a color guard and over 125 Marines marching down the PCH. **Col Buhl** rode with the Mayor, **Scott Schoeffel**, at the beginning of the formation.

Volunteers from the Support Group passed out over 2,500 American flags to enthusiastic parade viewers. This resulted in the Marines as well as all the other parade marchers being welcomed in a grand, patriotic style.



Kids aboard the humvee at the block party

*continued on page 3*



## From the Desk of Col Buhl

Dear Family and Friends of the Fighting Fifth,

This will be my last opportunity to thank you for your hard work, unflagging support and many kindnesses during service as your Commanding Officer.

As I pass our Colors to **Col Roger Turner**, I couldn't be more proud of all that has been accomplished by our Marines and Sailors and their families during this period. Marines from every one of our battalions have deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and measured up to the highest standards and tradition of the Corps' most decorated regiment. Places like Nawa and Sangin in the Helmand Province, have changed dramatically for the better because of the extraordinary service and sacrifice of our men and their families. People in Japan, the Philippines and Indonesia have met the Fifth Marines in the wake of typhoons, earthquakes and tsunamis, engendering good will among friends and allies. Right here at home, our own City of Dana Point has opened her doors and her heart to us ... it has been an extraordinary experience

for me and my family.

Much has been expected of the Fighting Fifth over this period and more will be asked when she deploys once again into harm's way this coming August. I want to thank the Commandant of the Marine Corps for sending us the very finest infantry Colonel of Marines available to lead her in the coming years, Col Roger Turner. Roger and his wife **Carole** and sons, **Alec** and **Max**, are not strangers to the Regiment. Roger began his officer career in the Fifth Marines and has past service in 3/5, 2/5 and the Regimental Headquarters. Among his many accomplishments, he has two recent combat tours in Iraq as a battalion commander. He is extremely personable and professional and with pride and pleasure I relinquish command to Roger and wish him and all hands the very best.

Finally, I want to thank our Dana Point Fifth Marine Regimental Support Group and all the incredible people that have supported their efforts and, in effect, the "Fighting Fifth". Our President, **Pete Hammer**, and his team are unique in a nation endowed with



A final salute to the City of Dana Point from Col Buhl riding with Mayor Scott Schofield during the Whale Parade

the most patriotic people on our planet. How very fortunate the Fifth Marines is to have such a special group of dedicated Americans supporting her, especially in a time of war.

My next duties will take me to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City, but my family will remain in the local area for the next year. I look forward to seeing you again from time to time when I return to visit. Not a day will go by that I won't think of all of you. Thank you for the continued love and support of "your" Regiment, the Fighting Fifth Marines.

*Semper Fidelis*, Col Willy Buhl

## Welcome Home Darkhorse Family



The Marine Corps Darkhorse Battalion, the 3/5 under the Command of **LtCol Jason Morris**, drew one of the toughest assignments in the Corps's history, the Sangin Valley District in the Helmand Province in October 2010.

This has been the strategic crossroads for the enemy fighters and the drug trafficking that funds the Taliban. They fiercely defended the territory as the Marines pushed the enemy all winter. Those insurgents who survived have either fled or gone into hiding.

The cost for the 3/5 Dark Horse family has been steep. More than 2 dozen Marines were killed and 140 wounded; more than any Marine unit in the 10 year history of the Afghan war. As the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines begin to return home, they are confident they are leaving Sangin a safer place. Schools are opening, village markets are thriving, Afghan security forces are gaining in competency and a key road project from Sangin to the Kajaki dam is close to completion.

Please join us in welcoming home the 3/5 Darkhorse Battalion. They have our tremendous respect and honor as they return to Camp Pendleton and their families. They are being replaced by the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines under **LtCol Tom Savage**. Our support of the 1/5 will be unwaivering.

## Operation Care and Comfort

Holiday Operation Care and Comfort for our Marines was a complete mission accomplished. Over 300 goody boxes were sent to our 3/5 in Sangin in time for the holidays. Thanks to our residents of our local communities for making our Marines feel the love across the miles. Special thanks goes to:

- Mission Parish School, Don Juan Avila Elementary, Coastal Mountain Youth Academy and the Boys and Girls Club for their precious cards and letters
- Dana Point High School Interact Club for their solicitation outside of Walmart to fulfill the wish lists for the goody boxes and holding a packing party
- The Monarch Beach Sunrise Rotary Club for their perpetual solicitation and packing of goodies for our Marines in country
- **Elena Flyer** and **Beth Apodaca** for holding packing parties to get our boxes off to Afghanistan

The list goes on and on, as does our need to continue to send care and comfort to our Marines. If you would like to donate to our Operation Care and Comfort efforts, you may do so online at [DanaPoint5thMarines.com](http://DanaPoint5thMarines.com).



## Fifth MAR Friends Become Lethal Weapons

The first Women's Self-Defense Class taught on March 12, 2011 by our American Heroes was a huge success. Civilians from our Dana Point community learned valuable tools and skills taught by **SSgt Jason Spurrier**, our resident expert in Martial Arts and his 2 assistants, **LCpl Chris Keba** and **Cpl Shawn Glasgow**.



The scenarios he taught empowered our civilian participants to help increase confidence in hazardous and threatening situations. A couple of the basic premises and moves Jason stressed were the carotid chop and knee drop, not looking your perpetrator in the eyes, and startling him with your unexpected and swift response. Even these simple moves can be enough to save lives. It was a day of empowerment for the 30 women who were honored to participate.

## Dojo Taking Shape

Renovation of the Dojo and Combat Fitness Center has been a pet project of our friend and former Board Member, **John Hicks**, and the Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group.

The facility was named in honor of our friend **Capt Trevor J. Yurista** who was killed in Afghanistan in the Helmand Province in 2008. A place where Marines could train in martial arts and also blow off some steam in their free time was a vision of Trevor's that has been evolving to its present form. Safe mats on the walls and floor, bags, weights, and cardio equipment have been donated over time to make it a viable facility for training.

This Dojo was perfect for the Women's Self-Defense Class to take place. The Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group hopes to be able to provide more Self-Defense education classes in the future. Ooh-rah!

## Pray for our Fallen Comrades

A beautiful Interim Tribute to our Fallen Comrades In Arms from Operation Enduring Freedom has been completed. This memorial is in front of the **LT Capodanno Chapel** aboard Camp San Mateo-5th MAR Area. The Placard which pays homage to the 37 Marines who made the ultimate sacrifice are part of our 5th Marine Regiment (1/5, 3/5 and 2/4) prior to (Capt Yurista-2/7) or at the time of their passing. The Fallen Brothers from the distinguished First Combat Engineer Battalion, who are physically located here at Camp San Mateo, are prominently honored as well. The stainless steel LT Capodanno Chapel sign, apex and glass enclosed case with tribute are lit from the inside and can be viewed at night.

The Tribute Monument Sign and Placard are a direct result of all the hard work by **Jerry Neely-TopLine Construction**, **Gillian Kirkpatrick-King Graphic Design**, our volunteers from

**Shoreline Church** in San Clemente, your **Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group**



and generous donors which include the **Armed Forces Retirees Association-CA**, **Newport Beach-American Legion Post 291**, **Marine Corps League-South Coast Detachment**, **Jim Naylor**, **Cynthia Martinez**, and **Tustin Community Bank** plus several anonymous contributors.

God bless our departed, wounded warriors, all our Fight'n Fifth Marines, and 1st Combat Engineers BN. With the encouragement of 5th MAR Command, their vision has now become a reality.

## Farewell Fiesta

About 150 people attended the support group's party for **Col Willy Buhl** on Monday at Olamendi's in Capistrano Beach, many sipping "Buhl's Fuel," a margarita-tequila sunrise mix named after the commander. This farewell was also a fund raiser so the Support Group can continue to support the 5th Marine Regiment wherever assistance is needed. Thanks to **Jorge Olamendi** for a memorable fiesta. The generous support of our 5th MAR friends and family made this event a spectacular success for not only Col Buhl but for everyone attending!



Col Buhl receives City proclamation from Mayor Scott Schoeffel

## Whale Festival, *continued from page 1*

Following the actual parade those who ended up at La Plaza were treated to an enjoyable "Block Party" with rides, exhibits, and plenty to eat. Highlights of this day were both the Marine Corp Humvee with little folks climbing in and out and the dunk tank, both sponsored by the Support Group. Wasn't it fun that all the small children got to dunk the Marines?



## Helping our Wounded Warriors

The DP 5th MAR Support Group is joining hands with **Beth Phillips of Furnishing Hope**. Furnishing Hope is a non-profit organization (furnishinghope.org) of talented interior decorators and volunteers who use their skills to transform the home environment by collecting usable furniture from private donors, manufacturers, and showrooms and distributing it to provide a comfortable home environment for kids and families in stressful situations. One cross-section of their lucky recipients includes our Wounded Warriors rehabilitating at Balboa Naval Hospital.



The wounded Marines returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan face many challenges. In addition to the physical and emotional toll they suffer, they have to deal with issues such as rehabilitation, retraining, post-combat counseling and long term medical care. Post-traumatic stress disorder is a legacy of this war. This serious disorder has caused many Marines to become institutionalized and lose their families. Our Support Group will furnish the kitchen areas: pots, pans, dishes, glasses, silverware etc. for any 5th Mar Wounded Warrior for whom Furnishing Hope provides a home.

A second project was spearheaded by our Board Member, **Bob DePew**. A colleague of his, **Tim Bartz**, President of **Mold-Craft Inc.**, raised \$10,000 through an email challenge. With that money, 15 iPads were purchased and donated to the Wounded Warriors of the 3/5 Darkhorse Battalion.

Each of our American Heroes received their own iPad with a personally engraved cover with their name, 3/5 Darkhorse Battalion and "Get Some" on the back of each! Also included was an iTunes gift card and headset.

Special kudos go to the two outstanding Marines **GySgt Moreno** and **LCpl Johansen** who are handling the 3/5 wounded. It should also be noted that our Command, Chaplain, and Family Readiness Officers have been visiting our Dark Horse heroes and supporting them in their challenging road ahead.

The greatest casualty of all is being forgotten. If you would like to contribute to our Wounded Warrior projects, please donate online **DanaPoint5thMarines.com**.



Pete Hammer (center) flanked by Col Willy Buhl (l) and Col Roger Turner (r)

A small gathering of 50 Marines, city officials and supporters of the Fightin' 5th had dinner at **Jack's Restaurant** on March 29th to welcome the incoming Commander of the Regiment, **Colonel Roger Turner**. A few speeches and many toasts thanks to Jack's generosity welcomed Colonel Turner in style.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**MAY 1:** The beer garden and static display at the Dana Point Grand Prix

**MAY 7:** Marine Car Wash

**MAY 11 -16:** 5thMARSOG assists the VFW when the Tribute Viet Nam Wall comes to Sea Terrace Park

**JUNE 13:** Combat Golf at Camp Pendleton

**JUNE 26 - AUGUST 28:** Refreshments at the Concerts in the Park

Visit [DanaPoint5thMarines.com](http://DanaPoint5thMarines.com) for details

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**Donate Online:** Donate to the DP 5th Marine Regiment Support Group using a credit card or via our secure PayPal account. Every dollar counts, so please donate online today. DPMRSG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax-deductible. 100% of your donations will go directly to support our Fighting Fifth!

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