



SEMPER FI SOUND OFF

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

FALL 2022



President's Message

We welcome Col Steele and SgtMaj Stokes home from Darwin, Australia. Our courageous defenders have made all of America proud, but without a doubt, it always feels better when our Marines are home.

Our Fighting Fifth returned just in time for the 24th Marine Corps Ball and a myriad of fun-filled events designed for our Marines and families, which you will read about in this edition of the Semper Fi Sound Off. But there is no rest for the weary. Our elite fighting force will be heading to 29 Palms in late November thru mid-December to the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center for an annual exercise, Steel Knight, to hone naval warfighting functions and embrace new challenges to be ready in service to our nation

Upon their return from Steel Knight, DPSG will be planning Holiday Magic for the single Marines and families. We thank our loyal constituents for standing shoulder to shoulder and working overtime with us to let our Marines know how much we appreciate them. Your donations and your volunteerism allow us to continue our morale-building efforts. The

incomprehensible sacrifices these families make on our behalf can be recognized. DPSG remains committed to making a difference in the lives of our Marines, Sailors, and their families through the support and outreach of our heartfelt seasonal missions. As a member of a grateful nation, you can step forward and accept the challenge of creating HOLIDAY MAGIC for our American Heroes.

Tis the season of giving. There are many worthy non-profits to donate to this holiday season when our hearts are full of charity. Please remember as you consider where to give your hard-earned dollars, our support organization is a 100% Volunteer Organization. With no employees, nearly every dollar donated goes directly to those we serve.

We thank you for your dedicated commitment to our support organization. If you would like to help us create memories for our single Marines and families, we would appreciate your contribution. You may use the enclosed self-addressed envelope or donate online at danapoint5thmarines.com.

Let us remember those that cannot go home for Christmas and military personnel around the world still in harm's way. They teach us the true meaning of giving. May your home and your holidays be blessed.

Semper Fi, Terry Rifkin, President

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

Volunteers are an essential part of our organization. We sincerely appreciate our DPSG volunteers' contribution of giving up time in their busy lives to support our mission of caring for our Marines, Navy Corpsmen, and families. They are our driving force and our most prominent advocates. It was a pleasure to honor some of our over 350 volunteers on October 24th at Task Force San Mateo. The event started with a visit to the sacred grounds of the 5th Marine Memorial Park and Garden. Then on to Task Force San Mateo for an evening of camaraderie and bonding, along with a delicious dinner and raffle prizes. It was a fun event with stories of appreciation from our Fighting Fifth about how our base projects, events, activities, and support have made a difference to the Marines and their families.

Special thanks to two of our directors who made this appreciation dinner possible. Director of Volunteers, Sheri Schneringer, manages our hard-working volunteers all year, and our quintessential party planner, Director of Support and Outreach, Jill Watson, created an autumn theme and delicious dinner for our guests of honor. Jill's daughter Stephanie also made a great video of our volunteers in action. We hope our volunteers feel valued and realize their impact on those we serve.





247th Marine Corps Ball at the Cape Rey Resort in Carlsbad

The annual Marine Corps Birthday Ball celebrates Marine Corps history, customs, and traditions. It represents where the Marine Corps started and where it is now, while giving us a glimpse of the past, present, and future.

Throughout the world, on 10 November (or thereabouts) Marines will celebrate the birth of their Corps—the most loyal, feared, revered, and professional fighting force the world has ever known.

Symbolically, the eldest Marine present passes a piece of cake to the youngest Marine present, just as for years, our experienced Marines have nurtured and led young Marines that will fill our ranks and renew our Corps. The oldest Marine was Mike Lipscombe, DPSG's Past President, and the youngest Marine present was Private First Class Luis Solano.

DPSG was honored to help defray the cost of the Ball by lightening the financial load for our Marines. We cannot do this without the support of all of you! It was a beautiful ocean-view evening. The Marines wore dress blues, and the women wore beautiful ball gowns. In attendance were 350 Marines and their spouses. In addition, we were honored to have many dignitaries from our very supportive City of Dana Point and our dedicated Board of Directors. The Marine Corps birthday is also a time to remember fallen Devil Dogs, and we were honored to have Gold Star parents, Cindy and John Elliott, with us. Their son Sean Elliott was a USMC KC-130 pilot who died unexpectedly on 10 July 2017 when the aircraft he was co-piloting experienced a mishap at



Above: City dignitaries from Dana Point along with President Terry Rifkin and her husband Chris (front, center); Right: Official March of the Colors



cruising altitude and crashed in Leflore, Mississippi. Sean will never be forgotten, and the Elliotts will always be invited to be with us for the Marine Corps Ball to keep his memory alive.

This was the first Ball for many young Marines because of Covid and Ball cancellations over the last few years. But, as is always the case, the 247th Marine Corps Ball provided wonderful memories where Marines enjoyed each other's company and formed the bonds that hold all Marines together forever. *Semper Fidelis!*

Welcome to our new Company for the Courageous: F&M Bank

HONESTY, INTEGRITY, DEDICATION, SERVICE

ABOVE SELF, AND DEPENDABILITY. For both F&M Bank and the USMC, these are not just words, they are a way of life.

DPSG was honored to receive a grant from the F&M Foundation to help continue our mission of providing support to our Fighting Fifth and their families. We are very grateful for the generosity of F&M Bank!

Above, L to R: Marco Reyes, DPSG President, Terry Rifkin, Tiffany Roberts, and her daughter, Quinn, DPSG Secretary Cathy Nelson, and Karen Cortez



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Scan this QR code to link to our Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts—be in the know about our events!



You can also follow us by going to :

facebook.com/danapoint5thmarines

instagram.com/dp5thmarines/?hl=en

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From the Command Posts

I am happy to announce our regiment completed its deployment to Darwin, Australia, and recovered all personnel and equipment. The deployment was a massive success, and part of what made that possible was the faithful service of the Dana Point Support Group. Your support to those Marines and Sailors forward and the Marines, Sailors, and Families who remained behind was and continues to be instrumental to our success.

Your efforts allowed the Regiment to execute over ten international exercises across the continent and into the Indo-Pacific, including humanitarian assistance, security operations, and complex live-fire events.

Our personnel conducted events across the area of operations from Brisbane to Canberra to Melbourne and worked with international teammates such as Japan and Indonesia. We also hosted many high-profile visits from the Commandant and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, to the Secretary of the Navy, and countless other U.S. and international leaders. Our Marines and Sailors pushed service-level initiatives to the limit, and those accomplishments were not possible without the great support back home.

While being forward deployed in support of our nation's goals is a great honor, it is good to be home with

our friends and families. I can think of no better homecoming than the Marine Corps Birthday Ball; thank you to all of those who participated in and supported the execution of that spectacular event in Carlsbad. Thank you all for the continued support to the Marines and Sailors of the Fighting Fifth!

Semper Fi,

Colonel Christopher Steele, Commanding Officer, MRF-D



Marine with Marine Rotational Force Darwin, 5th Marine Regiment, and an Australian Soldier hold security during a training exercise in Western Australia



Welcome Home, Marines!

Recently DPSG had the honor of being part of the welcoming home of the last of our Fighting Fifth, who were returning from their 8-month deployment in Australia. This rotation included Col Chris Steele and SgtMaj Justin Stokes, who were the first to leave and last to return. They didn't arrive at Camp San Mateo until after 3 a.m., but the families and our volunteers could care less about the time or temperature that night! Thanks to you, our generous Friends of the Fifth, we provided sandwiches, drinks, and goody bags for the families waiting and for our newly returned American Heroes!



Top: U.S. Marine Corps Col. Christopher T. Steele, the commanding officer of Marine Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D) 22, reunites with his family upon return to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, Oct. 18, 2022; Above: "Welcome homes" are always joyous! Some other images of our wonderful families reuniting on the parade deck.



Operation Holiday Magic

After a long 8-month deployment, we want to make this time of year festive and memorable for our Marines and families! Therefore, Holiday Magic will take place throughout the season from Thanksgiving until the end of the year! Would you please join our mission?

We want to make our single Marines living in the barracks feel special. So, for those who cannot go home for Thanksgiving, we will provide a catered turkey dinner with all the fixings, games, karaoke, gift cards and other goodies when they return to the barracks.

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, our Marines will be training in Twenty-Nine Palms, and what better way for DPSG to welcome them home and help them reunite with their families than for them to be part of HOLIDAY MAGIC! Santa will visit the Regiment for their Christmas party on 15 December at Dave & Busters. We will be throwing a HUGE merrymaking event for over 350 people, with every Marine and family member getting a D&B game card and a catered dinner. We can bet that Santa's workshop will be filled with toys for small children and lots of gift cards for our teens, single Marines, and families. Because some of the 5th Marine Battalions don't have an adoptive City, we make sure that "No Marine kiddo is left behind" and provide toys to children across the Regiment.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP: Please purchase a toy for a Marine child and drop it off at any Dana Point location listed on our website.

TOO BUSY TO SHOP? We will do the shopping for you! You can visit DanaPoint5thMarines.com and click on the "Holiday Magic" tab to make a secure, fully tax-deductible PayPal donation to support these needed Outreach efforts. You can also send a check in the enclosed remittance envelope.

The holidays are a perfect time to think of our military families who, by their sacrifices, give us our freedom, the greatest gift of all.



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