



# SEMPER FI SOUND OFF

The newsletter of the Dana Point 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment Support Group

FALL 2023



## President's Message

I just returned from a month in East Africa. It was a once-in-a-lifetime trip to see and experience wildlife, landscape, untouched and vast terrain, and diverse cultures, some of which have remained the same over hundreds of years. Once home, I was reflecting and overcome

with gratitude. How lucky am I that our American Military preserves our way of life so all Americans can live, work, and fulfill their dreams?

While I was away, the world shifted, and once again, American troops were in harm's way, countering the threat of evil actors who intentionally wanted to harm others.

The DP5MRSG objective of caring for the morale of the men, women, and children of the 5th Marine Regiment is increasingly more important daily if you read the news and understand the daunting duties ahead for those wearing our Nation's cloth. At any time, our Fighting Fifth elite fighting

force may be mobilized to report somewhere in the world. They have been training, and they are ready.

This holiday season, you have many worthy charities where you can support underprivileged people. Our mission is different. We serve honorable and proud service members who feel **privileged** to represent the United States of America in any climb and place where they are needed. They ask for nothing, yet they are willing to put their lives on the line with their selfless service so that we as a country may remain free.

In gratitude for those who sacrifice so much, we are joyfully planning outstanding Thanksgiving and Christmas festivities for our Marines and families. If your heart is moved to donate to assure that each and every member of the 5th and their family have a memorable celebration together, please either donate online to [danapoint5thmarines.com](http://danapoint5thmarines.com) "Holiday Magic", or you can write a check in the enclosed remittance envelope.

From all of us at the Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group, we hope you live, love, and laugh freely because we are safe and protected by our brave defenders.

*Semper Fi, Terry Rifkin, President*

## Father Capodanno Chapel Dedication

DP5MRSG raised funds for nearly a decade and worked to restore the Lt Capodanno Chapel at San Mateo, home of the 5th Marines at Camp Pendleton. Servant of God Vincent Robert Capodanno (Feb 13, 1929 – Sept 4, 1967) was a United States Navy Roman Catholic chaplain and a posthumous recipient of America's highest military decoration — the Medal of Honor — for actions during the Vietnam War.

The Lt Capodanno Chapel is a non-denominational church with great historical and spiritual value, named after this American hero. When DP5MRSG got involved, this historic gem was severely aged and in disrepair and was slated to be torn down due to its condition. Our support organization rescued the Chapel from its unfortunate plight and provided funds for renovations. Through vigorous efforts, the renovation of the Chapel began in April 2017. We worked closely with the Marines who provided labor and construction expertise. The Capodanno Memorial Chapel is multi-purposed. It not only serves Marines and their families as a house of worship, but is also a place the chaplains use for educational seminars and a special venue to host Sunday night fellowship barbeques for the Marines.

The Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group has been honored to facilitate the transformation of this extraordinary Chapel to ensure the function and beauty it deserves. The same day we welcomed our new Colonel, Brian T. Mulvihill, the Chapel was re-dedicated, and DP5MRSG presented this striking granite monument with a bas-relief image of Father Capodanno. What a superb way to remember and pay tribute to this military chaplain, a war hero in the truest sense, who exhibited unparalleled bravery and never left the side of his men.



*U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Greg Coates, Chaplain to the 5th Marine Regiment, presided the re-dedication of the Lt Capodanno Chapel, pictured here with Col Brian T Mulvihill.*



# OPERATION HOLIDAY MAGIC



With the Regiment heading into 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 turkey dinner with all the fixings, games, karaoke, gift cards, and other goodies the day before Thanksgiving.

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 December 14 at Dave & Busters. We will be throwing a HUGE merrymaking event for over 350 people, with every Marine and family member getting a David & Buster's 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](http://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.

## In-Kind Donor Super Star

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) members are vibrant, active women who are passionate about community service, preserving history, educating children, as well as honoring and supporting those who serve our nation. For over a decade, the San Clemente DAR chapter has contributed to our Fighting fifth in so many ways. Under Project Patriot, members donate out of their own pockets to keep our Marines going. While troops are deployed, DAR sends care packages for those in harm's way and, in many ways, lifts the morale of the families left behind at Camp Pendleton. Most notably, DAR friends have championed the annual Baby Shower with clothes, baby blankets, and gift cards. An absolute favorite is the homemade cookies the DAR women make for special occasions all year, including Trunk or Treat, Thanksgiving, and Christmas parties. A new project is "Spirit Packs" for the single Marines zip lock bags, which will be filled with snack items and dropped off at the barracks to remind our Marines that they are appreciated and remembered. We thank our Daughters of the American Revolution friends for their enduring support for our 5th Marine support and outreach endeavors.





## From the Command Post

Dear friends and families of the 5th Marine Regiment,

Since taking command of the Fighting Fifth four months ago, I have been humbled by the support of our Marines and Sailors over that time — from baby showers to retention events, from camp improvements to social events, and everything in between. Further, I cannot thank you enough for the warm welcome for me, Michaela, and the boys.

In those past four months, your Regiment has been busy preparing subordinate battalions to deploy while simultaneously training as the Command Element (CE) for the Marine Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D) Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). We finished the Summer off by welcoming many new personnel to the Regimental staff, and we promptly sent them to training events that will help us better integrate with United States Navy forces when we deploy. I also led the staff on a pre-deployment site survey to Darwin, Australia, to get eyes on the locations where we will live and work.

As we transition to the Fall, our schedule remains full as we prepare for our MAGTF CE certification exercise: Steel Knight. This will be the opportunity for the Regimental staff will rehearse the missions we will be tasked with during our deployment. However, before that, we will celebrate the 248th United States Marine Corps Birthday. While the Birthday is 10 November, we gathered on 26 October to commemorate this important event.

While the operational tempo of the Regiment is high, so is the morale of our Marines and Sailors. Training has been realistic and challenging, and your backing has been incredible. The Regiment is strong and ready. Thank you all for the continued support to the Marines and Sailors of the Fighting Fifth!

*Semper Fidelis,*  
Colonel Brian Mulvihill, Commanding Officer, Grizzly



Col Mulvihill and his family,  
wife Michaela Coughlan  
(Col, USMC) and sons  
Declan and Cellach

## Base Projects Aboard Camp Pendleton

We thank our base projects Director, Mark Schuler, and his co-chair, Jan Bennett, for their tireless efforts to enhance San Mateo and make the home of the 5th Marines a place of pride and improve the morale of our Marines and families.

Your charitable donations make all this possible. Here is a short list of some of their projects:

- Added rocks to Task Force San Mateo (TFSM) and the Chapel
- Helped secure the cannon at TFSM
- Re-vamped TFSM for our new Command's use with a pool table, barrels, and barstools for Marines to enjoy R & R
- With Marines in the field, helped with landscaping and tree trimming at the Memorial Park and Father Capodanno Chapel
- New shades in the Chapel
- Granite memorial of Father Capodanno
- 18 banners, five with logos at the Memorial Garden and on the parade deck.

The additional 8 banners line the streets with battalion logos and list battles where the 5th Marines fought.

- At the request of the Command, procured sweatshirts and tee shirts with the Regimental logo for purchase. (If interested, we have additional swag for civilians.)

Thank you to our hard-working boots-on-the-ground team!



Above: Jan Bennett and  
Mark Schuler;

Left: Fighting Fifth  
Marines banners





## Happy Marine Corps Birthday!

5th Marine Regiment Birthday October 26, 2023

The Westin, Gas Lamp Quarter, San Diego



Col Mulvihill and Guest of Honor, Col Willy Buhl (USMC-Ret), Former Commander of the Fighting Fifth.

Col Buhl gave compelling and motivational remarks about the Regiment's legacy and their upcoming deployment to Darwin, Australia.



## Keenan Becomes a New Company for the Courageous

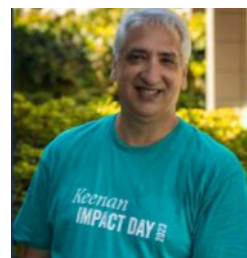
We are delighted to add Keenan, to our roster of distinguished Companies for the Courageous.

Keenan provides innovative insurance and budgetary solutions for schools, public agencies, and healthcare organizations. In addition, giving back to help communities thrive is central to the Keenan culture.

A warm-hearted thank you to Keenan and their generous associates, as well as the multiple AssuredPartners Employee-Led Resource Groups for both monetary and tangible donations in a successful 2023 Diaper Drive, which our common friend Michael Varma coordinated.

Company-wide, Keenan, and affiliates made a tremendous positive impact on the lives of our Marine babies and Mamas.

It is no surprise that Michael was made Keenan Volunteer of the year and we were thrilled that he designated his \$1,000 award to DP5MRSG. This extra donation bumped Keenan to the Colonel Level as a Company for the Courageous. Congratulations!



Michael Varma

Michael has long been a "Rain Maker" with his indispensable contributions annually to Laughs for Leathernecks. As a footnote, Keenan also participated this year in Trunk or Treat on base and donated over 100 stuffed animals for the upcoming Christmas party.

We thank Michael and Keenan for being heroes to our heroes!

### Board of Directors

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## Save the Dates!

**Monday, March 4**

**Irvine Improv**

Laughs for Leathernecks



**Monday, June 10**

**Arroyo Trabuco Golf Club**

Combat Golf

