



# SEMPER FI SOUND OFF

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

SPRING 2024



## President's Message

The Regiment deployed to Darwin, Australia in March with nearly 2000 Marines and Sailors for a six-month rotational deployment with the Australian Defence Force, Allies and partners to participate in a series of exercises and training events. As they departed, I was reminded

of many previous Fifth Marine deployments that have occurred in our 16-year adoption. We thank our Marines for their selfless service and have the deepest gratitude for those families who remain steadfast on the home front awaiting their loved ones' return. Please keep our deployed Marines in your prayers and wish them a safe deployment.

Several years ago, I was standing with a Marine in the 5th Marine Memorial Park. He asked me, "Why aren't the Marine families ever recognized with a monument?" His words stayed with me. I am delighted to share with you about a beautiful monument we have been working on for over 3 years, coming to Dana Point late this year. "Returning Home" depicts the sheer joy of families reuniting after a long deployment. **ANSWER THE CALL** and

help us to bring this enduring tribute to Dana Point. This bronze sculpture will be a compelling piece of art that thanks and gives respect to the families of those who sacrifice so much. Through your sponsorship, you can also honor a Marine, a family member, a Veteran, or your company. Please read this issue for more information.

In keeping with our commitment to honor the fallen, it was a profound experience to attend the dedication of the Team Spirit 1984 Monument. I was extremely proud of our DPSG team's committed involvement and contribution to support the 3/5 Lima committee to bring these fallen Marines home to Camp Pendleton. A reception was held at Task Force San Mateo after the ceremony and the fellowship could be felt so intensely, as it was for the alumni reunion the next day. Unless you were present, you would not be able to understand what an important weekend this was for those who have long carried burdens from 40 years ago after the most tragic Marine Corps training mishap taking the lives of 29 souls. The 5th Marine Memorial Park will remain hallowed ground where the 5th Marine brotherhood will continue to visit and find solace for the loss of those they loved so much.

*We remain in 5th Marine service, Semper Fidelis,  
Terry Rifkin, President*

## 40 Year Remembrance

Forty years ago, twenty-nine of our brothers paid the ultimate sacrifice while on a training mission in Korea. On 8 March 2024, we gathered to dedicate in stone the names we have carried long in our hearts. 180 friends, service family and relatives gathered as one united, chosen family remembering those spirits, sharing stories, laughter, and tears with those cut short from their father, spouse, brother or grandfather.

At this year's dedication and reunion ritual, we laid down our burdens, spoke unveiled truths, lifted others up, and bravely exposed our hearts, revealing to wondering spouses the occurrence that altered our being so long ago. We purged our souls and departed a better person than we arrived.

Where two or more warriors are gathered, the spirit is fanned to flame, igniting the torch which brightens our path. Walk tall with confidence and dignity; few have confronted the road you have traveled. Be humble and honest, let deeds be the mortar of your reputation. Patiently assist the next generation; remember those who guided your way. Treasure your brothers, respect their families, treat all with dignity and walk in the spirit, always.

*SgtMaj R. D. Thielen*

### Team Spirit 1984 Korea





## Team Spirit 1984 Monument Project

Our deepest thanks to our partners, the Dana Point 5th Marine Support Group, for their experienced guidance, financial management of raised funds, untold hours of toil, Memorial Park and Task Force San Mateo preparation, friendship and fervor in helping make this monument goal a reality. Over 180 guests arrived to see a beautifully manicured park and trees, with the permeated scent of eucalyptus on a blessed sunny day. The respect and honor surrounding the day's events etched a perfect memory most thought they would never see, wanting to relive the moments of bringing our 29 Marines home to join the rolls of the gallant fallen, of the fighting 5th Marine Regiment.

From the dedication to the reception, your actions and kindness have been weighed and not found wanting. Every promise was exceeded, and your heartfelt passion replaced the void of Gold Star family emptiness with happiness in finding a new family of supporting friends who remember those who have gone before us.

*Lima Company 3/5 (82-85) Monument Committee*



*Memorial dedicated to honor the 29 men of the Team Spirit crash in 1984*



*The 5th Marine Memorial Park was the perfect setting for healing for the Gold Star families of the fallen and Marine brothers*



*General John Paxton and Ireland Liddle Deliver cake to Gold Star families at the 3/5 reunion. Looking on, representation from the Republic of Korean, LtCol Sungjin Lee*

## Fighting Fifth Marines Huge Hit in the Dana Point Whale Parade

It was a great day for the Festival of the Whales Parade! We were so proud of our Marines, the 5th Marine Color Guard, and having the 1st Division Marine Corps band was a bonus! We got to "show off" some of our volunteers and the Boy Scouts did an outstanding job of handing out nearly 3,000 flags to the crowd.



## Combat Golf: June 10, 2024 Arroyo Trabuco Golf Club

Join us for the most fun you'll have all year on the links! This year the Combat Golf ball drop will feature more prizes than ever. For just \$10 a ball you can have **a chance to win \$2000, \$500, and \$250.** Just \$275\* includes golf, lunch, dinner, and prizes (\*after May 31, 2024, cost is \$290.)



For complete information about Combat Golf, how to register to play, sponsor a Marine, business sponsor opportunities or buy golf ball drop tickets, visit [danapoint5thmarines.com/combat-golf-2024](http://danapoint5thmarines.com/combat-golf-2024).



*Sponsor a Marine or Wounded Warrior for a day of camaraderie and fun!*



## From the Command Post

Greetings from Camp San Mateo,

I am deeply honored and grateful for my family and me to return home to the 5th Marine Regiment. Serving in the "Most Decorated Regiment" in our Corps, alongside the finest Marines and Sailors, is a privilege beyond words. For the second time in three years, our Regiment finds itself divided, with "Alpha Command" deployed to Australia and "Bravo Command" staying at Camp San Mateo to support our home station units. Bravo Command is prepared and actively supporting two of our four battalions at Camp Pendleton, along with managing various projects on camp. In the coming months, our focus will be on preparing "The Magnificent Bastards" - 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines for deployment to Okinawa with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, and "Darkhorse" - 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines for a future Western Pacific deployment. In short, Bravo Command is mission-ready and eager to serve.



We are proud to share that the Regiment's battalions, 1st Battalion/5th Marines - "Geronimo" and 2/4, have recently hosted Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) reunions. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the 1st Battle of Fallujah (1/5) and the Battle of Ramadi (2/4). These were among the fiercest battles fought by our Marines since Vietnam, and we were honored to welcome hundreds of OIF veterans to camp for these commemorations. As we reconnected and reflected on their sacrifices, we paused to remember the fallen and our proud legacy. "We will never forget the fallen and always pay homage to those who have gone before us, earning the title Marine."

Lastly, a heartfelt thank you for your unwavering support during our recent send-offs, reunions, and camp projects. We deeply appreciate your support for Grizzly Nation and our families. We cherish our partnership with the Dana Point Support Group and look forward to seeing you soon—hopefully at the Combat Golf Tournament on June 10th.

*God Bless and Semper Fidelis, Colonel AJ Munro, Officer In Charge, 5th Marine Regiment Bravo Command*

## Message from Down Under

Friends and family, greetings from the Top End. The Marines and Sailors have arrived and are settling in well here in Darwin, Australia (still waiting on our aviation unit from Hawaii). Our Aussie brothers and sisters have been incredible hosts, and everyone is looking forward to training together in the near future. It is very hot and humid here in the Northern Territory and our folks are acclimatizing with early morning and late-night physical training. We have just transitioned out of the wet season here and things should be cooling of soon. We've got some exciting training opportunities coming up, to include medical support and community relations activities in Papua New Guinea.



*U.S. Marine Corps Col. Brian Mulvihill, right, the commanding officer of Marine Rotational Force - Darwin 24.3, shakes hands with Royal Australian Navy Capt. Mitchell Livingstone, the commanding officer of Headquarters Northern Command at Royal Australian Air Force Base Darwin, NT, Australia*

In the meantime, our Marines and Sailors have enjoyed some incredible liberty events just in the short time that we have been here, to include rugby matches, crocodile tours, and trips to Litchfield National Park. Recently, I led some of the staff down south to Canberra, the capital of Australia, to meet with Ambassador Kennedy and key leaders of the Australian Defence Force. **Please make sure you are following all of these activities and more on the MRF-D social media pages listed below.**

Thanks again to everyone back there supporting the Marines and Sailors who did not deploy, as well as our families, who we miss greatly. We feel your love and support every day.

*Grizzly 6 - Col Brian T. Mulvihill, 5th Marine Regiment Alpha Command*





## Help Us Honor "The Force Behind the Force"

At right is a rendering of a bronze sculpture titled "Returning Home" by sculptor Sutton Betti coming to Heritage Park in Dana Point in 2024.

The City of Dana Point is joining our patriotic mission to bring this compelling piece of art to a public space and raise positive awareness of the City's adoption of the most highly decorated Regiment in Marine Corps history. This enduring monument will honor our Marines, Navy Corpsmen, and families of the 5th Marine Regiment. This bronze sculpture and a granite tablet behind it will pay tribute to our courageous guardians and spotlight the service and sacrifice of our military families.

Col Brian T. Mulvihill stated, "It is fitting that the City of Dana Point and the Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group would erect a monument capturing that precious moment when a Marine returns home and greets his or her family for the first time in months." Wouldn't it be extraordinary to have the dedication of "Returning Home" when Col Mulvihill brings his Marines home from Australia at the end of the year?



"Returning Home"

### Can You Answer the Call?

Commissioning this piece of art and the granite tablet behind it will be expensive. Determined and committed people can accomplish great things working together. Besides showing our support and pride in the unsung heroes who stay behind while their loved ones are on the front line ready to deploy at any time, we offer you an opportunity to enhance the visibility of your company, remember a Veteran, a friend or a loved one with a tangible branding opportunity at the site of this enduring monument.

There are many prominent sponsorship opportunities for purchase:

- Small and large engraved pavers
- Small, medium and large customized bronze plaques on the Wall of Honor
- 2 gray and black granite park benches with stars, stripes, and customization

Donations of **ANY AMOUNT** are gratefully accepted. Please note in the subject line of your check or credit card donation, "Returning Home." Your financial contribution will help to make this vision a reality. This is your opportunity to show your gratitude for all the sacrifices that are made by Marine families. Let us make "Returning Home" a tangible reminder of our thanks.



Proposed Layout in Heritage Park

**For complete sponsorship information, please visit our website [www.danapoint5thmarines.com](http://www.danapoint5thmarines.com). Under the Honor Tab, select "Returning Home" OR email [info@danapoint5thmarines.com](mailto:info@danapoint5thmarines.com).**

**Save the Date! Monday, October 7, Irvine Improv: Laughs for Leathernecks**

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Donations of any size are gratefully accepted!