



SEMPER FI SOUND OFF

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

SPRING 2026

President's Message

Aloha friends. I'd like to begin by thanking you for your generous contributions of time, talent and treasure which are the bedrock of our collective, continuing mission to serve those who serve. I also want to thank our amazing Board of Directors. We have an incredible team of passionate, generous, and faithful leaders who, with the support of their families, give of themselves so fully. Special thanks to Terry Rifkin who has spent more than 18 years dedicating herself to honoring and supporting our continuing mission. Her shoes are impossible to fill, but I promise to do my best and am grateful for her friendship, advice, counsel and continued support. Thankfully, Terry remains a vital part of our leadership team as Past President.

These last few months have been busy. We completed another season of Holiday Magic and with your help, we made incredible memories for our Marines and their families. We hosted Marines and their families in the Dana Point Holiday Boat Parade, supported the Festival of the Whales, and were proud to once again support the Wounded Warrior Trials.

We have received some incredible public recognition including being honored by the Dana Point Chamber of Commerce as the 2025 Non-Profit of the Year and once again being recognized in the annual Dana Point Times "Best of Dana Point" with a Reader Recommended award. As a true, "grass roots" organization where none of us receive a penny for our efforts, these accolades reflect our commitment, efficiency, and effectiveness. None of that happens without you!

DPSG also just learned that we made the podium for the Volunteer of the Year Award. The Commanding General of Marine Corps Installations West at Camp Pendleton, Brigadier General Nick I. Brown, will present DPSG with a certificate of appreciation for our steadfast volunteer service at the upcoming Volunteer Recognition Ceremony. This is such a high honor. It signifies that we are accomplishing our mission in the eyes of our Marines, Sailors and families.

Our tempo remains high as we prepare for our annual Combat Golf fundraiser on June 8th, the Dana Point Summer Concerts in the Park, and so much more. We hope we can count on your continued support. The biggest development since our

last newsletter is that the Regiment has once again deployed to participate in a series of training events and exercises designed to maintain and improve readiness and ensure that our Marines are ready in any clime, and at any time. I hope you'll join me praying for their safety.



As we prepare for summer, we are mindful of solemn events like Memorial Day and momentous events like our nation's 250th birthday. To some, these days are about hotdogs and hanging out at the beach. We know better. We know that these extraordinary milestones are about recognizing the sacrifices and dedication of our nation's finest. Thank you for standing with us to honor the values of duty, sacrifice, courage, and loyalty.

God bless each of you with health, happiness and Aloha.

Semper Fi, Christian Asis, President



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2026

Top Row, L to R: Dean Koukos, Terry Rifkin, Judy Mastracchio, Jan Bennet, Jon Storment, Cathy Nelson, Patti Short, Sherri Behar; Second Row, L to R: Jill Watson, Mark Schuler, Christian Asis, Sheri Schneringer



Your Invitation to Be Part of Something Lasting

There's still time to take your place in a tribute that will stand for generations. We are nearing the final phase of participation for this installation cycle prior to dedication, as engraving and placement must align with the construction schedule.

We invite you to be part of the Returning Home Monument in Dana Point by securing a personalized bronze plaque or commemorative paver—honoring service members from all branches and the families who stand beside them. This isn't just recognition... it's a legacy, permanently placed in a space built on gratitude, respect, and remembrance.

Even more exciting—plans are coming together for a truly unforgettable dedication in late October. We are honored to welcome the powerful traveling exhibit, Remembering Our Fallen National Memorial—featuring 34 towers with the images of more than 5,500 service members lost since 9/11. This will be the final national tour of this extraordinary tribute, offering a deeply moving opportunity to reflect on the true cost of freedom. This is the final National tour of this traveling exhibit. Proudly sponsored by Anduril Industries, the exhibit will stand alongside the Returning Home Monument—creating a rare and meaningful experience of honor, remembrance, and national pride.

And in a moment that brings it all full circle, we are coordinating this dedication with the return of Colonel George Flynn and the 5th Marines from deployment in Australia. Remembrance, homecoming, and community—together in one powerful, historic event for Dana Point.

Secure your place in this legacy today.

For more information: www.rememberingourfallen.org | <https://danapoint5thmarines.com/returning-home/>



Still in the Fight: Resilience in Action

Strength. Grit. Determination.

The Marine Corps & Air Force Wounded Warrior Wheelchair Rugby Competition at Camp Pendleton was nothing short of inspiring. These athletes leave everything on the court, and we were honored to stand beside them. A heartfelt thank you to the Stanley W. Ekstrom Foundation and our incredible Friends of the Fifth. Your generous support allowed DPSG to provide meals, snacks, and beverages for competitors and their families throughout the event.



Because of you, these warriors could focus on the game — not the logistics. You are truly the force behind the Force. We are proud to support those who continue to fight with courage, resilience, and heart.

Non-Profit of the Year

We are deeply honored to be named the 2025 Non-Profit of the Year by the Dana Point Chamber of Commerce. This recognition belongs to every volunteer who shows up before sunrise. Every donor who says "yes" when our Marines need support. Every sponsor who believes in our mission. And every member of this community who stands behind the Fighting Fifth.

We exist for one reason — to support the Marines, Sailors, Wounded Warriors, and families of the 5th Marine Regiment. This award is a reflection of a community that truly understands the meaning of service and sacrifice.



We are proud. We are grateful. We are always faithful.



From the Command Post

Greetings from Camp San Mateo,

As we move into another busy season for the 5th Marine Regiment, our team once again finds itself operating in two locations: "Alpha Command" is back in Australia, ready to respond to whatever may arise, and "Bravo Command" is here at Camp San Mateo, sustaining our home station mission. Bravo Command remains fully engaged, supporting training and readiness events across the battalions and ensuring our Marines and Sailors have what they need to excel. It is an honor to serve alongside such dedicated professionals here at the most decorated unit in our Marine Corps.

In the months ahead, our focus centers on preparing 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines for deployment and maintaining the camp here at San Mateo. We have already tackled several "home improvement" projects with the help of the Dana Point Support Group: painting, displaying mementos of our unit's storied history, and performing small renovations on Task Force San Mateo—our own little retreat here at 5th Marines. The Bravo Command team knows the mission and is moving forward with purpose.

We were especially proud to host several significant events at Camp San Mateo, including reunions marking major anniversaries from Operation Iraqi Freedom, welcoming back our veterans and honoring the fallen. These moments offer a chance to reflect on the Regiment's storied legacy and remind us why our work matters and why we remain committed to upholding the standards set by those who came before us.

Finally, thank you for your steadfast support—whether through send-offs, family events, or ongoing projects across camp. Your generosity strengthens the Fighting Fifth, and we look forward to seeing you soon and partnering with the Dana Point Support Group and the City of Dana Point on many events this summer.

Semper Fidelis, Bravo Command Col David S. McElliott



Message from Down Under

Friends and families of the Fifth Marine Regiment,

Greetings from Down Under! The Regiment is now deployed to Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia and is serving as the command element for the Marine Rotational Force – Darwin Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). We moved out and deployed thanks to the love and support from the Dana Point 5th Marines Support Group. Since arriving in Darwin, we have been extremely busy, and I wanted to take a moment to thank you all and share what we've been up to.

Our mission in Australia is to provide credible crisis response capabilities throughout the Indo-Pacific theater. We are setting conditions to posture for crisis response, first and foremost, by developing outstanding relationships with the Australian Defense Force, a critical ally to the United States. We are living with, working alongside, and exploring the local community of Darwin and the Marines are having a blast. Of note, the "Have No Fear, the 5th Marines are here!" stickers have fast become a coveted item for both Marines and Australians alike!

In the coming weeks, the team will be deploying out of Australia to numerous countries in the Indo-Pacific to conduct bilateral training with US allies and partners. These exercises are vital to regional stability, and we are here to represent the highest standards of the United States, the Marine Corps, and the 5th Marine Regiment.

I cannot thank you enough for the work the Dana Point Support Group provides for our Marines and Sailors. Many of our young men and women are serving far from home for the first time, and your generosity and kindness strengthens them for the many difficult things they do each day. I could not be prouder to lead such a fine Regiment, and I could not be more thankful for your loyal support throughout the years.

Semper Fidelis, Colonel George J. Flynn III, Commander Marine Rotational Force - Darwin, "Grizzly 6"

"Have No Fear, the 5th Marines are Here!"





Honor ★ Courage ★ Sacrifice



4:30 a.m. is not for the faint of heart... but it is for the faithful.

While most of Dana Point was still asleep, DPSG was wide awake — on base to send off our Fighting Fifth as they deployed to Australia. Coffee was hot. Snacks were packed. Hearts were full.



There is something profoundly powerful about standing in the rainy darkness before sunrise, watching Marines shoulder their gear and step forward with the quiet confidence that defines them. It is never easy to witness their goodbyes, but their families understand the weight of service — both for those who go and those who remain behind. We cannot go with them — but we can ensure they know they are never alone.



Our Fighting Fifth has arrived safely in Darwin, Australia, where they are now serving with the Marine Rotational Force – Darwin (MRF-D).



To our brave U.S. Marines and Sailors: *We are proud of you. We are praying for you. And we will be right here when you come home.*

Semper Fi.

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