



SEMPER FI SOUND OFF

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

FALL 2017



President's Message

Charitable organizations are especially significant during the holiday season. Military budgets, which are often already stretched to their limits, do not contain a lot of money for buying Christmas presents. However, military families are also some of the most deserving people during this period.

The incomprehensible sacrifices these families make on our behalf can be rewarded by a grateful nation who remain committed to these dedicated men, women and children.

As civilians, **YOU** can make a difference in the world of our Marines, Sailors and their families through the support and outreach of our seasonal heartfelt missions. As one member of a grateful nation, you can step forward and accept the challenge of creating HOLIDAY MAGIC for our American Heroes.

Here is how YOU can help:

- **Sponsor a Marine** or family member for Thanksgiving Dinner at Waterman's Harbor Restaurant in Dana Point. Just \$35! Because

our Marines are the nation's crisis response team, many can't go home for the holidays.

- **Donate a toy** for a Marine child.
- **Donate a gift card** for a single Marine, a Marine family or a teen.
- **Consider making a tax-deductible donation** on our secure website at DanaPoint5thMarines.com or utilizing the enclosed self-addressed envelope for any of our programs.

Civic organizations such as ours answer the call to provide morale-building services not covered by our Marine Corps. This allows our Marines to focus on their priority of "mission readiness." The families need encouragement and support since they are the remain-behind force when their infantry spouses and loved ones are called to serve. This holiday season is a time of giving. Won't you answer the call?

Our Fighting Fifth Marines may be home this Christmas, but deployment is just around the corner. Our mission is ongoing and we thank you for your enduring support which keeps us energized to sustain our efforts as we turn the corner into 2018.

Semper Fi and Ho Ho Ho! Terry Rifkin, President

Not Everyone Goes Home for Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a perfect day to "give back" to those who are willing to give it all! Our Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group is working alongside some wonderful community friends to sponsor a special day of gratitude for our Marines, Sailors, and families.

On Thanksgiving Day, November 23, Damian Collins will once again open the doors of the beautiful **Waterman's Harbor Restaurant** to share holiday hospitality with over 350 Marines and their families. Joining Damian will be his parents, John and Diane Collins, who will be our gracious hosts of this annual event. Waterman's Harbor Restaurant will be serving the traditional turkey dinner with all the fixings and dessert. Families enjoy the fun which will include great raffle prizes and a big screen television for the Turkey Day games. This Thanksgiving Dinner is open to ANY of our Wounded Heroes, Active Duty Marines, Sailors and their families.

Special thanks to our faithful Thanksgiving sponsors; **The City of Dana Point, The Strand at Headlands** and the **Transportation Corridor Agencies** who will help make this day be possible. In the spirit of giving, DPSG will give each Marine a \$25 gas card, each spouse will receive a \$25 Commissary Card and each child will be delighted with a \$25 Amazon card.

Will you sponsor a Thanksgiving Dinner for an American Hero and his family? Please go to DanaPoint5thMarines.com, click on the Thanksgiving Banner and contribute or donate in the enclosed self-addressed envelope! For just \$35 per person, you can say "Thank You" to those men and women who wear America's uniform who have given so much for our country.





Welcome our Mini Marines to the World!

We have had an increase in our infant population!!

On September 17, DPSG hosted a Baby Shower to provide outreach and support for any woman who recently had a baby or was currently expecting. There were 23 extraordinary women who attended this fun-filled event along with a friend or their husband as their guest. Each Mom received a special baby basket filled with hand-made quilts and numerous baby goodies. Mom and her guest decorated onesies, played shower games and shared a delicious lunch. The theme of the shower was "Grizzly Bears," the mascot for the 5th Marines.



Many of these women stationed near Camp Pendleton are far from their family and friends and for some, their husbands were deployed a world away. Keeping the morale high for these extraordinary women is an honor and a privilege.

Thanks to our Family Readiness Officer **Darci Streeter** and our Support and Outreach Director **Robin Skiles**, along with her team of volunteers for helping April Showers in September to always be remembered.

Celebrate the Marine Corps Birthday

What a source of pride to host the 242nd Marine Corps Birthday Ball in Dana Point this year at the Laguna Cliffs Marriott Resort and Spa on November 21.



The Birthday Ball is one of the biggest events on the Marine Corps calendar. It is a chance to get dressed to the nines, enjoy an evening of tradition, and celebrate the history of the Corps.

The **United States Marine Corps Birthday** is celebrated every year on 10 November with a traditional ball and cake-cutting. On that day in 1775, the **Continental Marines** were established. No matter where in the world our Marines may be deployed, there will be a Marine Corps Birthday celebration.

The Marine Corps birthday brings leathernecks together surrounded by their brothers and their sisters. It is a time to remember fallen Devil Dogs who gave their lives for our freedom, but most important, focusing on wonderful memories, enjoying each other's company and forming the bonds that hold all Marines together forever.

As one can no doubt surmise our young Marines earn very little, work extremely hard and are subjected, all too often, to the rigors of combat. To this end and once a year — as has been the case since 1775 — they can enjoy the camaraderie and tradition of this celebrated evening in each other's company. So that we might defray the costs of as many Marines as possible, we would ask that you consider sponsoring a Marine(s) or Table of Marines for this storied event. Your outreach will go a long way in lightening the financial load for our Troops.

Holiday Magic

It's time to create some holiday magic for our Marine families! Santa will be visiting the Regiment for their holiday party on December 17 and we hope his workshop will be filled with toys for the small children and lots of gift cards for our teens, single Marines and families. Here's how you can help:

Purchase a toy for a Military child and drop it off at any of the locations listed on our website DanaPoint5thMarines.com under the "Holiday Magic" tab.

Operation gift cards for the holiday party for Marines and families. Gift cards are especially needed for our teens and single Marines. Gift card suggestions: **Target • Walmart • Amazon • Gas Cards • Best Buy • Albertsons • Ralps • Movie Tickets • Fast Food • McDonalds • Carls Jr. • Burger King**

You may purchase gift cards and mail them via the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Too busy to shop? You can visit our website at DanaPoint5thMarines.com and click on the "Holiday Magic" tab to make a secure, fully tax-deductible PayPal donation to support these needed Outreach efforts.

With deployment around the corner in early spring, our Marine families being together this Christmas is very important. You can add to the joy of the festivities by contributing a toy for a Marine child or a gift card for a teen, single Marine or family. 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.





Friday Night Lights

At **Dana Hills High School** a grateful Nation honored 52 proud Veterans who fought over air, land, and sea to uphold the highest traditions of our Armed Forces from World War II to present conflicts. The football team, the fans and the students drew inspiration from these heroes. Their lives made a difference! **Honor the Valor** football game was something to smile and remember for both the player who wore their Veteran's name on their back and the hero himself. This year, DPSG was delighted to be the jersey sponsors for our team and Veterans.



One of our heartfelt missions is never to forget the fallen. DPSG asked the Honor the Valor Committee to pay a special tribute to our own Gold Star family; **Cindy and John Elliott and son Erik**. The Elliott's oldest son, **Captain Sean Elliott**, made the ultimate sacrifice when he perished in the Mississippi cargo plane crash on July 10, 2017.

those who came before us and fought heroically to protect the ideals we hold dear as Americans.

Being amongst heroes and honoring their supreme courage and bravery reminds us to all strive to live up to their example by leading good and honorable lives.

The Elliotts have been Support Group volunteers for many years. It was crushing to feel the loss of their son along with them. We had heard stories about Sean over the many years of our friendship and their devoted service to DPSG.

The Honor the Valor celebration touches many lives. It gives every student an American history lesson about our servicemen and women, many who were about their same age, who left their families to serve their country bravely a world away from everything they knew and everyone they loved. It reminds us all about the honor and integrity of

5th Marine Vietnam Memorial Monument

After a ground breaking ceremony on October 27, we are one step closer to adding a remarkable tribute to the 5th Marine Memorial Park. On Memorial Day 2018, we will add a 5th Marine Vietnam Memorial that will display 2,706 names of Fighting Fifth Warriors. The names of each Marine killed in the line of duty will be listed on this enduring tribute.



We feel the depth of the sacrifice of each and every service member listed; every color, every creed, rich, poor, officer and enlisted. We reflect upon the valor of an entire generation that served with honor. They looked out and took care of each other; their brother who was on the right of them and their brother who was on the left of them. These 2,706 Americans have earned their place amongst the greatest generations. They served with just as much patriotism and honor as any before them. We must long celebrate their courage.

On March 5, 1966, our own 5th Marines answered the call and deployed to the Republic of Vietnam. They remained there for the next 5 years until they finally left in April, 1971. Along with all the others who served, they were honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy.

We draw inspiration from these heroes and also those who suffered unspeakably as prisoners of war, who returned home with their heads held high. We pledge to keep faith with those who were wounded and still carry the scars of war, seen and unseen.

We hope you will Save the Date on Memorial Day 2018 to remember all those listed on the wall, and always remember a painful chapter in our nation's history that must never be forgotten. Those involved in this important endeavor include the 1/5 Vietnam Veterans Association, the 1st Marine Division Association, the Dana Point 5th Marines Support Group, and the 5th Marine Regiment Command Group. We are confident that, "with a little help from our friends," we can raise the last \$100,000 remaining to complete this project. When you earmark your donations for the 5th Marine Vietnam Memorial Monument, you will play a part in bringing home to San Mateo our 5th Marines who fought and died in Vietnam.



From the Command Post

Dear Friends of the Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group,

On behalf of the commanding officer, Col George Schreffler, a short note describing the state of the Fighting 5th Marine Regiment. I would like to introduce myself to you and then update you on the regiment's activities. I joined 5th Marine Regiment in August, and this is my second tour in the regiment, having served here as a company commander with 2d Battalion, 5th Marines from 2006-2009. It's great to be back in this special outfit. My wife Erin and I and our two little boys have loved living in this community during the past few years.

The majority of the regimental headquarters company has been deployed to the Marine Corps' Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) in Twentynine Palms, CA since early October for a major training exercise and they'll return to Camp San Mateo in mid-November in time for the regiment's celebration of the Marine Corps' birthday. The regimental HQ has had a great experience in the current exercise and it will prepare them well as they form the core of next iteration of the Marine Corps' Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Central Command (SPMAGTF-CR-CC) - a Marine task force based in the Middle East, focused on responding to crises and providing forces for ongoing combat operations. This split of the regimental headquarters company into a group that will be commanded by Col Schreffler and called the "SPMAGTF Command Element" and a group led by me that will keep the title "5th Marines Regimental HQ", will occur in December 2017 and this construct will exist until late 2018. All of this change does not interrupt the regiment's mission of preparing battalions for deployment in response to crises around the globe, in support of recurring and pre-planned unit deployments to Australia and Okinawa, and in support of recurring and pre-planned Marine expeditionary unit deployments sailing from San Diego.

1st Battalion, 5th Marines (1/5) is detached from the regiment and attached to and deployed afloat with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). They're standing by to respond to crises in the Middle East.



2d Battalion, 5th Marines (2/5) has been hard at work preparing for their next deployment in the summer of 2018. The battalion will conduct a period of unit training in Twentynine Palms this December and then spend a cold but rewarding month at the Marine Corps' Mountain Warfare Training Center in the winter of 2018.

3d Battalion, 5th Marines (3/5) is attached to the 31st MEU in Okinawa and coming to the end of their deployment. They've been very successful in a number of major exercises. We've welcomed the battalion's advance party back to Camp San Mateo and look forward to recovering the whole battalion soon.

2d Battalion, 4th Marines (2/4) is in training for a deployment to Darwin, Australia. The battalion is currently participating in the major exercise going on in Twentynine Palms. 2/4 is doing great work and forging a team in this current exercise that will march through a combat readiness evaluation in early '18 and then off to Australia.

We can't thank you enough for all that you do for the Marines and Sailors of the Regiment—whether here or forward deployed. Your continued support and dedication is noteworthy and appreciated. The Marines and Sailors of the "Fighting Fifth" are proud to be your regiment.

Semper Fidelis, LtCol John Gianopoulos

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Donations of any size are gratefully accepted!