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Quarterly Newsletter of the USMC Ground Ordnance Maintenance Association

# The Ordnance

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# Bomb



# Comments from the GOMA Chairman

Greetings GOMA Family,

First and foremost, I want to say thank you to everyone who has taken the time to email me over the past few months. I truly appreciate hearing from our community. Your input is invaluable and continues to guide our efforts. Thanks to your suggestions and feedback, we've made meaningful progress in the right direction.

Whether you're PCSing, EASing, retiring, or holding down the fort while others do, I hope this message finds you in great health, high spirits, and surrounded by those you care about most.

It's been a busy few weeks, and I'm excited to share updates on several key initiatives:

- Scholarship Applications have now closed. We're currently reviewing all submissions, and we'll be announcing the recipients in the coming weeks.
- We've also dedicated significant time to reviewing our Bylaws and implementing updates to better align with the Association's mission. We look forward to sharing these changes with you soon.
- There's been a steady rise in new memberships over the past few months. Sustaining this momentum is vital to the continued success of GOMA and the important work we do.

In this edition of The Ordnance Bomb, I MEF takes center stage by sharing updates on their operations, events, and highlighting outstanding performers within their ranks. I'm proud to say this is one of our most content-rich newsletters to date.

To our contributors—thank you. You are better for having put pen to paper, and somewhere down the line, a Marine will read your words and be inspired by the legacy you've helped preserve.

As always, thank you for your continued support and commitment to our mission. Together, we are preserving our proud legacy, supporting today's Marines, and shaping a stronger future for the Ordnance community. See you at the GOMAG. Stay Safe. Stay Connected.

Obed Macias  
Chairman  
USMC GOMA



## Get your GOMA Stickers!

Limited quantities of GOMA Stickers are now available on the GOMA website.

- From the homepage, navigate to the “Merch” link on the menu bar and place your order. OR copy this link into your browser: <https://www.usmcgoma.org/merchandise/>
- Once your order is received, please allow us a day or two to review and process your order.
- **Will start shipping on July 7th.** If you choose local pickup, a GOMA representative will reach out to you with coordinating instructions.

# Arthur Co., 1st LAR Conducts Rapid Deployment Exercise

By Staff Sergeant Joshua L. Kirkland

In June of 2024, Arthur Company, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion was tasked with executing a Rapid Deployment Exercise (REDEX) for Marine Rotational Force Darwin (MRF-D) to depart in July 2024. Logistically, this not only included movement of Light Armored Vehicles (LAVs) and equipment to Australia, but also an extensive agricultural inspection (DAFF). The DAFF required each vehicle to have its power plant and the LAV-25 turret removed. Additionally, a mobile Demand Supported Items (DSI) container was created to sustain the element at the basic-intermediate level for a projected timeframe of 30 days of continuous operations. Operationally, the mission at hand was relatively simple. The company would get on a plane with their vehicles and equipment, fly into South Australia, make movement up into the Northern Territory, and conduct 30 straight days of operations which included a multi-national force-on-force, company live fire exercise, and a multi-national combined arms live fire exercise (CALFEX). After clearing the DAFF pre-inspection and upon arrival to South Australia, the LAVs passed the in-continent DAFF inspection and underwent Monthly Operator Preventative Maintenance Checks and Services to identify any issues that were not previously corrected or yet to be identified. The company also conducted a lube order, as no grease was allowed to be on the vehicles throughout any of the DAFF inspection process or transportation. Simultaneously, Arthur Company and MRF-D staff were ironing out key logistical issues with a rail movement to ensure mission accomplishment for REDEX. The biggest problem was that the engineers working for the rail company did not approve of the LAV tiedown configuration.



The LAV-25 firing at its target during a night, live-fire exercise.

“...[The] Company’s accomplishments and ability to perform thus far would not have been achievable without connections, communication between [US and ADF] entities, and a sheer desire for mission accomplishment.”

That issue was quickly resolved as United States Marine Corps and Australian Defense Force (ADF) LAV maintainers, embarkers, and engineers from the rail company worked together to make an approved and achievable configuration to stay on the timeline. Once the vehicles and quadcons were loaded at the railyard, final preparations were completed. Arthur Company Marines and Sailors loaded onto an ADF C-130 and inserted into Mount Bundy Training Area in the Northern Territory under blackout/IR-illuminated conditions and transported to the Robertson Barracks ADF Army Base.

# Arthur Co., 1st LAR Conducts Rapid Deployment Exercise

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The morning after Arthur Company arrived in the Northern Territory, the vehicles arrived and were driven to Robertson Barracks. Maintainers and operators quickly “prepped for combat” and inserted into the multi-national force-on-force Operation Predator’s Run. During Predator’s Run, LAV maintainers were able to utilize the mobile DSI to keep the LAVs in the fight with minimal down time, allowing Arthur Company to be available for tasking from higher at full capacity. When Arthur Company transitioned from Predator’s Run to the company live fire exercise, two of the LAVs went down and needed parts that were not brought in the mobile DSI. This led to utilizing the Supply Management Unit (SMU) in Australia and ADF connections to receive those parts. This relationship between Arthur Company, adjacent Marine Corps units, and the ADF was crucial to return the vehicles to an operational status. It is noteworthy to mention that Arthur Company’s accomplishments and ability to perform thus far would not have been achievable without connections, communication between entities, and

a sheer desire for mission accomplishment. The maintenance community is not always afforded the opportunity to bring every part, tool, or piece of equipment that allows for mission completion due to space constraints. Many stateside Marines were not aware of a SMU being in Australia. This knowledge enables 1st LAR and other units across I MEF (and the Pacific) to better prepare and maintain for future operations. During the live fire exercise, LAV maintainers and operators conducted an additional pre-fire inspection and resolved any discrepancies to ensure the vehicles were operational for the multi-national operation, CALFEX. These efforts repaid Arthur Company ten-fold. The company’s LAV-25 25mm round load out consisted of approximately 680 rounds, all of which were expended in less than six hours without any mechanical failures or malfunctions. Arthur Company’s LAV-ATM also fired 11 missiles without a breakdown or mishap. These accomplishments are testament to the LAV’s relevance on the battlefield when proper PMCS and procedures are executed.

# Arthur Co., 1st LAR Conducts Rapid Deployment Exercise

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For roughly half of a day in South Australia, Arthur Company was hosted by 1st Armored Regiment. The Australian LAV operators and maintainers displayed and operated their vehicles for the Marines. Arthur Company Marines then executed a hike and shared food on the Australian's RAMP. Some of the maintainers even supported the Australians with the removal of a powerpack from an ASLAV. The entire operation and camaraderie building exercises further progressed the American and Australian military relationship, specifically for the light armored reconnaissance and ground ordnance community.

At the conclusion of CALFEX, Arthur Company's time in Australia came to an end and they returned stateside. REDEX/MRF-D was a pleasurable, yet challenging experience that challenged noteworthy maintainers and operators to ensure mission accomplishment. This correlation with the Australians, in their territory, was a great learning experience.

Served with LAR before? Share your stories with us. Email your content to [chairman@usmcgoma.org](mailto:chairman@usmcgoma.org).

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## Want to know how to contact the GOMA board?

Whether you want to bring up an idea, request support, or are looking to get involved with GOMA, we are eager to hear from you!

The GOMA Board of Directors hold a conference call on the second Wednesday of each month at 1630 PST. This meeting is held to track the progress of the Association, make decisions, and serves as an opportunity for you to speak directly to the Board. Join us by calling in to 848-220-3300, Code: 306434.

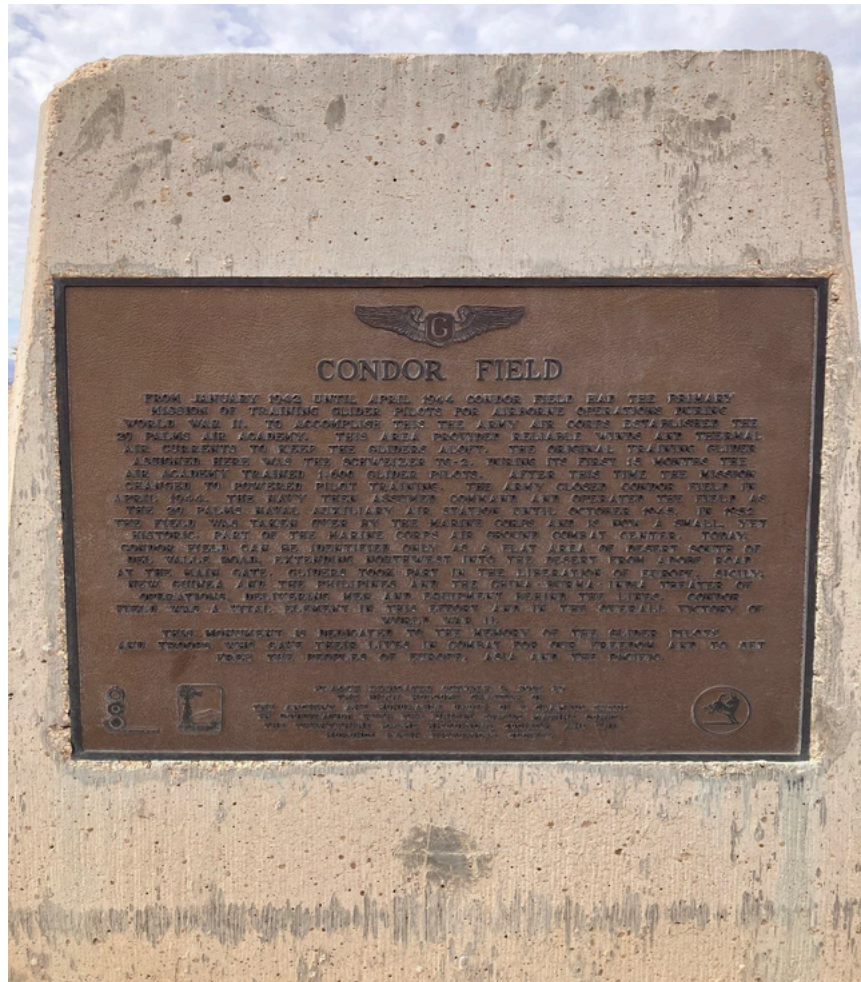
Phone calls not your thing? No problem. Every board member has an email you can reach out to directly. We look forward to hearing from you!

# The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center: Training Crossroads of the Marine Corps

By CWO3 Matt Pickelsimer



Nestled in one of the most remote regions of the lower 48, the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) encompasses over 1,000 square miles of the Mojave Desert near the town of Twentynine Palms, California. As the largest Marine base by land mass, the Center is renowned not only amongst the Department of Defense but partner nations as well for its vast expanses of desert terrain that play host to a myriad of combined arms exercises and ranges. However, at its core, MCAGCC is held in high esteem by commanders for its ability to provide an unmatched training experience due to the varied terrain and extreme temperatures. This environment has long provided not only a proving ground for troops but equipment as well. As many Marines have often said; “If you can make it here, you can make it anywhere.”



Once a central hub of Native American travel and trade, the dusty town of Twentynine Palms saw its first United States military presence not in the form of a base but in World War I veterans seeking clean dry air to relieve the effects of Mustard Gas. The veterans and their families, which likely included a couple of the original Teufel Hunden, where deeded 160 acre parcels at no charge throughout the 1920s. Fast forward to 1942 and the favorable weather of the region once again caught the attention of the military. The Army Air Corps (precursor to the Air Force) established the Twentynine Palms Air Academy at Condor Field. Training pilots to fly gliders for delivery of airborne combat troops in World War II (WW II) was the primary mission. These gliders were normally towed by a “mother aircraft” and released to targeted landing zones. Although short lived, the glider program trained more than 1,600 glider pilots in only 15 months of existence. The gliders were used at the invasion of Sicily, D-Day, and the Battle of the Bulge.

# The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center: Training Crossroads of the Marine Corps

Cont...



Condor Field today. Repurposed as a place of fun and relaxation... The MCAGCC PFT Course.

From 1944 and until the war's end, our Navy brethren assumed control of facilities for use in flight training, bombing, and strafing. Post WW II, the facility was placed in "caretaker" status until the Marine Corps acquired over 900 square miles of land including Condor Field in 1952. The newly acquired acreage was immediately put to use for long range weapons training which included artillery and mortars. Upon the United States entrance into the Korean War, Marines aboard Camp Pendleton began training in the wide open desert spaces. With assistance from 12th Marines, 3d Marine Division began training and completed the first large scale live fire exercise. Camp Wilson is named in honor of 12th Marines first commander, the late Brigadier General John B. Wilson.

The 1950s through 1970s ushered in the Korean and Vietnam war eras. Units from Twentynine Palms deployed to both conflicts. Most notable within the ordnance field, were the establishment of two Light Anti-Aircraft Missile (LAAM) battalions aboard Twentynine Palms. The area was one of only four locations within the country that could support training for these battalions. The early 1970s also saw the arrival of one of the Corps most beloved ground ordnance-centric units, 3d Tanks. The decade wrapped up with renaming the base to Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, which remains so to present day.



(Top) 3d Tanks 1978

(Bottom) TOW Missile launch circa 1980s.

# The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center: Training Crossroads of the Marine Corps

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3d LAR at Kuwait International Airport after retreat of Iraqi forces from Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm.

MCAGCC began to refine training processes, procedures, and weapons employment into the 1980s. By 1988, most large scale exercises came to be known as Combined Arms Exercise (CAX). Old timers reading this will likely have fond memories of their first CAX. The 1980s also saw the establishment of the Center's first Mk-19 range (range 112). Additionally, 3d and 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) Battalions, and elements of 11th and 12th Marines executed a "permanent change of station" up the hill from Camp Pendleton. The turn of the decade saw the arrival of the Magnificent 7th Marine Regiment from Camp Pendleton to the sands of the Mojave in August of 1990 where they remain to this very day ready to fight the Nation's foes. A few months later in October, the first Marine M1A1 tanks were fielded at MCAGCC, providing a legendary battle tank worthy of the Eagle Globe and Anchor. This was followed closely by the deactivation of 3d Tanks and the relocation of 1st Tanks from Camp Pendleton the next year. Not only was 1990 a pivotal year for the arrival of new resident units, but more importantly, was the deployment of troops in support of Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Among the 23 Marines killed in the operation, was LCpl Eliseo C. Felix of 11th Marines. The Felix Field Sports Complex near Del Valle and Adobe roads is named in his honor.

By the turn of the millennium, MCAGCC Marines participated in continued testing of two important weapon systems. The Javelin Anti-Tank missile system and the M16A4 service rifles. The Javelin offered several advantages to the Vietnam-era M47 Dragon Anti-Tank missile system, primarily survivability of the end user, penetration, and fire and forget capability. The M16A4 offered the advantage of a removeable carrying handle vice the integrated carrying handle of previous generations of M16. The A4 variant offered the option to mount optics lower and in a more comfortable/natural position for operator sight alignment. The M16A4 represented a significant milestone and foreshadowed the widespread use of magnified optics in lieu of traditional iron sights.

# The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center: Training Crossroads of the Marine Corps

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On 11 September 2001, the United States was thrust into the Global War on Terror. Due to the similarities of terrain and climate to the Middle East, MCAGCC would become not only a focal point of training for the Marine Corps but to partner nations and allies as well. For years to come, thousands of MCAGCC Marines would deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom. During this period, the base fell into a “battle rhythm” of train, deploy, re-deploy, train, deploy, re-deploy. Mojave Viper replaced CAX in 2005, and by the end of 2009, Enhanced Mojave Viper was initiated due to the addition of aircraft to the exercise.

Many lessons were learned during this period by Marines. In the War on Terror, Marines found themselves in more urban warfare than had been seen since the Battle of Hue City. Therefore, the Corps began placing additional emphasis on urban warfare. This focus helped shape new weapons systems and weapons employment. Most notably, was the introduction of the M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle (IAR). The weapon system was designed to replace the M249 Squad Automatic Weapon with a lighter, more accurate, and easier to maneuver weapon. Due to the M27's similar appearance to M16A4 and M4 carbines, the IAR supported force protection by enabling the automatic rifleman to blend in with his fellow squad members thereby increasing the difficulty of enemy combatants to single out “machinegun” wielding Marines. Of note, the M27 nomenclature stems from one of Twentynine Palms home station units, 2d Battalion 7th Marines (2/7), as 2/7 was heavily involved in the inception and development of the weapon system.



Desert Shield/Desert Storm Homecoming.



November 2009, Mike Battery, 3d Battalion 11th Marines, M777A2.

# The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center: Training Crossroads of the Marine Corps

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As the War on Terror began to slow in 2012, over 160 MCAGCC Marines and Sailors had given the full measure of devotion to their Nation. Since that time, a relative peace has enabled the Combat Center to focus on preparing Marines to win against the enemy in any clime or place. New technologies have entered the fray. Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), Counter UAS, and the battles of cyberspace are all the rage as we face potential near peer or peer adversaries. But as our Corps approaches its 250th birthday, there will always be a place for the dry and dusty “training crossroads of the Marine Corps.” The Combat Center will continue to harden Marines, their equipment, and inspire innovation well into the future.

**Author’s Note:** During the completion of this article, one of the Ground Ordnance Maintenance Community’s own retired from Civil Service on 8 May 2025. Former Towed Artillery Systems Technician, Paul Russel, retired as the Exercise Support Division’s (ESD) Artillery Work Leader. Paul has been the artillery magic man for years at ESD Ordnance. Much of the success for any major exercise in terms of maintenance and operational Howitzers, can be attributed to him and his team. We wish you and your family all the success in the world as you embark on this next chapter. You will be missed “Round Man.”



# Behind the Wrench: Honoring Paul Russell

By Master Sergeant Mark Wolff et al.



Paul Russell after receiving the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara.

If you pass through the Ordnance section of the Exercise Support Division (ESD) these days, you'll notice something's different. It's quieter. The echo of laughter that used to bounce down the hall from the old artillery work leader's office has faded, replaced by the clatter of tools and distant radio chatter. The unmistakable sound that's missing? That belongs to Paul Russell. Marine, mechanic, mentor, and unofficial morale officer of the shop. For 20 years, Paul wore his job title like a badge of honor, but long before he became a household name to anyone executing a Service Level Training Exercise, he was already shaping his legacy. From August 1994 to October 1999, Paul served as a Marine Field Artillery Mechanic, with duty stations that spanned Ordnance Maintenance Company in Okinawa, ESD, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, and Combat Service Support Group-1. If a howitzer needed repair, Paul was the guy who fixed it. Throughout his time his hands have turned bolts on the 105MM, brought life back into the M198, and mastered the complexities of the modern M777.

When Paul transitioned from uniform to civilian service, he returned to his old stomping grounds at ESD where he quickly became the backbone of artillery maintenance in the high desert. He didn't just service the equipment that came through his bay, he kept it battle-ready. If you've drawn guns from ESD or suffered malfunctions on your Howitzers, you know that Paul was always ready to provide support wherever needed. Every gun that rolled out of that bay carried with it Paul's handiwork. Paul's support was not limited to servicing and repairing equipment. He mentored and trained ordnance teams from across the Fleet Marine Force, many of whom still carry his lessons. To him, passing on knowledge was a responsibility, and one he fulfilled tirelessly. Whether on the floor with a wrench in hand or at a workbench sharing stories of "how we used to do it," Paul made sure no one left his orbit without shooting the breeze, laughing a little and learning something along the way. In recognition of his lifelong contributions to the United States Field Artillery, Paul received the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara in 2021, marking one of his proudest moments in his career.

Now, the shop is quieter. No more rock music. No more spontaneous impressions of Gunnery Sergeants. But in other units with deadlined Howitzers, there is a Marine applying the finishing touches to his gun, telling his Marines, "Paul taught me this." Paul may have retired, but his legacy lives on. Semper Fi, Paul.

# Bastard Spirit: GySgt Matthew Miller's Fight to Rebuild and Lead

By CWO3 Nelson Hoskins



GySgt Matthew Miller, a native of San Angelo, Texas, has always been driven by a deep sense of duty and commitment to his country. His decision to join the United States Marine Corps was profoundly influenced by the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent wars in the Middle East. Watching the events unfold and seeing the impact on the country left an indelible mark on him. Like many young men of his generation, he felt a calling to serve and defend his country. In July 2010, he decided to enlist, choosing the infantry MOS (0311) to follow in the footsteps of so many Marines before him.

Upon completing his initial training, LCpl Miller deployed to Afghanistan in September 2011 with 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines (V24). His deployment took him to the districts of Musa Qalah and Naw Zad, two areas in Helmand Province that were heavily contested and known for intense combat. While conducting combat operations, he stepped on an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), resulting in the loss of his left foot.

In the aftermath of the blast, LCpl Miller began a long and grueling road to recovery. He was transported to Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) in San Antonio, Texas, where he would undergo multiple surgeries and receive extensive rehabilitation. For the next several years, LCpl Miller focused on recovery, learning how to adapt to a prosthetic limb, and relearning basic functions like walking and running. Yet, even in the face of these hardships, LCpl Miller never lost sight of his goal to continue serving in the Marine Corps.

After several years of recovery and rehabilitation, LCpl Miller decided to continue his active duty. His desire to remain in the Marine Corps and contribute to the mission was unwavering. Understanding that his injury would prevent him from returning to the infantry, LCpl Miller chose to pursue a lateral move into a new Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). He selected the 2111 MOS—Small Arms Repairer. It was a decision that would require a significant adjustment, but he was determined to remain a Marine and continue to serve in any capacity he could.

In March 2016, he attended the Small Arms Repairer course at Fort Lee, Virginia, and by July 2016, he had earned the 2111 MOS. Following the completion of his training, Sgt Miller was assigned to Weapons and Field Training Battalion (Edson Range) at Camp Pendleton, California, in October 2016. His time at Edson Range proved to be an essential part of his transition into his new MOS. The duties of a Small Arms Repairer differed vastly from those of an infantry rifleman, and the learning curve was steep. However, Sgt Miller embraced the challenge and quickly began mastering the technical skills necessary to succeed in his new role. From troubleshooting weapons systems to repairing malfunctioning rifles, he was developing a broad and valuable skill set that would serve him well throughout his career.

# **Bastard Spirit: GySgt Matthew Miller's Fight to Rebuild and Lead** **Cont...**

In April 2018, Sgt Miller was assigned to an Inspector-Instructor (I&I) duty position with 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines in Houston, Texas, as the Armory Chief. This assignment marked a pivotal moment in his career as he began to understand the broader scope of the 2111 MOS and what it meant to be responsible for the maintenance and accountability of small arms within a unit. As the Armory Chief, he managed a team of Marines, overseeing the inventory, inspection, and repair of all weapons systems, and ensuring that the battalion was always ready for deployment. The role required a high degree of technical expertise, leadership, and organizational skills. It was here that he began to truly understand the importance of mentorship, leadership, and the impact that good guidance can have on the development of Marines. His experience as a young Marine under the guidance of strong leaders gave him a unique perspective on what effective leadership looked like. He worked diligently to pass on the lessons he had learned to those under his charge.

After completing his I&I duty, SSgt Miller received orders to 1st Marine Division, Headquarters Battalion, where he assumed the duties of Armory Chief. His new role was a step up, requiring more responsibility and a broader understanding of the division's operational needs.

SSgt Miller, having served as an infantryman before transitioning to the role of an armorer, found himself longing for the life and workload of a division unit. His desire to return to a combat arms unit was driven by a goal to deploy and expand his knowledge and experience in the field. With the help and support of his leadership in the ground ordnance community, his aspirations became a reality. Not only would SSgt Miller receive orders to a victor unit, but he would be reassigned back to 2d Battalion, 4th Marines—the very unit where he began his career. This return to his first unit marked a significant milestone in his professional journey, as he prepared to build upon his past experiences while contributing to his unit's mission readiness.

In July 2022, SSgt Miller received orders to return to V24 as the Armory Chief, where he would deploy with the battalion as part of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). The MEU deployment was a major milestone in

his career, as it was his first deployment since the IED blast that had almost ended his service. The deployment reinforced his love for the Marine Corps and the strong bonds he shared with his fellow Marines.

GySgt Miller currently serves as the Regimental Ordnance Chief for 1st Marine Regiment, a newly established Billet Identification Code (BIC) designed to improve leadership and oversight within the regiment's armory. In this role, he is responsible for the maintenance, accountability, and readiness of all ground ordnance equipment, as well as the management of personnel assigned to the ordnance maintenance sections. Additionally, GySgt Miller plays a key role in supporting the regiment's deployment posture, particularly in relation to the Marine Rotational Force – Darwin (MRF-D), ensuring that all ordnance-related requirements are met for both training and operational needs while the regiment proper is forward deployed.

The fast-paced environment of the division ordnance community is something that GySgt Miller thrives in. He enjoys the challenge of managing the workload and ensuring that his Marines have the tools and resources they need to perform their missions. He finds a deep sense of pride in being part of the ordnance community and values the critical role that ordnance plays in ensuring the success of combat operations.



# Bastard Spirit: GySgt Matthew Miller's Fight to Rebuild and Lead Cont...



Reflecting on his career, GySgt Miller often recalls his experience of making a lateral move to the 2111 MOS. He acknowledges it was a difficult transition, especially as a young noncommissioned officer, but it has shaped him into the leader he is today. He understands the importance of mentorship and leadership, and how it can help Marines navigate their own challenges and growth. “I was behind the learning curve when I became a 2111 as a Sergeant,” he says. “But I understand now the importance of being a good leader, and I’ve seen firsthand the positive impact it can have.

Outside of his professional life, GySgt Miller enjoys spending time with his wife, Ashlyn, and their two children, Harlon and Elliott. Family is a major source of strength and support for him, and he values the time spent with them. In his free time, he enjoys outdoor activities like hunting and fishing, which provide an opportunity to relax and recharge. Looking ahead, GySgt Miller plans to complete 20 years of service in the Marine Corps before retiring. His ultimate goal is to return to Texas, where he and his family can settle close to extended family and raise their children in the community he holds dear.

## What should we read next?

For Marines, reading isn’t just encouraged—it’s expected. Reading serves several reasons and helps Marines become life-long learners. Reading reminds us that sharpening the mind is as important as sharpening the blade. For Ground Ordnance Marines, that means seeking out books that strengthen our ability to communicate, lead, and make sound decisions—on and off the shop floor.

What book would you recommend to fellow Ground Ordnance Marines—and why?

Who is it for (Junior Marines, NCOs, etc...), and how has it helped you in your development as a leader, maintainer, or communicator?

Take part in elevating our community. Send in your recommendations along with a short narrative that answers the questions above to [chairman@usmcgoma.org](mailto:chairman@usmcgoma.org). Your recommendations will be published in our next Newsletter. When we exchange knowledge and experience, we don’t just grow individually; we raise the standard for everyone in the Ground Ordnance Maintenance community.

# From the Perspective of an FTAP Marine

By Gunnery Sergeant Jacob Negley



Corporal Synowski stands proudly reenlisted next to his Battery CO.

Corporal Brandon Synowski, born in Fort Myers, FL in July 2002, enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 2021 after graduating high school. After completing recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island and follow-on schools, he reported to Headquarters Battery, 11th Marines to serve as an Electro-Optical Ordnance Repairer. Shortly after hitting the ground, Cpl Synowski jumped at the opportunity to deploy, and crossed the international dateline with Romeo Battery, 5th Battalion, 11th Marines in support of the Unit Deployment Program. During his deployment to Okinawa, Japan, Corporal Synowski contributed significantly to maintaining all HIMARS systems, even stepping outside of his standard duties to assist with the HIMARS chassis. His technical expertise, including completing the HIMARS FMTV Chassis Electrical course, and leadership development through Corporal's Course, proved invaluable. Upon his redeployment, Cpl Synowski was reintegrated with the Headquarters Battery ordnance platoon. Corporal Synowski's blend of technical skills, leadership, and commitment to excellence has made him an indispensable asset to his unit.

## Q and A with Corporal Brandon "Ski" Synowski

**Q:** Why did you join the Marine Corps?

**A:** I wanted to do something with my life and serve a bigger purpose.

**Q:** Why are you reenlisting?

**A:** In a sense, it's the same reason as I've stated for why I joined in the first place. As I've grown into my boots as a Marine, I've realized that what I do carries significant impact in many ways. For instance, my time in Okinawa exposed me to the operational relevance of my craft, and other combat service support roles. The effects my work has on critical items is recognized, especially in that geographical region.

**Q:** What is the hardest lesson you've learned while in the Marine Corps?

**A:** Learning to accept things I cannot control, learning to receive criticism, and learning how to lead my peers.

**Q:** Not MOS related, what was your favorite thing about your time in Okinawa?

**A:** Exposure to a foreign culture. Having this experience makes me feel like a more well-rounded individual.

**Q:** What advice do you have for Marines that have trouble defining their purpose?

**A:** Do your job. I see a lot of Marines that fall into ruts of apathy, that in my opinion, further perpetuate their negative perspective. I'd advise them to be proactive in their development which in turn builds everyone around them.



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# Annual Blue Diamond Ordnance Golf Tournament - 2025

By Gunnery Sergeant Jared Mason



The sun rose over Camp Pendleton with the kind of golden hue that promised a perfect day. A light coastal breeze whispered through the eucalyptus trees surrounding the Marine Memorial Golf Course as 111 Marines gathered, laughing and stretching beside their golf carts. It was April 18th, 2025, and the 1st Marines Division Ordnance staff was ready for its much-anticipated Golf Scramble.

The smell of breakfast burritos filled the air as Marines grabbed their gear and loaded up for the shotgun start. The energy was high—part competition, part reunion. Old friends ribbed each other about their swings while newcomers soaked in the camaraderie. By 0830, golf balls were soaring off the first tees, the sounds of laughter and friendly trash-talk echoing through the fairways.

By mid-morning, the scramble was in full swing. Hole 4 became a quiet battlefield as competitors tried their luck at landing closest to the pin, lured by the \$100 prize. On hole 15, the longest drive contest pushed the Marines' strength to its limits. With a confident swing and a roar of approval from his team, Arle Palms smashed a drive that sailed further than any that day—earning him bragging rights and a crisp hundred-dollar bill.

As the scramble rolled on, teams played in foursomes, strategizing their way around the course's rolling hills and tricky greens. The 50/50 raffle generated buzz all morning, with Marines eager to win their share of the pot—which topped \$800 by midday. The raffle also included a sharp-looking Division Ordnance shirt and the three shot-pouring clubs that had already become legends by the back nine.

After nearly five hours of play, sun-kissed and sore, the final putts dropped, and the players made their way back to the clubhouse patio for food, drinks, and the awa-

rds ceremony. Despite the intensity of play, two teams had tied for first place—forcing a review of scorecards and some good-natured ribbing as a tiebreaker was calculated.

Ultimately, one team emerged as the official winner, Captain Matthew Suarez, 1st Lieutenant Louis Carter, Lance Corporal Brady Smith, and Private First Class Baez William, earned their names engraved on the 1st Marines Ordnance trophy, sleek whiskey ice golf ball sets, and a free round of golf for each player. The second-place team was awarded a sleeve of Pro V1 golf balls and beer sleeve coolers. Third place walked away with PXXG golf balls—still a coveted prize among the Marine golf crowd.



**USMC**  
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# Annual Blue Diamond Ordnance Golf Tournament - 2025

Cont...



Maj Arellano presents the tournament trophy



Capt Macias asks GySgt Gross if he's feeling hungry at "The Tern."



The event coordinator, GySgt Mason briefs the golfers.

The closing ceremony was more of a celebration than a contest wrap-up. The raffle drew cheers and groans of playful disappointment. The winner of the 50/50 took home over \$400, while another lucky Marine walked off with the sought-after Division Ordnance shirt and 3 other lucky individuals went home with the shot pour golf clubs. As the crowd thinned and the sun dipped low over the Pacific, Marines lingered to share stories, take photos, and toast to the day's success.

Whispers of "It's not about who won—well, okay, maybe a little," could be heard as beer cans were cracked open "But days like this remind us why we do what we do. Brotherhood, competition, and a damn good game of golf."

The 2025 1st Marine Division Ordnance Golf Scramble was more than just a tournament—it was a tribute to Marine spirit, a rare day of unity away from duty, and a reminder that some of the Corps' strongest bonds are forged not just in the field, but on the fairway. And somewhere, tucked safely in a trophy case, were the names of four Marines—etched in brass—who could forever claim victory on that unforgettable April morning.



Marines posing for a picture prior to the shotgun start.

# Growth and Change in the Assault Amphibian Community

By: Staff Sergeant Jared Kozloski

Transitioning from the Assault Amphibious Vehicle (AAV) to the Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV) has marked significant growth for the 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion. As the community adapts to the more advanced capabilities of the ACV, it has become clear that the existing organizational structure must evolve to support this new vehicle. One key aspect of this shift is implementing a concept known as Leader-to-Led. Somewhat mirroring the organizational structure of the infantry, the Leader-to-Led approach pushes more senior leaders into smaller units, bringing an increase in experience to the front lines and enhancing overall readiness. More experienced leaders embedded at the platoon and section levels are better equipped to handle unforeseen challenges and can provide invaluable mentorship to junior leaders. This transition affects operations and extends to the battalion's maintenance practices, ensuring that the growing demands of the ACV fleet are met with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The leader-to-led concept is a foundational change for the Assault Amphibian community. The Assault Amphibian community is structured with five line companies split between 2d and 3d Assault Amphibian Battalions. Under the new model, this structure expands to twelve line companies distributed across the coasts, with each battalion comprising six line companies. This reorganization reflects a more dynamic and flexible approach to operations, ensuring that each company is adequately equipped and prepared to meet the demands of modern amphibious warfare.

Within each line company, six platoons are now: First, Second, Third, Fourth, Headquarters, and Weapons. The First, Second, Third, and Fourth Platoons will each operate four ACVs, split into two sections. The Headquarters Platoon will manage a combination of specialized vehicles, including four ACV-Ps, one ACV-R, and one ACV-C. The Weapons Platoon will be equipped with six ACV-30s to provide increased firepower and support. This reorganization ensures that each company has the necessary resources and personnel to perform its assigned tasks effectively.

Implementing Leader-to-Led significantly impacts operations and maintenance. A critical change is the shift toward deploying entire ACV companies rather than sending individual platoons on deployment. This change enables a more cohesive and coordinated approach to operations, with each company being self-sufficient and fully equipped for the mission at hand. The battalion is also revising its maintenance framework to support this new operational structure. The new maintenance structure includes a Company Maintenance Officer, a Company Maintenance Chief, an Assistant Company Maintenance Chief, a Recovery Chief, six Platoon Maintenance Chiefs, and approximately 26 line mechanics. To support this new structure, the Ordnance Community will grow by seven 2110s, seven 2149s, and approximately 200 2141s. This expanded maintenance team ensures that each company can handle the complexities of maintaining a large fleet of ACVs, which are crucial to the battalion's mission success.



# Growth and Change in the Assault Amphibian Community

Cont...

The hope is that this shift will not only improve operational effectiveness but also increase the overall readiness of the community. By providing more leadership at the company and platoon levels, the Leader-to-Led concept aims to ease the burden on lower-level leaders, empowering them to make decisions quickly and confidently. As a result, the community can expect improved coordination and quicker response times in the field, especially in dynamic operational environments.

The transition to Leader-to-Led and the increased leadership presence at lower levels will undoubtedly shape the future of the Assault Amphibian community. As we transition to this change, the lessons learned will be closely monitored so that we can continue to grow through this change. The expectation is that increased leadership presence will lead to higher readiness levels and greater mission success, ensuring that the Assault Amphibian community is prepared to meet future challenges. The ordnance community will grow to ensure that the necessary support is in place for this vehicle, and to maintain keeping the Marine Corps amphibious. YAT-YAS!

Corporal Carlos RuizMontes' life experiences, interests, and mentors set him on the path to become a Marine. After his birth, Corporal RuizMontes, moved around a lot. He and his family finally settled in Princeton, Texas. Princeton was a small town with very little to do. When asked what he did for fun in Princeton, Corporal RuizMontes said, "the most exciting thing to do in Princeton was to hang out at the local Wal-Mart with friends,"

Small towns with little to do tend to develop two types of people- those that get in trouble and those that try to avoid it. Luckily, Corporal RuizMontes found hobbies and mentors that helped keep him headed in the right direction. He taught himself how to play the trumpet, how to repair cars, and work on computers. Anything that sparked his interest and stirred the desire to learn "how it works" occupied his idle time. Early on, his grandpa was an inspiration to "do something better with his life." Corporal RuizMontes found himself imagining the stories his grandpa would tell him about the

## Corporal Carlos RuizMontes:

### An Amphibious Warrior

By CWO2 Jeremy Owens and SSgt Max Ledford



times he served as a Mexican Marine. He was most captivated by the expressions of joy and excitement on his grandpa's face as he reminisced about his time in service. The seed of service to others had been planted. While waiting for his own opportunity to serve, Corporal RuizMontes developed a closeness and camaraderie with his childhood friends. As he recalls his favorite memories,

# Corporal Carlos RuizMontes: An Amphibious Warrior

Cont...

he pictured all the friends that were present during those moments. He honed his skills as a mechanic and technician and when the time came to serve his country, Corporal RuizMontes knew he was going to enlist as a Marine. When asked why the Marine Corps was the best fit for him, his response was, “they have a specific task to accomplish. They are Amphibious Warriors, and I wanted to be a part of that.”

Corporal RuizMontes became an Amphibious Warrior after graduating from Assault Amphibian School. He checked in to his current unit at 3D Assault Amphibian Battalion, Camp Pendleton, CA where he is currently a Platoon Maintenance Chief. His childhood experiences coupled with the desire “to leave things better than you found it” made him thrive in a billet traditionally held by a Sergeant. Under his supervision, his platoon sustained readiness of 85% or better during high tempo training of over a four-month period. The significance of that accomplishment can be better understood when pointed out that communities’ readiness historically hovers around 30%.

When asked what drives him to perform at such a high standard, he said his mother instilled in him to “give his best.” He also recalled a childhood memory when he loaned a toy to one of his friends. The friend returned the toy dirty and broken. He remembered how that made him feel. He made a commitment to himself that he was not going to do that to anyone else. He says he has tried to apply that to everything that he is responsible for. Taking care of Assault Combat Vehicles is no different. Corporal RuizMontes admitted that it could be discouraging to constantly work to keep his vehicles at such a high state of readiness. He said, “there always seems to be another issue to figure out.” He said what may discourage others is what keeps him focused. Knowing that people depend on him to always have an answer or to work until a resolution is found, keeps him engaged.

Corporal RuizMontes is not satisfied with 85%. He says his goal is to maintain 100% because “Marines depend on him and those he trains to keep their equipment in the fight.” He understands the importance of his job and works to ensure those under his charge are aware of the gravity of their responsibilities.

Corporal RuizMontes was asked if there were any words of wisdom or advice for someone that wants to become a Marine. He said, “Do your research. There are a lot of options out there that may be found in different branches of service. The Marine Corps is not for everyone. If they decide that the Marine Corps is a good fit for them, there will be Marines like me here waiting to lead, mentor, and train them to excel just as I have.”

Once his service draws to close, Corporal RuizMontes says that he wants to use his life experiences and skills learned as a leader and mentor and apply them to his next chapter in life. But for now, he and his team are focused on the mission at hand- to be Amphibious Warriors from the Sea.



# Forging Brotherhood and Readiness: Ordnance Maintenance Company's Warrior Night

By Capt Oleg Shekhter



On May 21, 2025, the Ordnance Maintenance Company (OMC), aboard Camp Pendleton, California, hosted a distinguished Warrior Night to celebrate the unit's exceptional maintenance achievements and to bid a heartfelt farewell to Marines departing the command. Rooted in the time-honored Marine Corps tradition of the Mess Night, this formal gathering served not only as a tribute to excellence but also as a vital ritual for fostering camaraderie, reinforcing discipline, and honoring the proud heritage of the Corps.

Over 100 Marines were in attendance, including OMC personnel, maintainers from 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) Battalion, and dedicated civilian contractors. This diverse turnout reflected the tight-knit nature of the ordnance maintenance community and underscored the strength that comes from collaboration across specialties and ranks. As structured toasts, rituals, and shared moments unfolded throughout the evening, bonds were strengthened among Marines and civilians alike—bridging gaps between armament, automotive, and other technical domains.

The Guest of Honor for the evening was Chief Warrant Officer 3 Paul D. Gallier, the Battalion Maintenance Officer for 4th LAR and the 2024 Ground Ordnance Maintenance Association (GOMA) Officer of the Year. In his address, CWO3 Gallier delivered an inspiring message focused on the values of readiness, purpose, and continuous professional growth. He emphasized the need for Marines to become masters of their technical craft while also being agile, multi-purpose warfighters—equally capable in garrison and on the battlefield. His words resonated deeply, reminding all in attendance of their responsibility not only to maintain equipment but to remain physically, mentally, and tactically ready for any mission. CWO3 Gallier also spoke to the vital integration between OMC's maintainers and the operational units they support. He highlighted the importance of building enduring relationships across all commodities and commands, reinforcing that trust and interoperability are key to mission success. His remarks validated the essential role OMC plays in enabling combat readiness across the force.

Warrior Night has become a hallmark event for OMC—a celebration of excellence, heritage, and unity. As the tradition continues to evolve, future events aim to welcome even more Marines across I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), further strengthening the ordnance community's bonds and reinforcing the shared commitment to mission readiness. Through Warrior Night, OMC is not only honoring its past but shaping a stronger, more connected future

# Lance Corporal Ryan, V37 Electro-Optics Technician

By CWO3 Matthew Pickelsimer

The story of Lance Corporal Thomas J. (T.J.) Ryan isn't your typical tale of a fresh-faced recruit. Born in Brooklyn, New York, on December 26, 1993, T.J. lived a life brimming with experience before he even considered donning the Marine uniform. At 30, he wasn't exactly the ideal candidate, but an age waiver paved the way for him to answer a calling that had been brewing for years.

Before the structured world of the Corps, T.J. was a union carpenter in the bustling city of New York. He mastered the craft, his hands shaping wood with skill and precision. But the hum of the power saw and the scent of sawdust couldn't quite quench a growing thirst for something more. In 2019, he traded his toolbox for a backpack and set off to explore the vast American landscape. He drifted through state after state, soaking in the diverse cultures and landscapes. A chance encounter in Oklahoma led to a summer job with a man named Cliff, tearing down old grain silos under the wide-open sky. With a fresh stack of cash in his pocket, T.J. chased adventure to the majestic Rocky Mountains of Colorado. From the serene heights of the Rockies, the bright lights of Las Vegas beckoned. But as fate would have it, a phone call from an old friend, Jordan, offered a new chapter: life in sunny California. Little did he know, this journey was just a prelude to the biggest adventure of his life – becoming a United States Marine.



T.J. participated in the poolee program at Recruiting Sub-Station Santa Rosa, California. On 19 January 2024, Thomas J. Ryan enlisted in the Marine Corps and was sent to Golf Company 2d Battalion at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego. While in Basic Training, “salty” recruit Ryan performed well and served as a squad leader. Private Ryan graduated on 26 March and reported to the School of Infantry West on 5 April 2024. His leadership abilities and attention to detail were immediately recognized by the instructor cadre which resulted in Private Ryan serving as Platoon Guide for the duration of his training. After graduation, Private Ryan reported to Fort Gregg-Adams, Virginia for Military Occupation Specialty training as an Electro-Optics Technician where he was promoted to Private First Class. Again, Private First Class Ryan was recognized for his outstanding leadership and served as the class leader for two concurrent classes. He graduated on 31 October 2024.

Private First Class Ryan reported to 3d Battalion 7th Marines (V37) on 25 November for duty as a Battalion Optics Technician. Being no stranger to new and challenging environments, he acclimated and adjusted with ease to the harsh climate of Twentynine Palms. After his arrival, Private First Class Ryan demonstrated a thirst for knowledge and initiative rarely seen in a junior Marine.

# Lance Corporal Ryan, V37 Electro-Optics Technician

Cont...

Since that time, he was promoted to Lance Corporal on 1 March 2025. In keeping with his positive trend of leadership and work ethic, Lance Corporal Ryan is currently serving in the capacity of a Non-Commissioned Officer by taking on three key billets within the battalion armory: Preventative Maintenance, Training, and Publications. His ability to efficiently manage multiple billets normally held by three higher ranking Marines cannot be overstated.

Lance Corporal “T.J.” Ryan has set the standard and tempo not only for his fellow V37 Marines, but adjacent battalions within 7th Marines as well. Peers, subordinate, and superior ranks alike have taken note of his natural leadership style and character. Lance Corporal Ryan has brought his rich life experiences, maturity, and wisdom to bear in both tangible and intangible ways. The Ground Ordnance Maintenance Community is proud to have him amongst their ranks and is excited to see what the future holds for “the old man of Blade.”

## Community, Traditions, and Impact

By WO Nathan Thompson



If you're outside of the artillery community, you have probably never heard of Saint Barbara's Day or maybe you've heard a few whispers or legends. To be honest, I had no idea it existed until arriving at 2d Battalion, 11<sup>th</sup> Marines. What is it? The history and lore could be an article of its own. In fact, there is plenty of both on the old interwebs. The short story is that St. Barbara is the patron saint of those in danger from thunderstorms or sudden death from above. Given what artillery does it seems fitting this Saint was chosen. On January 9th, the Best Coast's artillery community gathered at 11th Marines to honor St. Barbara and share in competition and camaraderie.

The day started with a brisk motivated run around the Las Pulgas Area paradise aboard Camp Pendleton, California. It was accompanied by cadence and an ensemble of junior Marines, NCOs, and SNCOs showing us what they had for breakfast or what was still left of their dinner the night before. This was followed by a field meet. HMMWV pulls, casualty shuttle runs, an M240B disassembly and reassembly relay, and of course tug of war. Despite being the “Regiment's Best” 2d Battalion took it easy on the competition and let Long-Range Missile Battery (LMSL) pull off the win for the field meet.



Next was the trebuchet competition. The gladiators of 11th Marines battled it out on the softball field utilizing this medieval artillery piece to showcase that it is not just the artillery implement, but the individuals behind them that make the difference. Or so it seemed. When trying to launch the gallon water jugs at targets of varying distances, it became apparent that proper preventative maintenance and LTI/PFIs were not being performed prior to their arrival at the firing line. How could this be? Well, the one thing noticeably absent behind the artillery line was the dedicated 21XX to ensure smooth operation. Nor was there a single TM in sight. One ordnance Marine was able to provide his trusty end of fiscal year Leatherman to help conduct some battlefield maintenance, but it was too little too late for several teams. 1/11, despite the odds, did make some impressive water-on-target contact though, and pulled off the win.

# Community, Traditions, and Impact

Cont...

The highlight of St. Barbara's Day was the ceremony that evening. Similar in fashion to a mess night or dining out, staff and officers from across the artillery community and supporting MOS's participated in the grand festivities. There were skits, speeches, and the laying of the artillery punch. Dinner was served and libations flowed.

It is great that such an event exists and took place, but why is any of this relevant to the ordnance community? From the time that the first bow was strung and the first cannon fired, there were craftsmen dedicated to the manufacture and maintenance of these ordnance items. It is not always a glorious job,

but for every round that goes down range there is an ordnance professional who's responsible. When the gun goes "bang" instead of "click", that means the enemy is facing judgement at a distance and our comrades are more likely to see home. It is the Ordnance Marine that instills confidence on the firing line and keeps America winning battles. So, when you are within a community centered around ordnance platforms that take such pride in their profession, it is the Ordnance Marine that can also take pride in facilitating their success. May you find your community and take pride in their success. Semper Fidelis and may Saint Barbara be praised.



## Introducing the Future: Sergeant Taylor Brenner

By CWO3 Drew Stanton



Sergeant Taylor D. Brenner has always been destined to be a Marine. As a child, he became interested in the Marine Corps through books and interactions with Marines at his school. He sought a life of purpose and personal fulfillment that he believed the Marine Corps could provide. However, the Marine Corps was not always in his plans.

Taylor was born in Ephrata, Pennsylvania in 1999. He was a part of a strong religious family and community that instilled values and morals focused on being a respectable and virtuous person, treating everyone right, and having pride in yourself. He has carried these values with him along his journey in life. An intelligent young man, Taylor initially attended college at Pennsylvania State University where he had a full ride scholarship for mechanical engineering. Upon his arrival, he noticed the lack of drive and determination in his peers and the need to do more.

In August of 2018, Taylor's values and need for purpose led him to put a pause on his academic pursuits and enlist in the Marine Corps. His journey brought him to the Ground Ordnance community where he became a Light Armored Vehicle Mechanic and stationed with 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion.

# Introducing the Future: Sergeant Taylor Brenner

Cont...

This turned out to be an excellent fit for the new Marine. Taylor was able to concurrently apply his passions of mechanics and physical fitness. Early on in his career, he was moved to Bravo Company and has excelled, building a reputation for himself as an impactful leader. A humble leader, Taylor attributes his success as a RAMP Chief and recent selection to Staff Sergeant to those that have impacted his life and career.

This turned out to be an excellent fit for the new Marine. Taylor was able to concurrently apply his passions of mechanics and physical fitness. Early on in his career, he was moved to Bravo Company and has excelled, building a reputation for himself as an impactful leader. A humble leader, Taylor attributes his success as a RAMP Chief and recent selection to Staff Sergeant to those that have impacted his life and career.



Specifically, Taylor is inspired by his grandfather. A man that was in an unfortunate accident earlier on in his life and left with permanent injuries. Taylor is forever encouraged by his grandfather's ability to find joy in life, bring happiness to those around him, and his words of wisdom are something he carries with him. His grandfather once told him something along the lines of "live for what you want to do and die doing something you love."

Along with his grandfather, he has been inspired by his mentors and Maintenance Chiefs, Master Sergeant Evans and Gunnery Sergeant Dehorta. Their guidance has significantly attributed to his development.

Taylor relishes in the purpose and fulfillment that being a Marine provides. As a mechanic, he thoroughly enjoys "getting his hands dirty", staying busy, and learning/understanding mechanical concepts.

“Live for what you want to do and die doing something you love.”

# Introducing the Future: Sergeant Taylor Brenner

Cont...

Additionally, he loves the warfighter aspect of being an LAR Marine. He has seen highs such as graduating boot camp with his entire family there (a favorite memory of his), traveling and operating all over the world in support of two MEUs, and conducting recoveries, specifically a challenging recovery of an LAV in a ditch on its side. There have been lows associated with COVID and experiences with less motivated NCOs early on, but Taylor has learned what right looks like from these situations. In the future, Taylor will continue his career as a schoolhouse instructor and wants to apply to be a Warrant Officer.

A current Martial Arts Instructor, Taylor wants to become an MAIT and MCIWS. He is passionate to continue using the values instilled in him by his family and the Marine Corps to lead and develop Marines. Sergeant Taylor D. Brenner is on his path of purpose and fulfillment. The future of the Ground Ordnance community is bright with leaders like himself.

## Fun with Sergeant Brenner:

If he was Commandant for a day, he would get rid of all tattoo restrictions. A night owl, Taylor is currently reading Vicious, thought the movie Tenet was crazy, and considers Lord of the Rings to be the best books and movies. He is half Filipino and enjoys all Asian foods, specifically from his favorite restaurant, Gyu-kaku. His favorite travel destination so far has been Singapore.

If he could collaborate with anyone, it would Leonardo Da Vinci. He is intrigued by Da Vinci's intelligence and creativity. With Da Vinci being a genius of his time, Taylor would like to discuss mechanical principles, his inventions, and concepts with him.

## Words of Wisdom from Sergeant Brenner:

“Learn anything you can from everyone you can”. “I felt like I was shotgun blasted into the fleet, but I was annoying enough to constantly ask questions”. “Don't be afraid to actually get your hands dirty. The more you do, the better you'll be at your job”.

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# A Profile of Sergeant Cody Kitchener:

## 2d Battalion 4th Marines

By SSgt Luis Sanchez

Sergeant Cody Kitchener embodies the spirit of dedication and service within the United States Marine Corps. Born on December 15th, 1993, in Chesapeake, Virginia, Sergeant Kitchener's journey in the Marine Corps is marked by resilience, adaptability, and a deep-rooted commitment to excellence.

During Sgt Kitchener's youth, his father was a Navy officer who taught him to value hard work and education. Sergeant Kitchener had limited interaction with the Marines, but the ones he met always struck him as competent, courteous, and professional. Upon graduating high school, Sergeant Kitchener went to California Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo and earned a degree in Computer Science. While going through the gauntlet of job interviews post-graduation he thought back to the Staff Sergeants and Gunnery Sergeants he had met and took a chance going to the Marine Recruiter's office. After talking to them about the opportunities, Sergeant Kitchener committed to enlisting within the United States Marine Corps with high aspirations.

After finishing MOS training at Fort Gregg-Adams, Sergeant Kitchener was given orders to Ordnance Maintenance Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group on December 2nd, 2020. Immediately, he immersed himself in a fast-paced environment that valued learning and problem-solving skills. He appreciated that what effort he put into learning and understanding the maintenance cycle and direct repairs would correlate to the education he would receive within his MOS. Repeatedly, his leadership stated that if he was unwilling to learn, he would be left behind and miss out on many personal and professional development opportunities. Taking to heart this advice, he excelled at asking questions from veteran maintainers to gain valuable knowledge about weapons systems and optics and requested to attend courses such as the additive manufacturing beginner and intermediate classes.



Nine months later, on August 19th, 2021, Sergeant Kitchener was given orders to the 2D Battalion, 4th Marines, and 5th Marine Regiment and faced a drastically different problem set from direct repairs to armory management. Upon entering the V24's armory, his skills in repairing ordnance optics did not directly translate into the armory's needs. Sergeant Kitchener took the advice of his previous leadership and set to learn as much as he could within the armory with the deadline of deploying with the 13th MEU looming a year out. Through actively participating within his first Field Supply & Maintenance Analysis Office (FSMAO) inspection and navigating the hurdles of an infantry unit's high-tempo training schedule that result in a continuous stream of broken gear; Sergeant Kitchener kept his head above the water and became an embedded asset within the battalion's armory. Sergeant Kitchener provided direct support on LHD-8 USS Makin Island and served as the Armory NCOIC for LPD-23 USS Anchorage for a month. By tenacity and uncompromising requirements, Sergeant Kitchener kept the readiness for V24's armory up and ready for the fight.

Sergeant Kitchener is now the Maintenance Chief for V24's armory. He impresses upon the Marines under him the importance of being a continuous student: you will always be learning something new no matter where you are, be it for work or personal growth. Sergeant Kitchener just recently re-enlisted for an additional five years and looks forward to filling in the gaps in his knowledge and expanding upon his experiences within the Marine Corps.

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### HQMC/LPM-2:

MGySgt Peter Charland

### HQMC/CD&I:

Maj Levi Trimble

### MARFORPAC:

Maj Joshua Ray

### MARFORCOM:

Maj Dustin Hamm

### MARFORRES:

LtCol Jason Price

MGySgt Jason Beall

### MARFORSOC:

Maj Jason Beken

MSgt David E. Smith

### I MEF

LtCol Douglas Mayorga

MGySgt Z. Lance Miller

- 1st Mar Div
  - Maj Mario Arellano
  - MGySgt Brent Levell
- 1st MLG
  - Maj Lucas Tuning

### II MEF

LtCol Mark Oldroyd

MGySgt David W. Smith

- 2d Mar Div
  - Maj Nicky Jones
  - MGySgt A. Fredo Uribe
- 2d MLG
  - MGySgt Byron Jacobson

### III MEF

LtCol Glen Pond

MGySgt Joshua Felshaw

- 3d Mar Div
  - Maj Aaron Rancloes
  - MGySgt Chuck Thompson
- 3d MLG
  - Maj Billy Quinn
  - MGySgt Laudencia

### Enlisted Monitor

MSgt Jason Poston



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