

10 Jan 09

Deadwalkers,

It is truly my privilege and honor to be part of your Battalion. This Battalion has a proud and illustrious war fighting legacy; a legacy that was forged by those who have walked before us in Jungles of Vietnam to the barren sands of Somalia. The valiant actions of Marines in these conflicts were indicative of an elite warfighting organization. For our Brothers who have walked before us, thank you for your dedication to freedom, your personal example, and for establishing the Battalion's warfighting ethos. Today, the Men of 1/9 will continue to honor your exploits and emulate your personal example in our training and deployments abroad.

Our Battalion faces many unique challenges in the near future. Tentatively we are scheduled to deploy with the 24 MEU (Marine Expeditionary Unit) as the Battalion Landing Team in early FY10. Recent history has proven that the MEU must be able to fight in "every climb and place" with minimal notice; Previous MEU deployments supported operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Africa, & Lebanon. This requirement precludes the Battalion's ability to tailor our training to specific area and specific fight. Additionally this requirement mandates that we be proficient not only in counterinsurgency skills that have been effective in Iraq but also our core competencies for warfighting.

Our current pre-deployment training plan focuses on "blocking and tackling", simply put the basics. During each training quarter we will have a designated field training period or battalion exercise that consists of 10 consecutive days of continuous operations. During these designated field training periods, the battalion will extend personal invitations to our 1/9 brother alumni & family to visit the training and speak to the men about lessons learned from your experiences in previous battles and operations. With your assistance, your shared experiences, and your lessons learned, we will set the conditions for Battalion to fight and win future battles.

The Battalion would like to extend you an invitation to attend the "Family Day" 6 February at the Marstal Pavilion from 1600-1800 (dinner included) on "Jane Wayne Day" on Saturday 18 April at the Battalion Head Quarters from 1000-1600.

Please accept my best wishes to all of you and your families for happy and productive 2009.

Semper Fidelis,
Bubba

LtCol Robert Salasko