

# SITREP

## FORCE RECON ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

### U.S. MARINE CORPS

01 June 2003  
Volume 13, Issue 2

*“Link Forever Those Who Served Together”*

*Special Interest Articles:*

- RECON Deployment
- Letter from your President.
- RECON 2003 Hawaii Update
- RECON 2003 Registration Form.



*Individual Highlights:*

Recon's Largest Deployment	1
President's LTR	2
Recon Hawaii	3
Stories of Interest	4-5
Mar Det USSOCOM	6
Remembrance	6
Back Page	7



## Recon sees largest deployment since 1991

HQMC Reconnaissance and Special Operations Section reports the largest deployment of reconnaissance forces since Operations Desert Shield/ Desert Storm (1991). While during that period (1991) 1<sup>st</sup> Force, 2<sup>nd</sup> Force and 3<sup>rd</sup> Force Recon (Reserves) were all joined together and deployed as Force Reconnaissance Group Southwest Asia, this deployment proved to be just as large. It consisted of 1<sup>st</sup> Force Recon Co augmented by 2 platoons of 2<sup>nd</sup> Force Recon Co. 1<sup>st</sup> Recon Bn was fully deployed at full Battalion strength, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Force Recon Co also deployed additional forces with 2D MEB.

Add in 3 MEUs out at one time, each with a platoon of Force Recon and a platoon of Recon Battalion and there were only a few stray cats and dogs left in the rear.

LtGen Bedard stated he was proud of the “Fix Recon” effort. Looks now like the reconnaissance rebuild was just in time. While battle

testing men with out full training cycles is not optimum, with that many Marines forwarded deployed we will have quite a seasoned force upon return.

Total numbers of reconnaissance forces in the Marine Corps now tops 1261 active duty billets when you add in the communicator slot with each team. In 1999 when CMC directed the “Fix Recon” rebuild, only 66% of that 1261 were among the Corps ranks. Now the numbers are 96.2% total end strength on active duty, with 1<sup>st</sup> Force deploying at 108%, and 1<sup>st</sup> Recon Bn at 101%.

Not all those fills were perfect to billet (meaning we have yet to grow all the MSgts and MGySgts to fill open billets) but deploying with a near full Table of Organization (T/O is impressive. Many “Nay Sayers” stated Commandant Jones would never see recon attain 95% or better. As always it is easier to side with the negative than find solutions to be positive. The reconnaissance units did an

exceptional job recruiting and finding the men they needed. Their training feed was increased from School of Infantry into the Reconnaissance Battalions and in the end they had what they needed, just in time, plus pushed more experienced men up to Force Recon Companies.

Stop Loss Stop Move was in effect for all forces. It helped recon units reach their peak numbers. Now that it has been lifted 46 men are leaving recon to either retire or go onto another challenge (once a Marine Always a Marine!). HQMC Spec Ops section will once again dial up the feed into recon from SOI and move Recon Bn personnel up to Force to fill the void of the experience loss. Hopefully we don't loose to many more and the men like the fact that they can stay recon for their entire career. That way numbers stay relatively level and career progression continues for all our reconnaissance forces.





## Letter from your PRESIDENT

From: Dick Sasser, President FRA

To: FRA Members Worldwide

On behalf of your Executive Board and Board of Directors I wish everyone a successful and healthy year.

Most of our Force Recon Marines are back from Iraq and they excelled in every mission that was presented to them. I know I speak for all members that the Recon Marines in the war zone lived up to the highest tradition of Force Recon and the United States Marine Corp. We wish God Speed to those that still remain in harms way.

Recon business has been good. Supply Hootch items have increased, however so has vender prices. Look for small price increase in Hootch items and also in postage. We send all items Priority Mail because the U.S. Postal Service

supplies us with all shipping materials, consequently the price of shipping is slightly higher but we don't pay for any boxes etc. Please remember your dues and the Supply Hootch is what financially supports our association. If you haven't paid your dues for 2003, please get it in today.

The reunion in Hawaii looks good. The Reunion Committee has done a good job in event planning and holding the cost down as best as they can. We hope that all members will do their best to come to Hawaii 2003. The geographic location of the reunion is decided at the General Meetings two years prior to the reunion. All those that participate at the General Meeting have a voice in where they think the reunion should be. 2004 will be in the New Orleans area and 2005 in the D.C. (East Coast).

We are always looking for volunteers to help with FRA Projects. If you have time and can make a commitment give me a call. My new phone number is 209-607-6961. E-mail is the same, [sasser@starband.net](mailto:sasser@starband.net).

This will be my last year as your President and I look forward to Patrick Teague to step to the forefront.

Again, on behalf of the Executive Board and Board Members we wish you a Happy and Healthy 2003, and hope to see you in Hawaii.

God Bless America, God Bless the United States Marine Corp., I remain.

Semper Fi  
Dick Sasser, President

## RECON 2003 Hawaii Update!



*"Don't wait any longer, get on the hook and make those reservations! Our reunion is coming soon. Reserve your rooms for Recon Hawaii from 25-31 August 2003!"*

Get ready for some fun everyone! We are less than 90 days out from our reunion and time is ticking away fast.

Sorry for the confusion out there on the hotel reservations. Some folks have been trying to get their rooms lined up using the 1-800 number and unless you call the hotel direct, they are not getting the deal set aside for FRA members.

So here is the best way to ensure you get what you got coming to you! Call the Hotel direct, they can be reached at **1-808-922-6611**. Make sure you tell them you are requesting rooms as a part of the Force Recon Association Reunion. They will then line up the right rate for you.

At last contact their were still rooms left but they are filling fast. We request you not wait much longer before you reserve them. Things tend to get tough to move around in the final hours so far from the mainland (distance + short notice = problems!). Please get on the hook and make those reservations as soon as you can.

The schedule has been tweaked and is below.

Buses will run to and

from events and are listed on the registration form.

We will have updated information upon your check in.

The schedule is as follows:

### Monday, August 25th 2003

0700-2200 **CHECK-IN**

### Tuesday, August 26th

Continue check-in.

0800 - 1800 Tour to MCBH Kaneohe Bay.

(Static Display, Shooting Range, BBQ Luncheon & visit with 4<sup>th</sup> Force Recon, Iwo Jima Memorial)

### Wednesday, August 27th

Continue check-in.

On your own to explore Oahu!

### Thursday, August 28th

0615 - 1300 Tour of Pearl Harbor (USS Arizona, SSN Bowfin, USS Missouri).

1700 – 2100 Hawaiian Luau at Paradise Cove

### Friday, August 29th

0800 - 1100 Executive Board Members Meeting

1200 - 2100 Visit to Polynesian Cultural Center.

### Saturday, August 30th

0930 - 1130 Scholarship Auction

1200 - 1330 General Members Meeting & Luncheon

1200 - 1330 Ladies Club Luncheon.

1800 – Midnight FRA Banquet & Dancing

If you haven't quite made up your mind about coming...then you're in need of a Hawaiian vacation and you need to get on the phone. It's a long distance to travel but the fun and relaxation among friends will be well worth it.

We hope to see you there!

**Tribute for Generals Jones and Pace**

The Marine Honors Society is hosting a tribute to Generals Jim Jones and Pete Pace in Washington, DC in mid August. It will include a banquet at the Washington Hilton on Thursday evening, 13 August and an Evening Parade at Marine Barracks on Friday evening, 14 August. All active and retired Marines are welcome to attend. The event is spelled out in a brief article in the Leatherneck website at [www.mca-marines.org](http://www.mca-marines.org) (under Leatherneck, then Up-To-Date News). Col. Wayne Morris, USMC (Ret), sends.

**Swift, Silent & Surrounded**

Retired Master Sergeant and FRA member #2390 Andy Bufalo has published a volume of sea stories, essays and commentary entitled "Swift, Silent & Surrounded." Proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to the 15<sup>th</sup> MEU Scholarship Fund, which benefits the children of the Marines from 1<sup>st</sup> Force Recon Company who perished in a training accident in December 1999 at Camp Pendleton California. The author was a member of that command at the time of the tragedy. The book itself is a cross between Major Duncan's "Brown Side Out, Green Side Out" series, and the as yet unwritten "Chicken Soup for the Marine's Soul." Contributing authors include James Webb, David Hackworth, Fred Reed and others. Cost is \$14.95 (plus \$2.95 S&H). The book can be purchased online at [www.s-and-b.com](http://www.s-and-b.com) (MC/Visa/Amex/Discover accepted), or by calling 1-866-762-4332, or by sending a check or money order for \$17.90 payable to "S&B Distribution" to S&B Distribution, 11705 Boyette Road #451, Riverview, FL 33569. Signed copies are available upon request. We appreciate Top Bufalo's generosity!

**Col. Ripley appointed to Department of Defense Panel**

Our own Col. John Ripley, USMC (Ret), FRA member #0612 has been appointed by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to the panel that will make an independent inquiry into the Air Force Academy's sexual assault scandal. The panel will be chaired by former congresswoman Tillie Fowler. Other members include Josiah Buning, who oversaw the admission of women to the Virginia Military Institute in 1997, Amy McCarthy, a United Airlines pilot and Air Force Academy graduate, Laura Miller, a social scientist at the Rand Corporation, Michael Nardotti, former judge advocate general of the Army, and Sally Satel, a psychiatrist at the Oasis Drug Treatment Center in Washington. The panel's 90-day study will "study the policies, management, and organizational practices and cultural elements of the academy." Col. Ripley informed the FRA that, "...there is a very good chance that many of the events I may have committed to already will be scrubbed." We will understand if he is unable to make it to RECON 2003 in Hawaii.

**Very well said**

When in England at a fairly large conference, Colin Powell was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury if our plans for Iraq were just an example of empire building by George Bush. He answered by saying that, "Over the years, the United States has sent many of its fine young men and women into great peril to fight for freedom beyond our borders. The only amount of land we have ever asked for in return is enough to bury those that did not return." It became very quiet in the room.

### Street antics of a Korean War Marine

While observing a group of chanting protesters as they marched along Beacon Street, Ralph White, a Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War flashed them a “thumbs-down” sign. One young man, in his 20’s, decided to confront Ralph and detoured to the sidewalk where Ralph stood. Getting into Ralph’s face the young man said, “So you think it’s OK that our troops are over there murdering innocent people for oil?” White, who served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division and came home from Korea with a Purple Heart, replied, “No, they’re over there defending your right to get in my face without me punching you in the (bleeping) mouth.” The brash young man crushed against him, daring him, “Try it.” White later recalled, “I nailed him. Here I am 71 years old, rolling around Beacon Street and it felt great. Then the State Police moved in, breaking it up all to soon.” When the police asked if he wanted to press charges the Marine veteran said, “Hell no, I’d just like another piece of him.” The story ended with Ralph trying to explain to his wife Gerri how he’d scuffed and torn his suit. Hours after the paper published the story the calls began to come in, Gerri said, “One, who sounded like he was Ralph’s age, all gung-ho, called from a coffee shop were a group of vets had just read the story. I told them that they sounded like they were ready to leave for Kuwait. He said you bet we are, tell Ralph we’ll swing by to pick him up. I said don’t joke about it, he’d go with you.”

#### Membership Data Base

Since the beginning of the Force Recon Association over 20 years ago we have issued 2808 membership numbers. Currently we have the following **active** members in our data base:

Life Members:	166
Honorary Members:	23
Dues Paid Through:	
2002	367
2003	549
2004	124
2005	52
2006	31
2007	4
2008	3
2009	2
2010	2
2011	1
2012	<u>1</u>
Total active members:	<u>1,325</u>

We have 267 Member in Memorial.

Of the 2808 membership numbers that have been issued 1216 are currently inactive.

#### Passing of Thomas E. Hayward, FRA Member #0298

Steven M. Hill, FRA Member #1670 writes: “I am sorry to inform you of the passing of Thomas E. Hayward (63), my step-brother, due to cancer. He is survived by a wife, Margy, and a son and daughter, Scott and Julie who reside in Redding, California. His stories to me were the reason I joined Force Recon. Although my tenure there pre-dated his time in Recon, I was always grateful for his mentoring and guidance in things regarding the Marine Corps. He served a full 19/6, was a mustang Captain, and was discharged a CWO.” We’ll miss him.

## Marine Detachment USSOCOM Update!

Many have asked what is going on with the formation of the new "Proof of Concept" Marine Detachment USSOCOM. While the mount out preparations for possible war with Iraq slowed down the movement of people, HQMC and new incoming CMC (Gen Hagee) remains committed to completing the task. The unit has been recognized as a legitimate unit and has a Table of Equipment, Table of Organization and is officially stood up in message traffic as a unit. It will consist of approximately 86 men. It will be stationed at Camp Pendleton on Delmar, and facilities are nearly complete to house the unit.

The unit has a new logo. The emblem carries with it some interesting points. It is round in shape as most of the newer recon unit logos. It also has the gold jump wings and displays the newer combatant diver insignia. Behind the wings lies the lightening bolt for the signals collection piece in the Det and for the power of distant strike with fire support that it will have to wheel on its missions. It has the fighting knife crossed with the lightening bolt to display the fighting warrior spirit. Below the emblem is the "Raiders" shield with a number 1 behind it. This is two fold. It first recognizes that not since the Raiders formation has the Corps assembled a unique Detachment for a specific mission type, and the number 1 signifies the

first Det. We are anticipating 2 to 4 Detachments to grow in the future once USSOCOM sees the versatility and expertise. One per geographic Combatant Commander, should this be requested.

Of course this means we need to grow some more Force Recon, Radio Recon, and Fire Support Marines and we are already looking into expanding that gene pool.

First men (called Key Personnel) are on station. Many of the men returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom are moving as of this writing. Unit stand up is scheduled to 20 June 2003. The potential for war with Iraq may delayed some personnel from arriving on a timing manner, but things are coming together now as the wind down of Iraqi continues with stabilization forces and not Marine Expeditionary Forces.

The men will endure LtCol Robert Coates (Commanding Officer), 9 month mission training plan and then deploy with NSW Squadron Group 1 for a 6 month deployment cycle. The dates for that deployment are to start sometime in in April 2004 to Oct 2004.

The capability of this Det is unlike any assembled in quite some time. It is a stand alone unit, with amazing fire power, individual equipment, internal Intel fusion, SIGINT collection, (4) teams of Force Recon (with 6 Marines, 1 SARC Corpsman in each team). All the billets in the were raised one rank level in the Force Recon element. Meaning that the Plt Sgt is a MSgt, Team Leaders are GySgts,

ATLs are SSgts and the rest are Sgts.

Some say this is a drain on resources but it really isn't. It matures our Force Recon life cycle and after a two year commitment to the Detachment, the men will flow back into our recon units carrying the interoperability piece with USSOCOM and feed back into the 0321 Primary MOS. It also gives the men a chance to operate a few more years before the senior enlisted Marines assume Operations Chief billets in recon. Thus carrying back even more knowledge from working with other services. Provided CMC continues to execute Phase III "Fix Recon" as per the old Commandant's order, the unit will highlight to USSOCOM and the Secretary of Defense, the full repair to "Fix Recon" and expand our operating levels in the war on terrorism. For years we have been sitting quietly in the shadows ready to execute National Priorities, but since the scale back from the Cold War, our warriors have been engaged very little against the enemies of America. Now standing ready is a group of highly skilled Marines that are as ready and credible as any SOF unit, willing to carry the fight to the enemy deep and with more punch than they can imagine.

## Remembrance Page TAPS.

Once again as you close your Sit Rep, we mourn the loss of another FRA member. We lost MSgt Herman H Diaz (Ret) life time FRA member # 0180 this past month. He was killed in the terrorist bombing in Riyadh Saudi Arabia, while working there as an American Contractor . He is survived by his wife Yoneko in El Cajon, CA. Keep his family in your prayers.

"Those that seek to destroy our compassion and world wide efforts to bring freedom and prosperity to the dark corners of the earth, shall see even more darkness in their end. Justice has no time limits and comes to all. God bless you Herman Diaz".