

Raging Bulls Notes

MAY/ JUNE 2004

A farewell from LtCol Belding...

Raging Bull Families,

As my tenure as Commanding Officer draws to a close I reflect on the great times we have had together as a squadron and as a family. A family made up of Marines, friends, spouses and children that have shared a portion of our lives with one another. From the Birthday Balls and family activities to the hardships endured while your Marines have been deployed, it has been a true pleasure to become acquainted with most of you and good friends with others.

Through the post MEU reorganization, preparations for CAX and all the changes that have taken place since then, you have all been understanding and supportive of your Marines. I don't think anyone could have predicted six months ago that we would be in Iraq right now instead of returning from CAX and WTI support. One thing that was predictable was that you and your Marines would be ready for whatever was thrown our way.

I want to specifically thank the ladies of the Key Volunteer Network. I have conveyed to them before, that they are a force multiplier for the commander and without their true dedication and unselfish donation of time and energy there would be a significant challenge in keeping families informed of the latest news, solving issues and problems or referring a person in need to the appropriate agency. Whether it was hosting a coffee, delivering a meal to a new mother or talking someone through a tough time, their performance has been top notch – the same performance that has been the hallmark of the Raging Bulls.

As Lisa and I turn over command to LtCol Parker and Tonya, I leave with mixed emotions. I am extremely proud of your Marines and the things they have accomplished in the past 18 months. They have exceeded every expectation. From simple things like having minimal disciplinary problems to huge accomplishments like deploying to Iraq and being the best squadron to join MAG-16 in the fight against terrorism. They have excelled at every endeavor. It has been my pleasure to serve with all of you.

I regret that I cannot stay with them to finish the job they have started. I have promised to each of you to keep them safe and bring them all home the same way they left – as a team and healthy. Unfortunately, I do not have the option of staying, but as I pass command to LtCol Parker, know that the safety of your Marines remains his number one focus and concern. Your Marines will continue to set the standard and he will serve them well.

Farewell, Raging Bulls,
Mike Belding

A note from our CO, LtCol Parker...

Raging Bull Spouses, families and friends,

I would like to start off by saying it is truly an honor and privilege to assume command of such a fine and professional Squadron. Tonya and I both look forward to the next 18 months in the Squadron. Making the deployments bearable and the "at home" time fun is one of our priorities.

Your Marines continue to surpass all expectations in this challenging environment. The hours are long and the flying is hard, but their camaraderie and your support from home keep their spirits high. Let there be no doubt in your minds; your Marines are making a difference here and on the Global War on Terrorism.

On behalf of the Raging Bull family, I would like to thank LtCol Belding and Lisa for their leadership, caring, and friendship over the last 18 months. They made the ride a lot more fun. Fare winds and following seas.

Finally, LtCol Belding's number one focus was the safety of your Marines, and I want each of you to know that the focus remains unchanged. We are all looking forward to a safe and healthy return.

Semper Fi,
LtCol "Bones" Parker

SgtMajor Corner...

Friends and family of the Raging Bulls, the start of May finds the Marines of the squadron doing just fine. However, let me say that we do face some challenges on a day to day basis, but none greater than maintaining our aircraft in support of the ground forces, so please put your minds at ease.

We're operating out of what I consider to be a relative safe area where the conditions are more conducive to our way of living than one would have initially have expected. In fact, the weather around here would remind you of being back in Jacksonville.

I realize there is some worry on your part because of the nature of this deployment, but let me say that the Marines and Sailors of HMM-261 have done a superb job and continue to shine in the eyes of their leaders. Their professional determination and hard work ethic will continue to be the driving force of our success. If you could witness, first hand, the work of these great Americans you would be as proud as I am to be with them serving our Corps and our Country.

Last, I would like to say thanks to Lisa Belding and the Key Volunteer Network for keeping all of our families informed.

Lisa in moving on we all wish you and your family the very best in your future.

May Gods light forever shine its rays of sun upon your face.

J.A. Blair

Sergeant Major USMC

A farewell from Lisa Belding...

"Whew, what a fast 18 months!! Hard to believe that it was Halloween of 2002 when my husband took command of the Raging Bulls and now we have to say goodbye. I can't tell you how hard it is for me!! Moving, leaving friends, new jobs-- they are all a part of the Marine Corps culture. Doesn't make it easy, though, does it?"

What does make it bearable is the fact that HMM-261 has the best group of spouses that I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. You are a strong, confident, and faithful group. Your Marines and Sailors can do their job knowing that they can count on you back here. You all have made my position as Key Volunteer Advisor an easy one. I can leave knowing that all of you will continue to support your husbands or wives and their mission.

I can also rest a little easier knowing that I turn my position over to Tonya Parker. She is kind, supportive and hard-working. I know that all of you will welcome her with open arms as you did me when I joined the Raging Bulls family. I would also like to welcome Cynthia Gercoulis as the new XO's wife. As you all know from her great job on the deployment calendar, Cynthia is a lot of fun and has a great sense of humor!

There are so many of you that I wish I had gotten to know better, but I will consider you all family forever.

I love you all!

Lisa Belding

Want to get the latest news and pictures? Go to www.ragingbullsfamily.com

A Note from our new Key Volunteer Advisor...

Hello to all! John and I were made to feel a part of the 261 family as soon as we walked thru the door and it quickly became home to us. I have really enjoyed getting to know many of you over these past months and look forward to meeting the rest of the 261 families.

What a hard act to follow! Lisa Belding has been such an invaluable asset to this squadron that it will be hard to imagine it without her. She has my heartfelt thanks in getting me prepared for this role and she will be greatly missed by all! Best of luck to her, Mike, and family.

Summer is just around the corner and many of you may be planning on traveling. If so please leave your information on where you can be reached with your KV so that they may continue to get those messages to you quickly. The KV's do such a fantastic job in keeping everyone informed and this will make the job much easier as well as benefit you.

If you are planning on being in the area, the Party Committee has some great Family Days planned to have some fun and get together with other 261 families. Check out what they have planned!

Take care,

Tonya Parker

A Note from our Key volunteer coordinator...

I am hoping that this newsletter finds you all doing well. I would like again to reiterate that the Key Volunteer network exists exclusively to support the families of Marines. We realize that Marine Corps life presents many unique challenges and we hope you know that we are here to help with whatever problems may arise. We are not counselors and we can't solve your problems, but we can help you find the right person to help resolve most situations. Please do not hesitate to call on us; it is our pleasure to help you.

On a sad note, we have to say goodbye to Ginny Miller. She is heading west to California and I would like to wish her the very best in her travels. She has been a Key Volunteer for almost two years and the raging bulls of 261 are going to miss her deeply. Ginny, thank you for all you have done - your contribution to our squadron is what makes HMM 261 such a very special family.

We also have to bid a fond farewell to our KV Advisor Lisa Belding. Your contributions are too many to mention but please know that all of the families of HMM 261 will feel a void when you leave. Although you are headed North you will always remain a part of the 261 family and we wish you the very best in all that you do.

If you are interested in becoming a Key Volunteer please contact Kelly Kline at the Marine Corps Family Team Building at 910-449-5343.

MARCH/ APRIL PROMOTIONS

The following Marines have been awarded **Combat Aircrew Wings**:

MARCH

LCpl Sharkey

Cpl Booth Cpl Bower
Cpl Ervin Cpl Farley
Cpl Gilbert Cpl McGuire
Cpl O'Brien Cpl O'Neill
Cpl Pool Cpl Woodworth

APRIL

LCpl Elsass

MGySgt Harter MSgt Lytle
GySgt Crane SSgt Dix
SSgt Manson Sgt Flynn
Sgt Uribe Sgt Vaughn
Cpl Collins Cpl Day
Cpl Farley Cpl Finley
Cpl McGuire Cpl O'Brien
Cpl O'Neill Cpl Pool Cpl Saifi
Cpl Thornton LCpl Barnett LCpl Glowinski



CONGRATULATIONS!

Upcoming Events!

If there is one thing the ladies of 261 know... it's how to have fun! I hope to see all of your smiling faces at our upcoming family events.

Here's what going on...

In May we will have a 261 Families Tent set up at the Maymania.

Maymania is a fun time with carnival rides and games as well as food and entertainment.

It is being held on Camp Lejeune on May 14th, 15th, and 16th. Our Family Day will be held on May 15th from 1:00-4:00 pm. Come by the 261 Families Tent at this time and get a bracelet to ride the rides at a discounted price, as well as enjoy snacks with 261 friends. Prices for the bracelets are \$3.00 at the entrance and \$1.00 at the 261 Families Tent.

The bracelets sold at the 261 Families Tent are for 261 Families only.

We also have a 261 Families Beach Day planned for June 13th at 2:00 pm and a Pool Party planned for July. Your KV will keep you updated.

We have a Party Planning Committee working on planning fun things for the 261 families. If you would like to be on this committee and have fun getting these activities together please contact me, Tonya Parker, at 910-577-3318.

A Final Thanks from Lisa & Mike Belding

Many thanks to all of our volunteers:

Susie Hessen, Key Volunteer Coordinator

Leigh Clise, Key Volunteer

Janie Croley, Key Volunteer

Nikki Davis, Meals on Wheels

Nicole Eidem, Key Volunteer

Bug Gallagher, Key Volunteer and Family Readiness Newsletter Editor

Cynthia Geracoulis, Key Volunteer and Deployment Calendar Coordinator

Gayle Glenn, Key Volunteer and Cookie Lady

Sarah Hager, Key Volunteer

Anglea Lippy, Key Volunteer

Elizabeth Lytle, Key Volunteer

Ginny Miller, Key Volunteer

Tonya Parker, Key Volunteer and Party Committee Chairman

Sachiyo Shearman, Website Coordinator

Lisa TenKley, Key Volunteer

"Farewell!!!"

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to Gayle Glenn, aka "The Cookie Lady." Gayle has been baking and serving cookies to the Raging Bulls of HMM-261 for over 3 years now. Not to mention the fact that she has served as a Key Volunteer as well. I said recently that Gayle does all she does for us and doesn't even have a family member in the squadron, but I was terribly mistaken. Gayle considers ALL of the Marines and Sailors of HMM-261 her sons and daughters.

Gayle, your hard work, positive attitude and GREAT advice will be missed!

Love always,

Lisa and Mike Belding

Questions? Comments?

Ideas? Suggestions?

Write or email

HMM 261

c/o Bug Gallagher

438 Star Hill Drive

Cape Carteret, NC 28584

bug_gallagher@yahoo.com

*If it isn't fun,
we're not doing
it!*

www.ragingbullsfamily.com