

1st Marine Division BaLL

Fri, 6 Nov 09 FINAL, 6 Nov 09

THANKS, GEN MILLS. YOU HAVE THE BEST JOB OF ANY  
GENERAL OFFICER IN THE WORLD!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MARINES!

OORAH, BLUE DIAMOND! IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK

HOME AGAIN W/YOU AND YOUR BEAUTIFUL LADIES.

I'D RATHER BE A LCPL IN 1ST MARINE DIVISION THAN A 4  
STAR GENERAL ANYWHERE ELSE!

AND THERE'S NO PLACE I COULD BE MORE PRIVILEGED  
TO OCCUPY THAN HERE IN YOUR PRESENCE TONIGHT.

A ROUND OF APPLAUSE PLEASE FOR THE BLUE  
DIAMOND BAND. MANY A TIME I BREATHED A SIGH OF  
RELIEF AS WE DROVE BACK INSIDE OUR LINES, OUR  
MARINE BAND LYING QUIETLY BEHIND MACHINE GUNS  
GUARDING OUR COMMAND POST, IN THE FINEST  
TRADITIONS OF EVERY MARINE A RIFLEMAN!

ALSO WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE LOVELY LADIES HERE  
TONIGHT,

-MANY OF WHOM HAVE STOOD LONELY VIGIL WHILE  
YOU MARINES HAVE BEEN TOGETHER  
OVERSEAS;

-LADIES WHOSE BEAUTY REMIND US ALL WHAT WE  
ARE FIGHTING FOR----

GENTLEMEN: A STANDING OVATION FOR THE LADIES  
HERE TONIGHT

-TO THOSE WHO ADD ELEGANCE AND MEANING TO  
OUR LIVES!

AMONG THE HIGH SPIRITED WARRIORS OF THE FINEST  
FIGHTING OUTFIT IN THE WORLD!

FEEL SORRY FOR ANYONE NOT IN THIS ROOM TONIGHT  
OR WHO HASN'T SERVED OUR BELOVED CORPS IN THE  
MAGNIFICENT BLUE DIAMOND

-AMONG YOU GREAT SAILORS AND MARINES  
-BATTLE-HARDENED YET COMPASSIONATE  
-CUNNING, BRAVE, AND HIGH-SPIRITED,

-THE HONEST ADVOCATES OF OUR NATION

TONIGHT WE SALUTE OUR CORPS THROUGH OUR  
CONNECTION WITH EVERY MAN OR WOMAN WHO HAS  
WORN OUR UNIFORM AND THIS DIVISION, YOUR DIVISION  
THE 1ST MARINE DIVISION  
HAS BEEN IN THE FRONT RANK OF OUR CORPS  
HISTORY:

NO OUTFIT HAS TAKEN ON A GREATER SHARE OF THE  
ROUGH WORK AND DANGER THAT HAS BUILT OUR  
CORPS' REPUTATION AND PROTECTED OUR REPUBLIC  
THAN HAS THE BLUE DIAMOND!

AND WE HAVE A STORY TO TELL, AND A FUTURE THAT  
YOU IN THIS ROOM WILL WRITE!

THE STORY - YOU KNOW IT:

TONIGHT IN 1942

-BATTLES OF BLOODY RIDGE AND HENDERSON  
FIELD BEHIND US, OUR LADS  
--WORN THIN BY MALNUTRITION AND MALARIA

-JAPANESE ARMY ACCEPTS ITS FIRST DEFEAT AND  
GIVES UP REINFORCING GUADALCANAL

TONIGHT IN 1944

- OUR DIVISION--MOSTLY TEENAGERS OF THE OLD

BREED--WAS LOCKED IN COMBAT ON BLOODY  
PELELIU

- AS HOT AND BLOODY A FIGHT AS EVER FOUGHT  
FOR A NOBLE CAUSE  
TONIGHT IN 1950

- PRESIDENT TRUMAN HAD LOOKED FOR HIS  
COUNTERPART TO THE ROMAN LEGIONS AND  
FOUND THEM IN THE 1ST MARINE DIVISION

- AND OUR LADS WERE MOVING NORTH TOWARD A  
LITTLE KNOWN LAKE NAMED CHOSIN  
RESERVOIR, WHILE BITTER COLD SWEEP IN FROM  
SIBERIA  
TONIGHT IN 1968

- OUR BATTALIONS WERE FIGHTING ELUSIVE  
ENEMIES OUTSIDE AN ANCIENT CAPITAL, A CITY  
THEY WOULD TO KNOW WELL WITHIN 60 DAYS-

---HUE CITY

TONIGHT IN 1990

- FOUND 1ST MAR DIV IN THE SAUDI DESERT, GRIMLY  
REHEARSING HOW TO BREACH MINEFIELDS AND  
THROW SADDAM'S FORCES OUT OF KUWAIT  
TONIGHT IN 2001

- OUR DIVISION SAILORS & MARINES PREPARED TO  
LAND IN AFG AND MOVE AGAINST KANDAHAR  
AFTER OUR NATION WAS ATTACKED ON 9-11

TONIGHT IN 2002

- OUR DIVISION WAS ORGANIZED FOR COMBAT AND  
ALREADY DEPLOYING TO KUWAIT FOR OPERATION  
IRAQI FREEDOM  
THIS NIGHT IN 2003

- OUR DIVISION WAS PUT ON ALERT TO REDEPLOY

TO IRAQ TO A PLACE CALLED AL ANBAR

TONIGHT IN 2004

- ASSAULT TROOPS OF OUR DIVISION WERE FILING INTO ATTACK POSITIONS FOR A FIGHT TO THE FINISH IN FALLUJA

TONIGHT IN HELMAND RIVER VALLEY, AFG

- 1ST BN 5TH MARINES ARE SHATTERING OUR ENEMIES PLANS TO CONTROL THE TOWNS & VILLAGES THERE.

AND TONIGHT HERE IN PENDLETON OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS ARE WITH EVERY SAILOR & MARINE AS THEY AGAIN MOVE AGAINST THE ENEMY A MEDIEVAL, THINKING ENEMY,

- A PROFOUNDLY IGNORANT ENEMY WHO THOUGHT THEY COULD SCARE US BY HURTING US BUT WE DIDN'T TAKE PELELIU OR FALLUJA BY BEING MADE OF COTTON CANDY!

[PAUSE]

SINCE I HAVEN'T THE WORDS TO CAPTURE ALL THAT IS IN OUR HEARTS TONIGHT,

AND BECAUSE I NEVER LIKED LONG SPEECHES WHEN I WAS AT THE POSITION PARADE REST, AND I WAS WAITING FOR DINNER AND INFORMAL CAMARADERIE WITH THE BEST OF FRIENDS,

LET ME QUOTE ONE OF OUR FORMER SHIPMATES IN 1ST MAR DIV, CPL E.B. SLEDGE, WHO LIKE MOST YOUNG NCOS CAN SUM THINGS UP BETTER THAN GENERALS, WHEN REFLECTING BACK ON THE BLUE DIAMOND'S FIGHT FOR PELELIU AND OKINAWA:

WAR IS BRUTISH, INGLORIOUS, AND A TERRIBLE  
WASTE. COMBAT LEAVES AN INDELIBLE MARK

..

THE ONLY REDEEMING FACTORS WERE MY COMRADES  
INCREDIBLE BRAVERY AND THEIR DEVOTION TO EACH  
OTHER. MARINE CORPS TRAINING TAUGHT US TO KILL  
EFFICIENTLY AND TO TRY TO SURVIVE.  
BUT IT ALSO TAUGHT US LOYALTY TO EACH OTHER  
AND LOVE. THAT ESPRIT DE CORPS SUSTAINED US.

MY FELLOW SAILORS & MARINES

THIS DIVISION FORMED ME AS A MAN

IT GAVE ME ROLE MODELS THAT TOLD ME I'D  
NEVER FACE A FIGHT WITHOUT A COMRADE  
BESIDE ME AND MARINE AIR AND ARTILLERY  
HURRYING IN OVERHEAD, AND THAT NO FIGHT WE  
FACED COULD BE TOUGHER THAN WHAT THEY  
FACED IN THEIR YOUTH.

AND IT'S FOREVER MY HONOR TO HAVE SERVED

ALONGSIDE SO MANY OF YOU

YOU WHO CONSIDER IT THE GREATEST HONOR TO  
FIGHT ALONGSIDE A FELLOW MARINE.

YOU WHO PROVED THAT THERE IS NO BETTER

FRIEND, NO WORSE ENEMY, THAN A U.S. MARINE

IT'S ACTUALLY A CONSTANT SOURCE OF AMAZEMENT  
TO ME THAT I'VE BEEN ALLOWED TO BE A MARINE SO  
LONG, AND I WAS PRIVILEGED TO SERVE REPEAT  
TOURS IN OUR MAGNIFICENT BLUE DIAMOND.

AND IF I CANNOT SUFFICIENTLY THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
SERVICE THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE I CAN DO:

I WILL NEVER FORGET THE MOMENTS I STOOD  
WITH YOU,  
THEY ARE FIXED IN MY MIND FOREVER.  
AND WHILE I WILL NEVER AGAIN SEE ANYTHING  
LIKE IT,  
WHEN I STOOD IN YOUR MAGNIFICENT RANKS AS  
WE ENTERED THE FIGHT,  
STORED IN MY MEMORY I WILL ALWAYS SEE THE  
FILE OF YOUNG MARINE INFANTRYMEN OF THE  
BLUE DIAMOND,  
MOVING AGAINST THE ENEMY,

ALWAYS MOVING AGAINST THE ENEMY.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL AND HOLD YOU CLOSE IN THE  
MONTHS AHEAD. OUR NATION NEEDS YOU STILL, AND  
YOU MUST BE READY ONCE AGAIN.

LONG LIVE THE UNITED STATES

AND SUCCESS TO THE MARINES!

SEMPER FI, LEATHERNECKS!