

# MEDIA GUIDE 2014



*“The force of choice for the Asia-Pacific region”*





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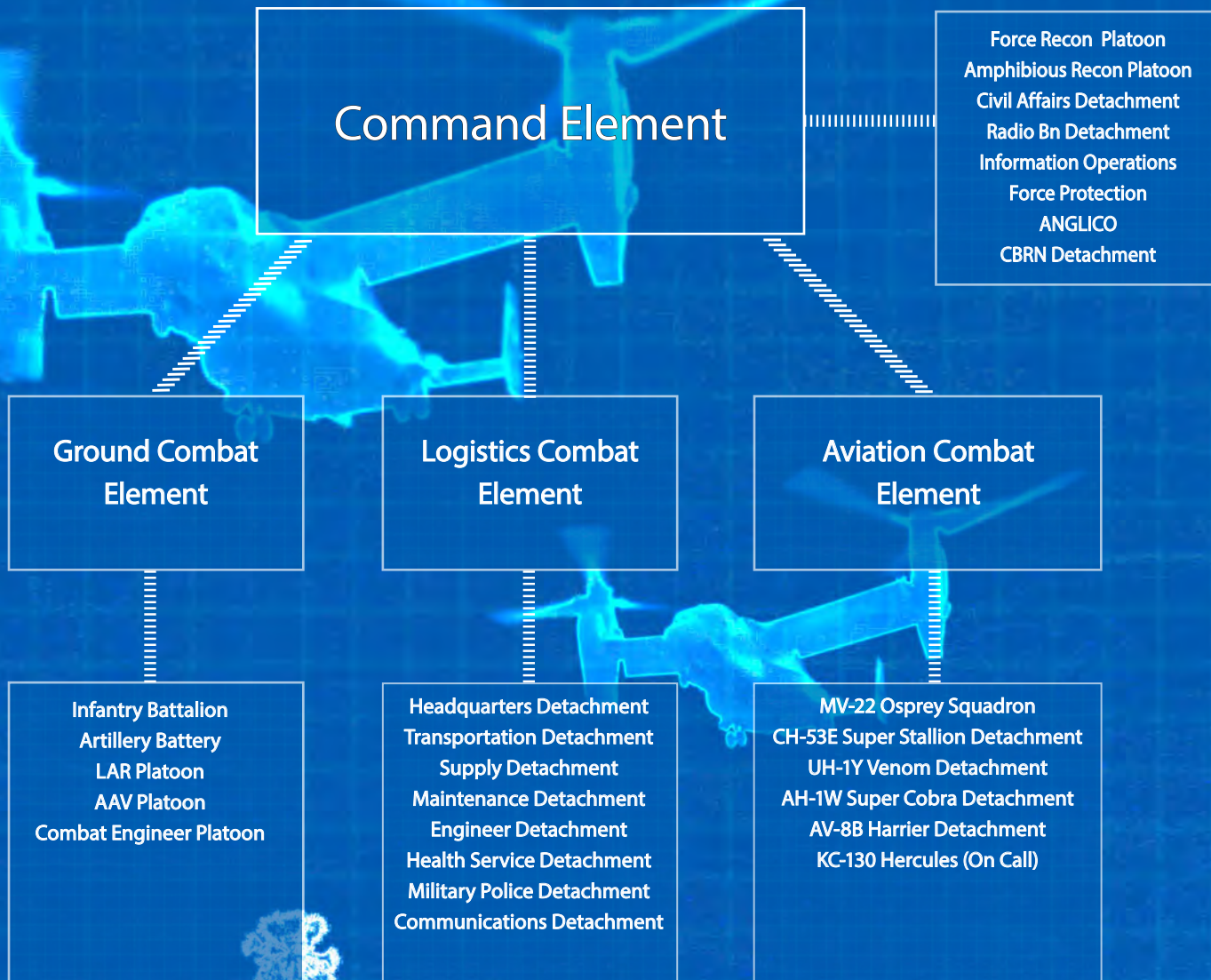
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# Table of Organization





## 31st MEU Leadership

Colonel Romin Dasmalchi was commissioned in 1992 after graduating from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He completed The Basic School before reporting to Flight School where he earned his wings in 1994. His first tour was with the Dragons of HMM-265 in Okinawa, Japan, where he completed multiple deployments with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) as a CH-46 pilot with the Aviation Combat Element (ACE).

After serving for four years with HMM-265, Col Dasmalchi attended Amphibious Warfare School in 1999 and executed follow on orders to 2D Marine Aircraft Wing where he was assigned to HMM-365. Col Dasmalchi served three years with the Blue Knights as the Assistant Operations Officer and Maintenance Officer. While with HMM-365, he deployed to both Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF).

Col Dasmalchi returned to Quantico in 2003 to attend Command and Staff College and the following year reported to Manpower and Reserve Affairs to serve as the Majors' Rotary Wing Monitor. After this tour, he moved back to New River, North Carolina to transition to the MV-22B Osprey.

In 2007, Col Dasmalchi then became a plank owner with VMM-266 and served initially as the Executive Officer for this newly transitioned Osprey squadron. He deployed with the Fighting Griffins to OIF and was part of the retrograde of MV-22's out of the theater.

In June of 2009, Col Dasmalchi assumed command of VMM-266 and eventually became the ACE Commander with the 26th MEU. During the deployment with the 26th MEU, the ACE participated in numerous exercises and conducted combat operations in support of OEF, as well as OPERATIONS ODYSSEY DAWN and UNIFIED PROTECTOR in Libya.

Following squadron command, Col Dasmalchi reported to the Naval War College in Newport, RI and graduated in May of 2012. He was next assigned to Joint duty at NORAD and US NORTHERN COMMAND in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He served in the J5 Directorate as a Branch Chief responsible for the Arctic Working Group, Joint Doctrine and Concepts and Initiatives.

Col Dasmalchi assumed command of the 31st MEU on 9 June 2014.



Executive Officer  
Lt. Col. Thomas Chalkley



Sergeant Major  
Sgt. Maj. James Roberts



# Command Structure



## Command Element

The command element is the headquarters for the MEU. Its staff and assets provide the MEU commander the ability to exercise command and control over its major subordinate elements. The primary sections include: administration, intelligence, operations, logistics and communications. Other specialized sub-sections within the CE are the chaplain's office, staff judge advocate, medical surgeon, public affairs, and family readiness.



## Ground Combat Element

### Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 3/5

The ground combat element provides the ground combat power for the 31st MEU. It is structured around a conventional infantry battalion reinforced with light-armored vehicles, artillery, combat engineers, and amphibious assault vehicles. The 31st MEU rotates BLTs every six months from units stationed on the West Coast of the U.S.



## Logistics Combat Element

### Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) 31

The logistics combat element is augmented by detachments from a variety of units that include a transportation support detachment, postal service, supply detachment, maintenance detachment, engineer support detachment, health services detachment, financial disbursement detachment, military police detachment and a communications detachment. CLB-31, based in Okinawa, Japan, is permanently assigned to the 31st MEU as the LCE.



## Aviation Combat Element

### Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 262 Reinforced

The aviation combat element provides the air combat power for the MEU. Its arsenal includes the MV-22 Osprey, CH-53E Super Stallion, AH-1W Super Cobra and UH-1Y Venom helicopters. The 31st MEU rotates its Osprey detachment every year while the reinforcing detachments rotate on a semi-annual basis.



### Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 542

The VMA reinforces the ACE with AV-8B Harrier jets, adding a fixed-wing offensive aircraft element to the MEU. The VMA rotates on a semi-annual basis.





## Our History: 1967-1999

For more than 45 years, the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) has provided combatant commanders throughout the Asia-Pacific region with a potent, highly adaptive, rapid reaction force capable of conducting multiple and concurrent missions in support of the full range of military operations. Since its establishment in the late 1960s, the 31st MEU has conducted several deployments and participated in numerous contingency operations and training exercises.

### Vietnam War

The 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit was activated on 1 March 1967 as Special Landing Force Alpha for operations in Vietnam. It made the first of many amphibious deployments from Okinawa on 10 April 1967.

The first operation conducted was on 14 April 1967, when the MEU conducted a rescue of the crew of the SS Silver Peak, a Panamanian vessel run aground by Typhoon Violet, in the vicinity of Minami Ko Shima Island, Japan. Days later, it was committed to Operation Union, a search and destroy mission in Vietnam.

It was during this period of intense combat that Special Landing Force Alpha earned the Presidential Unit Citation. The unit participated in continuing combat operations ashore over the next three years, including the Vietnam Tet counter-offensive in 1969, while returning to Okinawa periodically for re-outfitting and the rotation of forces.

Special Landing Force Alpha was officially designated as the 31st Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) on 24 November 1970. Once more, the unit returned to the Gulf of Tonkin. This time, however, the 31st MAU was not committed to overt land operations as the Vietnam War was winding down. The 31st MAU performed presence missions and conducted a series of special operations through May 1971. From June 1971 until April 1975, the 31st MAU conducted numerous deployments to the waters off Vietnam.

The 31st MAU was then directed to the Gulf of Thailand for Operation Eagle Pull, the American Embassy evacuation by air of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, which took place on 12 April 1975.

This was followed by participation in Operation Frequent Wind on 29 April 1975 which was the final evacuation of Saigon as North Vietnamese forces entered the city.

### 1980s and 1990s

During the 80's and 90's, the 31st MAU remained the forward-deployed U.S. presence in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia. Combat operations were replaced by regional exercises, which allowed training opportunities in a variety of countries. In 1983, the 31st MAU was recalled from a combined exercise with local forces in Kenya, and positioned in the Mediterranean Sea. Its mission from September to October 1983 was to support U.S. peacekeeping forces in Beirut during an intense period of complex political and life-threatening conditions in Lebanon. It was the 31st MAU's last operation of that period and the unit was deactivated in May 1985.

The unit was reactivated as the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) on 9 September 1992. In 1994, the unit was relocated to its current home station at Camp Hansen, in Okinawa, Japan.

### Iraq 1998-1999

The flexibility of the MEU was demonstrated during the Iraq crisis in late 1998 when the Iraqi regime did not comply with the U.N. weapons inspections process. All four Amphibious Ready Group ships had recently completed Exercise Foal Eagle off the coast of Korea and were heading to various ports for liberty when they received the call on 14 November 1998 to sail immediately to Okinawa to onload the 31st MEU.

A significant portion of the 31st MEU's 2000 Marines



## Our History: 1999-2005



were engaged in urban warfare training in Guam when their message came to return to Okinawa. The rest were still in Okinawa, but approximately a quarter of those were a new infantry battalion just rotating in from California. The battalion had just two days to gather all their personnel in order to deploy.

The 31st MEU and ships' company personnel started their initial onload of the ships on 9 November and completed the morning of 11 November. In one night alone, they loaded more than 170 pallets of equipment, weapons, and cargo. In addition, a C-5 Galaxy from Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, originally scheduled to bring maintenance supplies and tools to Okinawa two weeks later, arrived early on 10 November in order to restock the MEU's Air Combat Element. This evolution was a part of the normal supply rotation, but the shipment arrived a week early – just in time to load onto the ships before they departed.

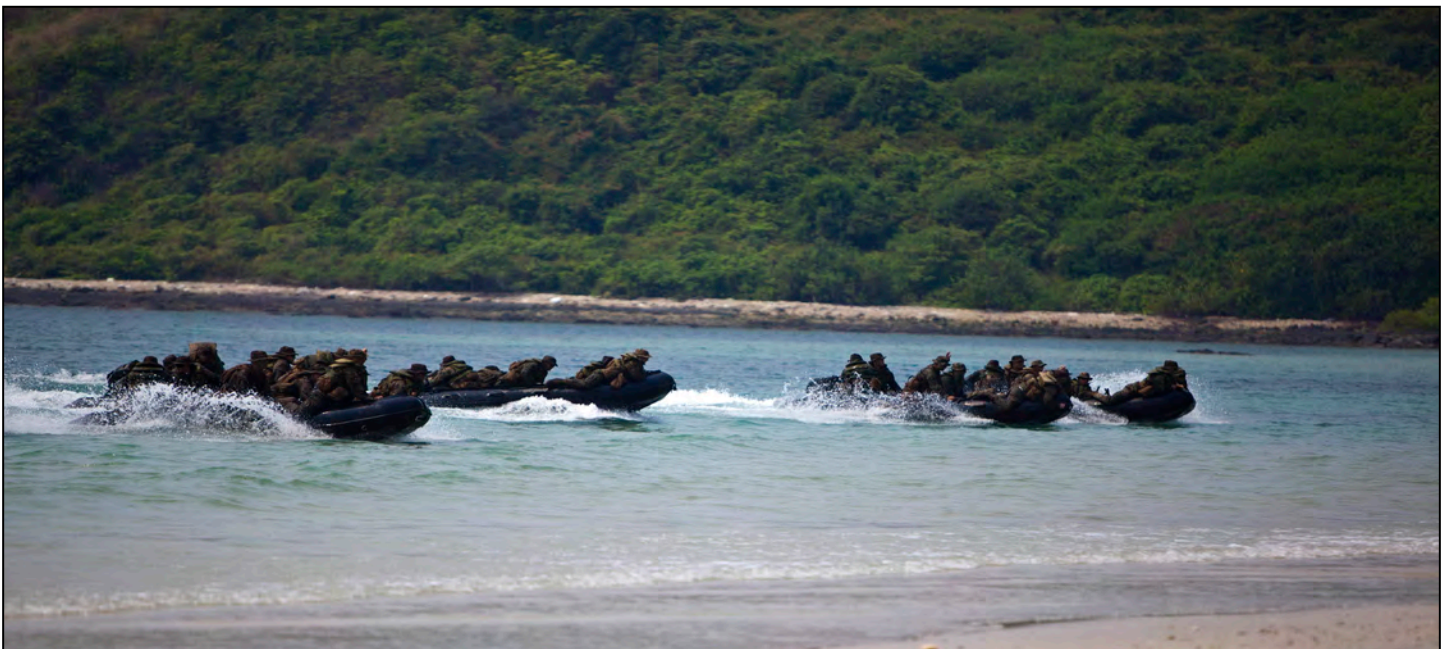
From November 1998 to February 1999, the 31st MEU participated in operations in the Persian Gulf and Kuwait, including Operation Southern Watch and Operation Desert Fox.

### East Timor

Portions of the MEU deployed to East Timor in January 2000 aboard USS Juneau (LPD-10) as Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force East Timor, including Company G., 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, then the MEU's Battalion Landing Team; portions of the Command Element; HMM-265 and the MEU Service Support Group 31. In East Timor, the Marines and Sailors supported the transition from the Australian-led International Forces in East Timor (INTERFET) to the new United Nations Transitional Administration East Timor (UNTAET).

### 21st Century

From September 2004 to March 2005, the 31st MEU, including Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines with attached Charlie Battery of 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, conducted combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Participation included a major role in Operation Phantom Fury, the clearing of Fallujah in November 2004.



HAT YAO, Kingdom of Thailand - Marines and Sailors with Company B., Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, speed ashore on combat rubber raiding craft during a bilateral boat raid as part of exercise Cobra Gold 2013 here, Feb. 15, 2013.



## Our History: 2005-2014



SUBIC BAY, Republic of the Philippines - Marines and Sailors with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit play with students while visiting an elementary school here, Oct. 11, 2012. The visits were part of a bilateral effort by U.S. and Philippine armed forces to give back to the communities that help host Amphibious Landing Exercise 2013.

With organizational changes to Marine Corps reconnaissance units in 2006, the designation as “Special Operations Capable” was no longer used. The 31st MEU then was designated as a Maritime Contingency Force, although it remains capable of conducting nearly the same wide variety of specialized missions on both sea and land.

In February 2006, the 31st MEU was sent to the Philippines to provide relief assistance during the mudslides in southern Leyte.

On 21 September 2007, the 31st MEU Command Element dedicated its headquarters building at Camp Hansen, Okinawa, to Sergeant Rafael Peralta, who died in Iraq during Operation Phantom Fury while with the 31st MEU. Sgt Peralta received the Navy Cross for his actions in Fallujah.

In May and June of 2008, the 31st MEU participated in Operation Caring Response after Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar.

In October 2009, the 31st MEU assisted in humanitarian & disaster relief operations in Luzon,

Philippines, after Typhoons Ketsana and Parma hit consecutively. Simultaneously, elements of the 31st MEU assisted in Sumatra, Indonesia, after earthquakes struck the region.

In October 2010, the 31st MEU conducted humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in northern Luzon after Super Typhoon Megi hit the Philippines.

In March 2011, the 31st MEU sailed from Malaysia and Indonesia to mainland Japan to assist in the recovery efforts after the 9.0 Tohoku earthquake and subsequent tsunami. The 31st MEU participated in Operation Tomodachi, delivering more than 164,000 pounds of food, water and relief supplies via helicopter.

In November 2013, the 31st MEU assisted in disaster relief operations during Operation Damayan in the southern portion of the Republic of the Philippines. The MV-22 Ospreys of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 265 were utilized to deliver nearly 100,000 pounds of relief supplies to island villages inaccessible by land transportation.



## Our History: 2005-2014



OKINAWA, Japan - U.S. Marines with Company I., Battalion Landing Team, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, conduct a mechanized raid as part of MEU Exercise (MEUEX) aboard Camp Schawb, Okinawa, Japan, July 17, 2014. The MEUEX is part of the pre-deployment training in preparation for the fall patrol.



SULUAN, Republic of the Philippines - A Filipino helps unload bags of rice from an MV-22 Osprey with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 265, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, during a supply drop-off at an island village during Operation Damayan here, Nov. 25, 2013.



## Area of Responsibility & Exercises



Unlike the other six MEUs on the East and West coasts of the United States that deploy for seven months with a 1:2 float/garrison ratio, the 31st MEU typically deploys at least twice a year throughout the Asia-Pacific. These deployments include a variety of operations and various theater security cooperation exercises with partner nations. Some of the annual/biennial exercises are:

- Cobra Gold, Kingdom of Thailand
- Amphibious Landing Exercise, Republic of the Philippines
- Talisman Sabre, Australia
- Ssang Yong & Korean Military Exchange Program, Republic of Korea
- Realistic Urban Training Exercise, Guam



# Amphibious Squadron 11



Spread across three ships known as the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, with Amphibious Squadron 11, is capable of responding to different operational missions from locations all around the world. Typically, the 31st MEU/BHR ARG deploys with an LHD, LSD and LPD-type ship.

The current 31st MEU/BHR ARG is comprised of the following ships:



## USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD-6)

Class & type: Wasp-class amphibious assault ship  
Displacement: 40,500 tons  
Length: 844 ft (257 m)  
Beam: 106 ft (32 m)  
Draft: 27 ft (8.2 m) navigational 28 ft (8.5 m) limit  
Propulsion: Steam turbines: two shafts, 70,000 shp (52 MW); Boilers: two, 600 psi (4.1 MPa)  
Speed: 20 knots (37 km/h)  
Range: 9,500 nautical miles (17,600 km) at 18 knots (33 km/h)  
Troops: 1,800  
Complement: Embarked ships company: 104 officers, 1004 enlisted  
Embarked Marine detachment: 1894 officers and enlisted



## USS Peleliu (LHA-5)

Class & type: Tarawa-class amphibious assault ship  
Displacement: 39,438 long tons full and 25,982 tons light  
Length: 820 ft (250 m)  
Beam: 106.6 ft (32.5 m)  
Draft: 27 ft (8.2 m)  
Propulsion: steam turbine  
Speed: 24 knots (44 km/h; 28 mph)  
Complement: 262 officers and about 2,543 enlisted men



## USS Germantown (LSD-42)

Displacement: 11,496 tons (light) and 16,396 tons (full)  
Length: 610 ft (190 m)  
Beam: 84 ft (26 m)  
Draft: 21 ft (6.4 m)  
Propulsion: 4 Colt Industries, 16-cylinder diesel engines, 2 shafts, 33,000 shp (25 MW)  
Speed: 20+ knots (37+ km/h)  
Boats & landing craft carried: 5 LCACs  
Troops: Marine detachment: 402 + 102 surge  
Complement: 22 officers, 391 enlisted



## Recent HA/DR Operations

Based in a strategic location in the Asia-Pacific, the 31st MEU plays a vital role in rapid humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) response to surrounding countries. If called upon, the 31st MEU is capable of embarking upon the ships of the ARG and responding within days of notification.

Two of the most recent HA/DR operations conducted by the 31st MEU were Operation Tomodachi in Kessenuma and Oeshima Island areas, Japan, and Operation Damayan in and around the Southern Samar region of the Republic of the Philippines.

### Operation Tomodachi

On March 12, 2011, an earthquake struck off the east coast of mainland Japan, causing a tsunami that swept across the island. The nuclear power plants in Sendai and Fukushima were also affected, adding the threat of nuclear contamination in the surrounding areas. A reported 300,000 people were displaced from their homes.





## Recent HA/DR Operations



The 31st MEU embarked from a port call in Malaysia and arrived off the east coast of Japan to distribute food and supplies. With debris clearing vehicles, two hundred Marines assisted the local Japanese clean-up efforts for two weeks.

### Operation Damayan

On November 8, 2013, Super Typhoon Haiyan swept through the central regions of the Republic of the Philippines, ravaging the villages and cities. Approximately 6,000 people were killed and more than \$700 million worth of damage was incurred as the result of the storm.



The 31st MEU, at the request of the Philippine government, delivered nearly 100,000 pounds of food and supplies via MV-22 Ospreys to isolated villages not accessible by land. In addition to delivering supplies to the villages, hundreds of displaced locals were evacuated to other locations in the Philippines. The rest of the MEU forces remained on ship in the region, ready to respond to any further requests by the Philippine government and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).



## Awards & Honors



Presidential Unit Citation Streamer  
Vietnam, 1967



Navy Unit Commendation Streamer with Three Bronze Stars\*  
Vietnam, 1968  
1998  
2001-2003  
2004-2005



Joint Meritorious Unit Award  
Operation Tomodachi, 2011



Meritorious Unit Commendation Streamer with Two Bronze Stars  
Vietnam, 1975  
Lebanon, 1983  
1998-2000



## Awards & Honors



Marine Corps Expeditionary Streamer



National Defense Service Streamer with Two Bronze Stars



Vietnam Service Streamer with Two Silver Stars and Four Bronze Stars\*\*



Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Streamer



Global War on Terrorism Service Streamer



Vietnam Cross of Gallantry Streamer with Palm Device

\* Each Bronze Star denotes a subsequent time an honor is awarded

\*\* Each Silver Star denotes 5 subsequent times an honor is awarded



## Contact Information

### On the web:



<http://www.31stmeu.marines.mil/>



<http://www.dvidshub.net/unit/31MEU>



<https://www.facebook.com/31stMEU>



<http://www.youtube.com/user/the31stmeu>

### Points of contact:

The 31st MEU's Public Affairs Office assists media representatives in gathering information, images and video on our unit. When we're not deployed, please contact us at (315) 623-7198. When we're deployed, please e-mail us using the below information, or send us a message on Facebook.

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