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Sunday, May 25, 2008

## RCT-1 HQ Co. Commander letter to friends

My Dear Friends:

Once again, I find myself apologizing for the long delay between E-mails. I'm working on getting into a better E-mail "battle rhythm," and I greatly appreciate your patience. I also greatly appreciate all of the encouraging words you all sent to me in the last few weeks. I greatly appreciate them and treasure them.



Please know that I am well. I am also very encouraged by what I am seeing around me. Last Saturday I had the opportunity to go to a local Sheik's home as the Fallujah Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team delivered a solar-powered

water pump and filter unit. The photo labeled, "the well," shows you what the sheik and his family (tribe) used for a well up until we delivered a new one. You can see that it is just a small hole in the ground tapping into a very neglected water infrastructure. The small little pump on the right side of the photo shows the pump that brought them their water when it worked and when it had power. Of course, the water itself is not clean and even the locals get sick if they drink it. And, even if the water were clean, the pipes are severely neglected, so clean water in dirty pipes still produces dirty water. It is nearly impossible to get chlorine here, so cleaning the water that way is out of the question. Fuel is also very difficult to get here for the average person, so fueling your generator to power your pump is also not a very reliable solution. With those strikes against the local Iraqi, we are helping by providing units like the one shown in the photo labeled, "new solar powered pump." Since it's solar powered, and Iraq has a LOT of bright sun, fuel isn't a problem. And since the unit comes with easy to get filters, no need to try to find chlorine. While Iraqi children tend to put their

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arms at their sides and just stare at the camera (like in the photo labeled, "kids") hiding their joy, the sheik, his family, and their kids were all very excited when their new pump started pumping clean water for them. It was awesome to be a part of.

While there, I had the pleasure of talking to a young man named Jamal (see photo labeled, "Jamal"). Jamal is probably in his mid-20s, and, while I didn't ask, probably was very much opposed to us in 2004. Jamal is now studying



English at the University of Anbar in Fallujah and hopes to be an English teacher some day. He spoke English very well and was genuinely touched that anyone would volunteer to come to Iraq to help them build a better life. Family is one of the most important things to an Iraqi, and when I told Jamal about my wonderful wife and good kids remaining back in California while I was here serving in Iraq, he seemed to me to be sincerely appreciative of their sacrifice and strength. The dozen or so kids who surrounded Jamal and me as we talked asked question after question, which Jamal patiently interpreted for them. I did my best to answer his questions and it was very inspiring to see the eyes of the kids light up as Jamal interpreted my answers back to them.

Of course, this conversation was bitter-sweet. While I truly felt that I was talking to a friend when I spoke with Jamal, I still had to remember exactly who I was, where I was, and what I was doing. Some questions caused me to pause and wonder who this man was and if I could trust him. Trust isn't a luxury. But one thing that I knew for certain, even if Jamal's sincerity and appreciation was all an act, which I do not believe to be the case, there is no doubt that those children will never forget that day and the acts of kindness extended to them by Americans.



Those kids, I'm confident, were raised to hate us at one point. I'm sure that Jamal had heard his entire life about how evil Americans were. But here in Iraq now, were kids

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#### About Me

FEARLESS 1ST MARINES

**History Of The 1st Marine Regiment** - The First Marines, one of the most illustrious Regiments in the Marine Corps, was originally activated at Philadelphia on 27 November 1913. At this time it bore the designation of 2d Advance Base Regiment. On 1 July 1916, this organization was re-designated as the 1st Regiment of Marines.

smiling, laughing, and playfully joking with United States Marines. Kids are simply not that clever to hide their true emotions. These kids will remember your generosity for years to come. I say, "your generosity," because I am here representing you. What I do, Americans do in the eyes of these Iraqi children. How I act and who I am is how Americans act and who Americans are to these people. I remember hearing about the American G.I. walking through World War II Germany giving a little German girl a chocolate bar, and that German girl never forgetting that one seemingly random act of generosity for as long as she lives. I am confident that we will have fewer enemies tomorrow because of the experiences of this sheik, these kids, and Jamal today.

These gains, however, do come at a price. I ask, that as we approach Memorial Day, that you would remember Marines like Sergeant Glen E. Martinez, Corporal Miguel A. Guzman, Lance Corporal Casey L. Casanova, Lance Corporal James F. Kimple, Corporal Richard "Ricky" J. Nelson, Lance Cpl. Dean Opicka, Lance Corporal Jordan Haerter, and Corporal Jonathan T. Yale. I have attached three news articles so that you can read about these fallen warriors from Regimental Combat Team 1. Their sacrifices are not in vain. And while we truly mourn the loss of these brave men and this brave woman, I trust in the words of my God, that "[t]here is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). So on this Memorial Day, I hope that you will join me as I salute all Americans who have died in service to our great nation. The Commandant of the Marine Corps offers these words to my fellow Marines:

"WE MOURN THEIR PASSING AND HONOR THOSE WHO CONTINUE TO SELFLESSLY SERVE TO ENSURE OUR CONTINUED SECURITY AND PROTECT OUR IDEALS OF FREEDOM. TODAY, IN AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ, AT HOME, AND AROUND THE GLOBE, I AM PROUD OF MARINES HEROICALLY SERVING OUR NATION AND ABLY SHOULDERING THE BATTLE COLORS OF OUR CORPS." - JAMES T. CONWAY, GENERAL, U.S. MARINE CORPS, COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS.

As I close, I would encourage you to pray for me. Rather than praying for my safety, though, I would encourage you to pray that God would grant me the courage and wisdom to rise up and face whatever challenge I might face. Please pray for Karen and patience while I am away and unable to be her helper. Please pray for Kyle and Julia, that they would be a blessing to their Mama and each other during this challenging time. Please pray for our fallen warriors and the families left behind, and that God will comfort their families and draw them near to Himself. Please pray that God will cause freedom to take hold in Iraq through the wise actions of brave men and women, and through the witness of men like Jamal. Please pray. I strive to run the "great race" well and am assisted and encouraged by you, my family, and the words of encouragement that you bring me, like my dear Father-in-Law's reminder of where our strength comes from (thank you, Opa):

"I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

During the early years of its existence, the Regiment was primarily employed as a combat force in the so-called "Banana Wars", in the Caribbean area. The first of these engagements occurred in April 1914 when the Regiment, along with other Navy and Marine Units, landed and seized the Mexican port of Vera Cruz. The Regiment next participated in the Haitian campaign (1915-1916) and the Dominican Republic campaign (1916). In December 1918, the 1st Regiment returned to the Caribbean and was deployed to Cuba for approximately six months. It was a garrison force from August 1922 until July 1924... [click here to read more](#)  
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"I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies."

-- Psalm 18, 1 - 3.

I do count it a blessing to face these trials for something that is greater than myself, and I know where my strength comes from and in whom I will trust. I am truly thankful that He has blessed me with such dear family. Now, if you will forgive me, I must once again turn my attention to my duty here. You are all in my heart. You are all in my prayers.

Yours truly,

Shaun

Captain Shaun W. Doheney, USMC  
Company Commander, HQCO, RCT-1

Posted by fearless 1st Marines at [11:38 PM](#) 

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