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Advertiser Photos by Charles Okamura

No words were necessary yesterday when Sgt. J. W. Wells came home.

## 100 Isle Marines Are Home Again

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One hundred Island Marines returned home from Vietnam yesterday. They went off thinking they were going to take part in "war games," but what they got into was seven months of fighting on some of Vietnam's most brutal battlefields.

They were men whose

during the Communist Tet offensive.

When orders came, the ships changed course and the command group landed at Da Nang Feb. 23.

"We Marines, by our very nature, are expeditionary creatures. Our job is to be ready to go. So when the call came, the 29th was ready," said Maj. Gen. Paul J. Fontana, when he greeted the re-

and children who welcomed them with signs and plumeria leis.

The women and children waited in the hot midday sun while the Leathernecks marched past a color guard and stood in formation through welcoming speeches and prayers.

Then they boarded buses that took them to the Military Airlift Command Terminal

fighting on some of Vietnam's most brutal battlefields.

They were men whose families remained in Hawaii following the deployment and those who specifically requested to be stationed here.

The men, members of the 1st Battalion, 27th Marine Regiment, were among 1,100 Kaneohe-based Marines sent to Vietnam in February.

They were afloat and on their way to a routine SEATO training exercise in Okinawa when President Johnson ordered them to Vietnam to bolster American forces

ready to go. So when the call came, the 29th was ready," said Maj. Gen. Paul J. Fontana, when he greeted the returning men at Hickam yesterday afternoon.

Fontana is deputy commander of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.

Lt. Gen. Henry W. Buse, Pacific Marine commander from Camp Smith, was in San Diego to greet the remaining members of the regiment who arrived there yesterday.

The men who returned to Hawaii were met at Hickam by about 200 friends, wives

and prayers.

Then they boarded buses that took them to the Military Airlift Command Terminal.

And it was another half-hour wait for their greeters while the men checked their baggage through customs.

"I wouldn't even mind standing in water up to my neck for this," said Mrs. Ralph Patterson, as she waited for her husband, Sgt. Patterson, to finish Customs.

Mrs. Patterson stood in her stocking feet, holding her high-heeled shoes, as she waited for her husband.

"I'm taller than he is when I wear heels," she said. "So I wear them the whole time he's away and take them off just before he comes in."

One of the first men to come out the door was Lt. Thad Wiener, who was embraced by his wife, Donna, and his 5-year-old daughter, Patricia.

This is the second time he has come back from duty in the Vietnam war.

"It's getting to be a habit," he said as a friend gave him a pink plumeria lei.

Another Marine who came home from his second tour was Capt. Martin Farmer, commander of the battalion's headquarters company.

"The war was simpler this time," he said. "Two years ago our contacts with the enemy weren't as solid or as heavy. Now we are able to use everything we have against them."

Martin and the men saw some of the worst fighting of the war when they were sent to Hue shortly after their arrival to halt the North Vietnamese in the Tet offensive.

For this and other major battles in the last seven months, they brought home 20 Silver Stars, 73 Bronze Stars and papers are being processed that could award them two Navy Crosses and five more Silver Stars.



Mrs. John Stone focuses on the arrival.



It's been seven months since they were home.

