Marine Week has started in Cleveland Ohio.

By JAMES W. WADE III
Staff Reporter

CLEVELAND– Marine Week officially kicked off Monday atPublic Squarewith a ceremony that included Mayor Frank Jackson and several high ranking Marine Corps. leaders. Marine Week is this week, June 11 through June 17, and over 750 Marine's arrived inCleveland.

Lt. Col. Michael H*ubbard served as the Master of Ceremony and is a 26-year veteran who* supe rvises the 3rd Battalion 25th Marine Regiment, located on Smith Road in Brookpark.

Mayor Jackson presented a proclamation to Lieutenant General Steven A. Hummer. "The City ofClevelandremains a strong and faithful supporter of our sons, daughters and families who serve asUnited StatesMarines... I want to welcome all of the Marines toCleveland," saidJackson.

The Quantico Marine Band performed following the declaration. During the ceremony, a flyover by UH-1N Huey and AH-1W Cobra was seen. Many retired Marines were on hand to support this special week inCleveland.

Lt. Gen. Steven Hummer, opened his remarks by thankingClevelandfor the welcome. Hummer noted that Marine week had been previously held in three other cities,Chicagoin 2009,Bostonin 2010,St. Louisin 2011, but added, “Let me tell you,Clevelandwill be the best yet.”

Speaking highly of Marine Week he said “Marine Week is an annual event that celebrates community, country and Corps in a different city every year. It provides a unique experience that directly connects the American public and Marines.”

One of those 700 who landed is Lt. Col Riccoh Player a graduate ofShawHigh Schoolwho grew up on 92nd andSuperior. “I went through my old neighborhood and things have changed so much,” said Lt. Col. Player.

He graduated from boot camp atParris Island,SC, in 1989 and after completing theSchoolofInfantryatCamp Geiger,NC, he reported to Marine Barracks 8th & I, where he served in Bravo Company as a Physical Training NCO, Ceremonial Drill Instructor and Platoon Sergeant.

In May 1996, First Lieutenant Player accepted augmentation and change of MOS. He attendedDefenseInformationSchoolinFt. Meade,Maryland. Upon completion of school he reported toCamp Lejeune,NC, and served as Operations Officer, Media Officer and Director of Consolidated Public Affairs. Also during this tour he earned his master’s in Public Administration fromWebsterUniversity.

In June 2004, Major Player served as Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton Public Affairs Officer and deployed as Deputy Director I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) to participate in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM inIraq.

In June 2007, Major Player was assigned toDefenseInformationSchoolwhere he served as Marine Detachment Commander and earned his Master Instructor certification. Lieutenant Colonel Player's personal decorations include: Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal and Combat Action Ribbon. Lt. Col. Player and his wife, Shelly, have four children: Isaiah, Tyla, Noah and Elijah.

Marine Week comes toClevelandmainly because of the outstanding support Cleveland-area residents gave the battalion following 48 combat deaths of 3/25 troops inIraqin 2005, said Hubbard, ofBerea.

What's more, he said the Clevelandarea has expressed "unwavering" support for Marines ever since 3/25 was based downtown in the 1960s. As you enter Public Squareduring Marine Week you will see displays of nine vehicles, two helicopters, a light howitzer and a tank parked around the square.

"Marine Week is our opportunity to connect with Clevelanders and all Americans, thank them for their support and demonstrate why the Marine Corps isAmerica's Force in Readiness," said Lt. General Hummer.

The Marine Corps is honored to give back to the city ofClevelandand the state ofOhiofor their enormous support, said Lt. General Hummer. With some 9,000 active and Reserve Marines hailing fromOhio, there is a strong military background here added the Lt. General.

ClevelandandOhiohave been there for the Marines through an unfortunate time in 2005 when 3/25 lost 46 Marines inIraq, said Hubbard. They were also there for their Marines once they got back fromAfghanistanlast year. To further repay the community, Marines will work in many local neighborhood service projects like community clean-ups, park restorations and housing rebuilds.

The week features a variety of exhibits and events at various downtown locations, culminating with a staged combat exercise at Burke Lakefront Airport Saturday and Sunday.