

THE PARRIS ISLAND BOOT



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ALPHA PLOTS WAY THROUGH LAND NAVIGATION



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Photo by Lance Cpl. David Bessey

Recruits from Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, arrive to their first destination and begin to plot their next point during the day land navigation course at Elliot's Beach on Parris Island on June 26. Alpha Company will graduate today.



Photo by Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis

The recruits of Platoon 1049, Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, watch as Staff Sgt. Michael Allen, senior drill instructor, corrects the new members of his platoon.

Alpha meets their drill instructors

Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis
Staff Writer

The recruits of Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, were shocked into training April 28 during the first meeting with their drill instructors on what is known as "pick up" day.

Recruits spent the previous week with calmer drill instructors who supervised them during in processing. However, "pick up" day marks the beginning of their three-month transformation into Marines. It is one of the most stressful days for recruits.

"These recruits are entrusted to my care," said Staff Sgt. Michael Al-

len, senior drill instructor of Platoon 1049, as he recited the drill instructor pledge during the introduction ceremony.

The recruits, silent and stone-faced, stared at the Marines who guided them through the next 12 weeks of training.

For a moment, the squad bay was peaceful. Allen ordered the recruits to stand by their beds. As he walked away, the sound of his footsteps filled the room.

"Drill instructors, you got 'em," Allen said.

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Recruits run initial strength test

Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis
Staff Writer

The recruits of Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, ran the initial strength test at a physical training field and stepped closer to the beginning of recruit training April 27.

Recruits must prove they have the physical strength necessary before

they face the stresses of recruit training.

They were tested within the first week of arriving at Parris Island.

The IST consists of three events, which measure a recruit's strength, speed and endurance. To pass, they had to complete crunches, pullups and a 1.5-mile run.

The purpose of the test is to evaluate each recruit's physical fitness

for the trials of recruit training, said Staff Sgt. Anthony Johnson, 30, a chief drill instructor of Receiving and Processing Company, Support Battalion.

When the IST is finished, the drill instructors will know the strengths and weaknesses of their recruits and will be able to better

SEE STRENGTH PAGE 4



Photo by Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis

Recruits from Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, begin the 1.5 mile run during the initial strength test on Parris Island on April 27. Male recruits must complete the run in less than 13 minutes, 30 seconds to pass.

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ALPHA COMPANY GRADUATES

Honor Graduates

Pfc. C. W. Tobin, High Point, N.C.
Platoon 1048, Tobin was recruited by
Sgt. Chorn and trained by Sgt. Flohr

Pfc. J. R. Cooper, Stoutsville, Ohio
Platoon 1050, Cooper was recruited by
Master Sgt. Rohr and trained by Staff Sgt. Compton

Pfc. C. L. Magnoli, Weston, Conn.
Platoon 1053, Magnoli was recruited by
Sgt. Mercado and trained by Staff Sgt. Webb

Pfc. J. M. Estienne, Virginia Beach, Va.
Platoon 1049, Estienne was recruited by
Staff Sgt. Pearson and trained by Staff Sgt. Allen

Pfc. P. C. Torbet, Wauseon, Ohio
Platoon 1052, Torbet was recruited by
Sgt. Averette and trained by Sgt. Blankenship

Pfc. M. L. Weller, Bridgewater, N.J.
Platoon 1054, Weller was recruited by
Staff Sgt. Douglas and trained by Staff Sgt. Franklin

Platoon 1048 Pvt. R. N. Barnes II, Pfc. J. S. Bellinger, Pvt. B. T. Bishop, Pvt. R. T. Boker, Pfc. B. A. Brown, Pvt. Z. T. Brown, Pvt. R. K. Coffin, Pfc. M. A. Cook, Pvt. J. M. Davis, Pvt. W. D. Devine, Pvt. D. A. Duncan, Pvt. P. H. Elsberry, Pfc. K. L. Felton, Pvt. J. E. Herzog, Pvt. B. L. Hunt, Pvt. J. I. Jones, Pvt. V. A. Lugo, Pvt. A. A. Manzanoramirez, Pfc. L. M. Munoz, Pvt. L. E. Reynolds, Pfc. C. R. Rosen Jr., Pvt. R. Rueda, Pvt. N. R. Russell, Pvt. M. D. Schardt, Pvt. J. A. Stacy, Pvt. R. C. Stoddard, Pvt. S. Suy, Pfc. C. W. Tobin, Pfc. D. J. Tucker, Pfc. A. T. Valdez, Pvt. T. A. Wood II, Pvt. S. M. Yates, Pfc. K. M. Young

Platoon 1049 Pvt. A. C. Anderson, Pfc. J. D. Anthony, Pvt. E. Ariza, Pvt. A. H. Blackwood, Pvt. N. E. Bogue, Pvt. D. M. Brown, Pvt. J. L. Burd, Pvt. J. C. Cabanyoung, Pvt. M. B. Chase, Pfc. C. B. Crooks, Pfc. S. P. Dever, Pvt. C. J. Drawdy, Pfc. J. M. Estienne, Pvt. M. Gunther, Pvt. Z. T. Harrelson, Pvt. C. B. Harvey, Pvt. D. A. Holmes, Pvt. J. R. Johannesen, Pvt. J. G. Johnson, Pfc. J. T. Kearns, Pvt. P. A. Koudelka, Pfc. J. B. Lee, Pfc. G. D. Lindsay Jr., Pvt. B. A. Majette, Pvt. J. M. McCray, Pvt. C. W. McWhorter, Pvt. C. L. Miller III, Pvt. B. M. Newman, Pvt. P. L. O'Brien, Pvt. T. B. Rico, Pvt. M. M. Stroman, Pvt. J. Wilson, Pfc. L. A. Wirtes, Pvt. J. Wohlford, Pfc. J. Wojciechowski, Pvt. A. C. Zachareas

Platoon 1050 Pvt. C. D. Barss, Pvt. T. M. Benjamin, Pfc. B. Bragan, Pvt. J. M. Buras Jr., Pfc. J. M. Campbell, Pfc. D. F. Chaves, Pfc. J. R. Cooper, Pvt. Z. G. Depinet, Pvt. R. T. Fleming III, Pvt. J. R. Foster, Pvt. N. R. Fuller, Pfc. A. C. Hahr, Pvt. B. F. Hills, Pvt. S. E. Himberg, Pvt. J. Inzaina IV, Pvt. J. C. Kavel, Pvt. J. P. Klecha, Pfc. M. B. Kronket, Pvt. A. J. Lambert, Pfc. A. C. Minton, Pvt. L. B. Moreira, Pfc. D. M. Natko, Pvt. J. D. Ottowell, Pfc. A. J. Padilla, Pvt. D. A. Pluff, Pvt. N. D. Purick, Pvt. A. S. Rigoli, Pfc. N. D. Sahr, Pvt. R. J. Sekerka, Pvt. R. D. Shields, Pfc. J. L. Singlemann, Pvt. J. H. Tackett, Pvt. P. M. Tracey, Pvt. T. J. Truex, Pvt. J. P. Walker, Pvt. E. C. Wamsganz, Pvt. A. J. Welch

Platoon 1052 Pfc. J. M. Adams, Pfc. F. T. Beasley, Pvt. M. A. Bolin, Pvt. M. T. Buebe, Pfc. E. M. Candelario, Pvt. T. A. Carne, Pfc. F. T. Castillomateo, Pvt. E. D. Chen, Pfc. A. D. Cho, Pvt. A. C. Donahue, Pvt. B. M. Emery, Pvt. R. E. Gorecki, Pvt. J. A. Hacker, Pfc. K. E. Haycraft, Pvt. J. M. Hinkley, Pvt. C. D. Horton, Pvt. A. Hrangbiklianhang, Pfc. L. Johnson III, Pfc. R. N. Latham II, Pvt. M. E. Lee, Pvt. S. W. Lee, Pvt. M. A. Macahia, Pvt. M. B. McLin, Pvt. D. K. Nicholson, Pvt. J. A. Patel, Pfc. J. J. Perez Jr., Pvt. C. R. Rice Jr., Pfc. R. C. Rice, Pvt. M. E. Salas, Pvt. J. D. Sampson, Pfc. P. W. Schmeling, Pvt. G. R. Smith, Pvt. L. E. Soriano, Pfc. D. R. Statz, Pfc. P. C. Torbet, Pfc. B. R. Wilczynski, Pvt. H. G. Williams

Platoon 1053 Pfc. J. L. Alvey Jr., Pfc. M. C. Andrews, Pfc. O. E. Aquirre, Pfc. L. P. Bither, Pvt. C. Black, Pvt. G. E. Botterbrodt, Pfc. T. S. Chavis, Pvt. J. R. Cogle, Pvt. N. A. Crane, Pvt. C. D. Crawmer, Pfc. C. M. Denman, Pvt. J. R. Everett, Pfc. K. E. Fairweather, Pfc. C. J. Fitzgerald, Pvt. J. M. Gautreaux, Pfc. R. W. Gibson, Pvt. J. A. Gonzalez, Pvt. R. Guerra, Pfc. K. L. Henon, Pvt. C. R. Joyce, Pvt. M. R. Judd, Pfc. H. B. Leonard II, Pvt. P. J. Lynott, Pfc. C. L. Magnoli, Pfc. A. R. Malszycki, Pfc. R. A. Merlino, Pvt. M. W. Murphy, Pfc. A. T. Patterson, Pvt. E. J. Riveraortiz, Pvt. B. I. Roethel, Pvt. N. D. Ruppert, Pfc. J. R. Seale, Pvt. J. N. Villalobos

Platoon 1054 Pvt. C. M. Babine, Pvt. Z. R. Barnes, Pvt. J. Benscome, Pfc. A. R. Bonilla, Pvt. D. J. Brodie, Pvt. P. A. Cart, Pvt. M. R. Chianese, Pfc. C. J. Davidson, Pfc. T. Dorjee, Pvt. M. C. Dou, Pfc. A. S. Francis, Pfc. J. Gonzalez, Pfc. Z. W. Hammons, Pfc. D. W. Jackson, Pfc. D. K. Josephs, Pvt. B. A. Kennedy, Pvt. C. R. Lewis, Pfc. P. M. Logalbo, Pvt. M. R. Marchese, Pfc. C. P. Marcks, Pvt. R. D. McLaughin, Pvt. E. M. McLoughlin, Pfc. D. J. Morrone, Pvt. S. R. Norman, Pfc. D. M. Patel, Pvt. J. L. Paul, Pfc. K. A. Roberts Jr., Pvt. L. A. Rodriguez, Pfc. T. Scotti, Pvt. S. C. Shapiro, Pfc. B. T. Smith, Pvt. A. P. Taylor, Pvt. E. C. Vandenberghe, Pfc. M. L. Weller, Pfc. K. B. Young

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Alpha Company practices bayonet techniques



Recruits of Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, face off in a bout during the second round of pugil sticks at Leatherneck Square on May 18.



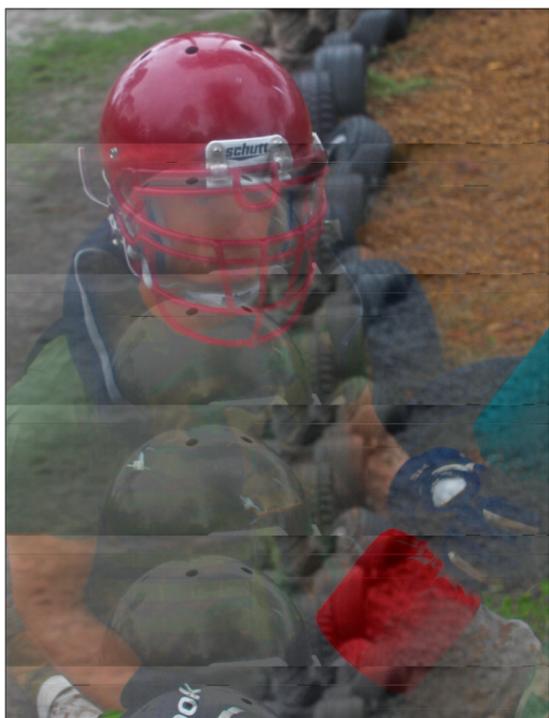
Recruits of Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, apply the techniques of close-quarters combat during their second round of pugil sticks at Leatherneck Square on May 18.

Photos by Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis

Today, recruits with Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, will graduate from recruit training. Part of their graduation requirements was earning a tan belt in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program.

On May 19, they took up pugil sticks, which are used to simulate a rifle and bayonet and has thick padding on both ends, and used the skills they learned throughout their first month of training.

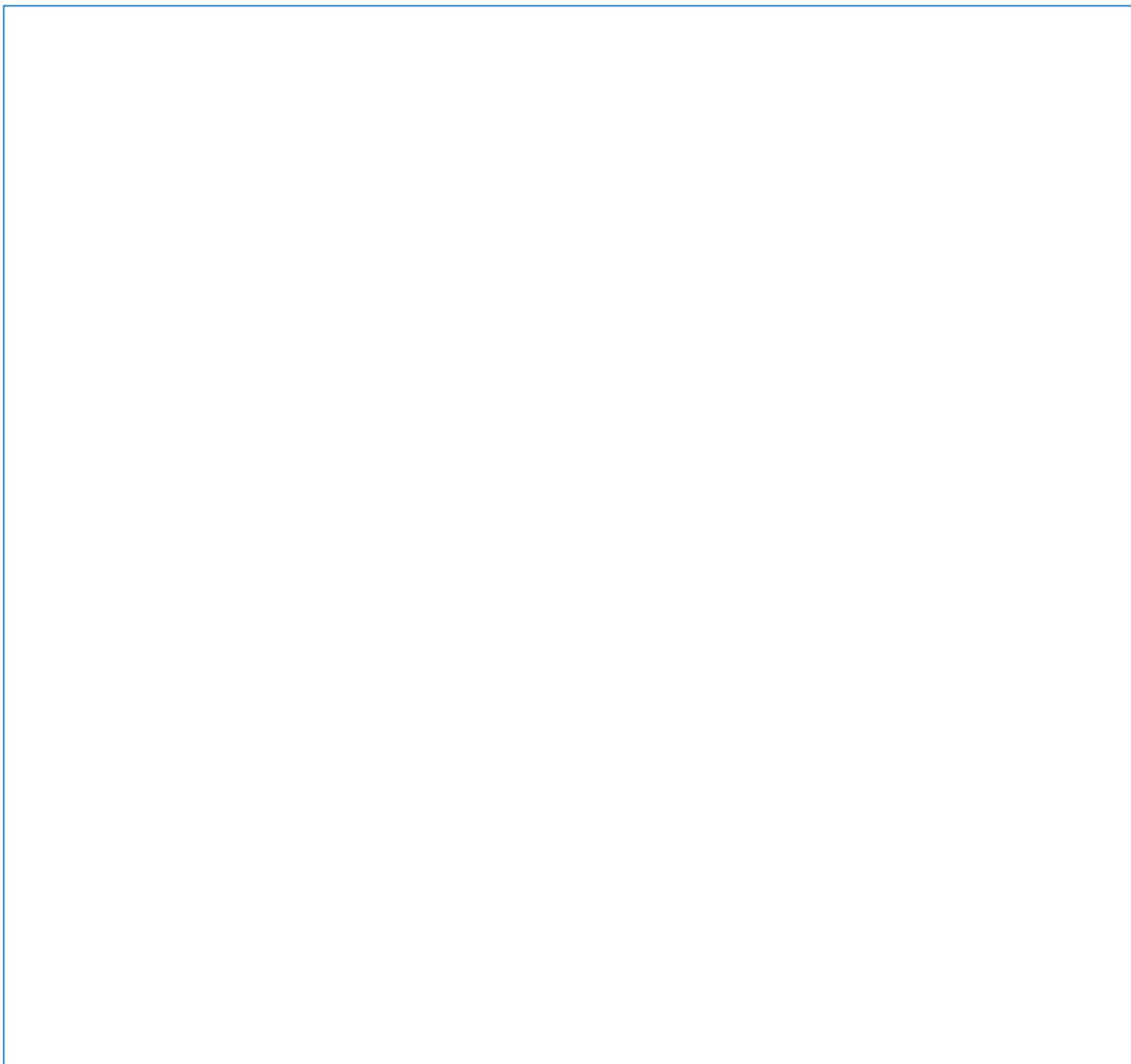
Recruits go through approximately 27 collective hours of martial arts training before they can take the test for their tan belt.



Rct. Brian Smith of Platoon 1054, Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, waits for his match to begin during the second round of pugil sticks at Leatherneck Square on May 18.



Recruits of Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, face off in a pugil sticks battle at Leatherneck Square on May 18.



STRENGTH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

train the them accordingly, he said.

Recruits take an IST before arriving to recruit training to show their recruiters they are ready to go to Parris Island, said Johnson.

Recruits still need to take another IST on Parris Island to show they are ready for training, he continued. The change in climate can effect their readiness.

"Recruits take the IST here because they still have to make training standards," said Johnson, a native of Memphis, Tenn. "They may have gained weight or lost strength before being sent to Parris Island,"

As recruits progress through training, their bodies will be strengthened and the distance of each run will gradually increase up to three miles for the physical fitness test, said Capt. Patrick Murphy,

26, commander of Alpha Company.

The PFT is the Marine Corps' standardized fitness test, which every Marine must take for a score annually.

"We have to build them up before they are ready for a PFT," said Murphy. "It's a crawl, walk, run philosophy, and they are just not ready yet to make Marine Corps standards."

The test's minimum requirements for male companies are 35 crunches in two minutes, three pullups and a 1.5 mile run in 13 minutes and 30 seconds or less.

The number of failures is low, Johnson said. Recruits will be held back from training if they fail the IST and sent to Special Training Company to be conditioned back to into shape.

Those who passed the test continued with recruit training.

Just over three months have passed since that day. The men of Alpha Company once recruits, now graduate as stronger and faster Marines.

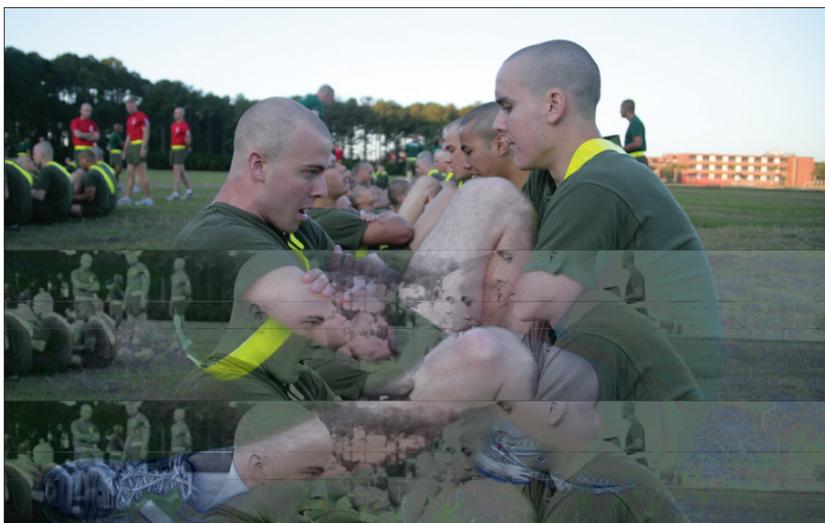


Photo by Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis

Rct. Adam Donahue, 20, of Platoon 1052, Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, holds Rct. Brett Wilczynski, 18, of Platoon 1052, during crunches for the initial strength test on Parris Island on April 27. Donahue is from Levittown, Pa., and Wilczynski is from North Collins, N.Y.



Photo by Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis

Staff Sgt. Michael Allen, senior drill instructor for Platoon 1049, takes charge and orders his recruits to get dressed at the barracks April 28. Recruits learn to obey orders from their drill instructors without question while in recruit training.

INSTRUCTORS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The silence was instantly shattered as the drill instructors launched toward the recruits. Mayhem ensued and the recruits stood with their bodies locked at the position of attention while the drill instructors stormed up and down the aisle.

They demanded instant obedience to orders, followed by swift, shouted reprimands to any recruit who failed to do so.

The presentation is meant to set the tone for the rest of the training cycle, Allen said.

The squadbay turned into a melting pot of emotions. Anxiety hit some recruits immediately.

"It was a scary experience," said Rct. Lavone Singleton, 24, of Platoon 1049 and a native of Fayetteville, N.C. "I knew they meant business."

It is the drill instructors' job to teach the recruits how to handle stress dur-

ing training so they will be able to function in a combat setting, Allen said.

The purpose of the constant yelling, screaming and the counting down of recruits is done to add to the stressful environment.

Everyone handles stress differently, Allen said. The recruits must learn to accomplish their missions under pressure.

The task, however, was no easy one. The initial surprise recruits experience during "pick up" typically throws them into a mental shutdown.

As former civilians, the recruits had to quickly adapt to the culture shock of recruit training in order to be successful.

The stress rarely stops during training, Allen said. The tension can wear recruits down into less confident, less functional versions of themselves.

However, the drill instructors were there to rebuild them with the physical and mental strength they will need to graduate as new Marines.



Parris Island Marine Band performs at opening for Beaufort Water Festival



Photos by Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis

The Parris Island Marine Band performed at the opening of the Beaufort Water Festival at the waterfront in Beaufort, S.C., June 13 as part of the first day's events. The water festival is a week-long event in downtown Beaufort, which will end Sunday.

Alpha Company navigates with new skills

Lance Cpl. David Bessey
Staff Writer

The recruits of Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, plotted their way through the day land navigation course at Elliot's Beach at Parris Island on June 26.

Recruits learned how to use a map to prepare them for situations when modern technology fails, said Cpl. Stewart Richardson, 27, a land navigation instructor.

Instructors taught the recruits basic navigation skill by using tools such as maps and compasses to practice finding plotted points.

"We teach recruits at a basic level so they have

that basic understanding of land navigation," Richardson said.

When recruits graduate and go to the School of Infantry East at Camp Geiger, N.C., they will have a foundation for the advanced land navigation there, Richardson said.

Before recruits travel through the course, they received classes on how to read a map, plot points on a grid and how to use a protractor to find an azimuth, or the direction, to plot their path.

Recruits also learned how to use their pace count and apply it. A pace count tells a person the natural amount of strides it takes them to walk 100 meters, said Richardson.

Recruits received com-

passes, maps and the coordinates to several locations on the course. They recorded the number labeled on an ammunition can that represented point markers before they returned their answers to a course instructor.

The course at Elliot's Beach spans more than over a square mile, which provides recruits with plenty of space to practice finding their points, said Richardson.

The course only teaches recruits to plot eight-digit grid maps, the same type of map recruits will use in the advanced land navigation at SOI, said Sgt. Javares Taylor, 25, a land navigation instructor.

"The course is challenging for beginners," said

Rct. Charles Davidson, 18, of Platoon 1054. "You had to be directly on top of the ammunition cans to find your points."

If recruits failed to find their points, the instructors will help them recalculate their

azimuth and sent them back into the course, said Richardson.

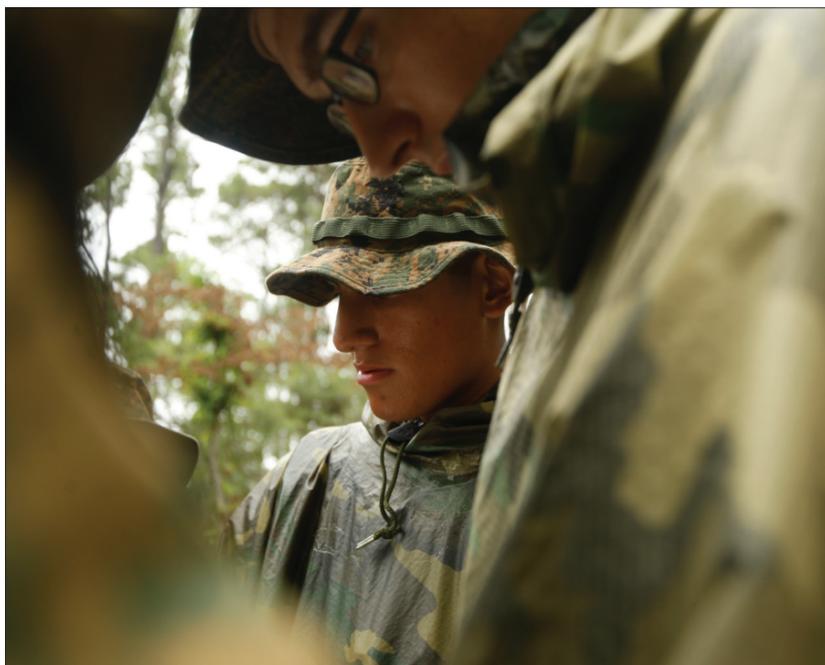
The course is not a graduation requirement, but recruits will be tested on the material on the practical application test to ensure basic under-

standing. Alpha Company is scheduled to graduate today. When these Marines leave, they have the necessary knowledge to carry out the mission, even when all the electronics no longer work.



Photos by Lance Cpl. David Bessey

Pvt. Jordan Johnson, 22, of Platoon 1049, Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, uses his compass to plot his first destination during the day land navigation course at Elliot's Beach at Parris Island on June 26. During training, recruits are taught the basics of land navigation using basic tools such as compasses and maps. Johnson is from Upper Marlboro, Md.



Pfc. Franklyn Castillo Manteo, 19, of Platoon 1052, Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, looks at his map to plot his last point during the day land navigation course at Elliot's Beach on Parris Island on June 26.

Marines and West Africans Train to Fight Together



Photos by Sgt. Tatum Vayavananda

Marines and Gambian soldiers move from the 25-yard firing line to the 15-yard firing line during a combat marksmanship range for Exercise Western Accord 2012 on July 15. Basic combat marksmanship focuses on techniques and maneuvers effective in urban environments and close-quarters battle.

Sgt. Tatum Vayavananda

U.S. Marine Forces Africa

THIES, Senegal – The sound of American service rifles and Kalashnikovs can be heard across the dusty, arid training area in Mont Rolland, dubbed the “Fishbowl,” due to the tall embankments surrounding it, as Marines and West African partner nations practiced the principles of combat marksmanship during Exercise Western Accord 2012 in Thies, Senegal.

“Most modern engagements take place in close quarters,” said Lance Cpl. Daniel Lingeman, a fire team leader for Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment. “Being able to pivot, move into position and fire in circumstances other than a marksmanship range is very important.”

Basic combat marksmanship focuses on techniques that are effective in urban environments and close-quarters battle, such as inside a building. Basic skills include: firing from a distance less than 50 yards; firing from the pivot; firing while moving forward; “controlled pairs,” which are two well-aimed shots, “hammer pairs,” or two shots in rapid succession; failure-to-stop drills, for neutralizing the target; as well as weapons safety and tactics useful for close-quarter combat.

“One of the most important things

is that they get a better understanding and familiarity of their weapon,” said Capt. Lamin Njie, company commander for the Gambian detachment participating in exercise.

“If they can grasp how their weapons behave, it will give them more proficiency in their operations,” said Njie.

All the nations participating in the exercise belong to the Economic Community of West African States—a united front of all the participating African countries that have banded together for common economic benefit. Participating nations include the U.S., Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Burkina Faso and France.

“It will help us with interoperability. Wherever [our forces] find themselves, they will be able to coordinate with whatever [partner] forces they come across,” Njie said.

The combat marksmanship training is one of the many counterinsurgency-themed training exercises they practiced to help inter country familiarity with tactics and procedures and bolster endearing partnerships with U.S. and West African nations.

Other types of training include: non-lethal weapons and crowd control, cordon, search and seizure techniques, urban combat training, demolition training, implementing entry-control points, and vehicle convoy operations.

“It’s training the way you fight,” said Lingeman. “The potential is always out there that we might find each other

fighting together some day. Being able to share tactics, techniques and procedures is key if we have to work in a



Lance Cpl. Jason R. Demopoulos, a native of Columbus, Ohio, and rifleman with 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, lines up among Gambian soldiers to shoot from the pivot July 15.

More than 50,00 Facebook users “like” Parris Island

Parris Island’s official Facebook site reached a major milestone July 21 when it reached 50,000 likes, further cementing it as the most popular base or unit social media site in the Marine Corps.

The site, located at <http://www.Facebook.com/ParrisIsland>, posts a mixture of photos and information about recruit training connecting fans ranging from recruit parents to Marines who earned the title here decades ago.

So far in 2012, fans have grown by 14,000. In July, an average of approximately 135,000 unique Facebook users saw Parris Island content per week, according to statistics provided by the site.

Besides the Marine Corps’ official Facebook site and the Facebook site run for Marine Corps recruiting, each with more than 2 million likes, the Marine Corps Marathon’s Facebook site has approximately 1,500 more likes than Parris Island. However, site administrators expect to surpass the marathon’s site within two to three months, based on past fan growth averages.

The site was established Oct. 19, 2009, and is administered by the depot public affairs office.

Marines defend training town from Australian forces

Cpl. Jonathan Wright

31st Marine Expeditionary Unit

QUEENSLAND, Australia - As dawn approached the quiet town, a harsh voice cut through the silence. "Stand to! Enemy sighted at 200 meters!"

After two weeks of preparing defenses in the fortified town of Raspberry Creek, elements of G Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, were assaulted by the Australian army's 1st Brigade forces during Exercise Hamel 2012 on July 5.

Light armored vehicles approached the town and a tank rattled in the distance. Minutes later, the Marines received "near miss" readings on their multiple integrated laser engagement system gear, signaling indirect fire artillery strikes.

2nd Lt. Cory Moyer, platoon commander of 2nd platoon and officer in charge of the Marines in Raspberry Creek, was in an overwatch

position tracking enemy movement, while the Marines prepared their fields of fire.

"The atmosphere is mostly excitement and anticipation of engagement after waiting in the defense for so long," said Moyer. "The Marines have done an effective job of setting up security for the town, so we're going to give 1st Brigade the best we have to offer."

Multiple M1-A1 Abrams tanks became visible as three armored personnel carriers cautiously approached the town.

The advance halted, and the Marine FGM-148 Javelin missile system team kept them at bay, destroying two armored vehicles.

The Javelin team was deemed killed by the exercise umpires, designated officials used to determine the outcome of skirmishes if the MILES gear becomes unreliable.

Under the cover of smoke, the Australian forces pushed through



Photos by Cpl. Jonathan Wright

Marines with G Company, 1st Marine Regiment, assigned to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, engage the enemy Australians from inside a building during Exercise Hamel in Queensland, Australia, on July 5.

simulated artillery and stopped behind buildings across from the town. Three fire teams of Marines kept the soldiers pinned down, but were eventually cleared by the superior firepower.

Free to move by vehicle, the Australian soldiers pushed into the buildings, exchanging fire with the Marines in their own fortified buildings.

Cpl. Justin Wilson, a team leader, said approximately 40 soldiers moved into the building and were held off, but it was only a matter of time before they moved into the town.

With the Australians held in the buildings across the road, the rest of the forces began to move forward. Six more vehicles unloaded their 12 passengers into the waiting M240-G machine gun fire.

"So far, we've killed a little more than a platoon's worth of troops with a loss of eight Marines," said Staff Sgt. Bryan Robbins, platoon sergeant for 3rd Platoon. "They haven't made it into buildings we occupy yet, just ones on the outskirts of the town. We're only four

hours in, though."

For the next two hours, the battlefield was quiet.

The Australians were stalled by the aggressive defense and took time to plan a push past the outer buildings to the inner core. The Marines kept a watchful eye on the enemy locations and used the time to count ammunition and take in some food and water.

Shortly after noon, the vehicles that dispatched Australian soldiers fell back after discovering the mine fields that surrounded the town. The armored element swung around to the opposite side of the town to provide covering fire for the advancing soldiers.

The Marines still kept the advance at a standstill.

"We've been fighting for nearly seven hours now, and we've been doing a good job keeping them back as the smaller force," said Lance Cpl. Erik Brasile, fire team leader with 3rd Platoon. "We've accomplished our overall mission by holding them off until [July 3], which was two days ago, and now we're going to delay their taking the town as long as possible."

To do this, the Marines fortified each building by lining the alleyways with concertina wire, barring the insides of the doors, wiring and taping the windows, and running more wire inside the lower floors of the buildings. They also used guerrilla-style defenses such as trip wire smoke grenade traps.

Passing the mine fields that surrounded the town, the Australians maneuvered a tank to provide an overwatch of the roofs. Marines took on several casualties from the tank, but the majority moved inside, which caused the tank to cease fire because of possible

civilian casualties.

Confined to the indoors, Moyer was unable to call in further artillery strikes but continued to coordinate where to focus fire.

"From here on out, we have to be reactive to the Australian soldiers," he said. "It's the Raspberry Creek Alamo now."

Impatience now coursed through the enemy. After more than six hours of fighting and two hours of a stalemate, the remaining Marines itched for more action, but were conscious of how the passing of time could work in their favor.

"They think fighting 50 Marines during the day was bad," said Robbins. "Wait until they have to fight 18 during the night."

Over the next few hours, intermittent firefights and minor Australian advances wore away at the Marines' numbers, but the Australians suffered a much higher casualty rate. At the 11-hour mark, 12 Marines remained, prepared to fight to the very end.

Moyer, Robbins and four other Marines suppressed the Australians on the roofs and second stories of the surrounding buildings. Two additional fire teams remained in the town — one moving around to draw fire away from Moyer's team, while the other set up defenses in an adjacent building.

Darkness descended upon the town. The Australian soldiers donned night vision goggles and made their advances.

However, the Marine fire team, cloaked by darkness, proved much deadlier than estimated.

A team of soldiers broke through the first-floor barricades of the reinforced building.

Moyer, the three-war veteran Robbins, three Marines and two machine guns facing the stairs

were all that stood in the soldiers' way. With suppressive fire, the Marines held their position for an additional 20 minutes, eventually being overrun. Two of the Marines were deemed wounded in action and taken as prisoners of war.

"We fought to the last and held them off as long as possible," said Cpl. Fritz Waechtler, machine gun team leader with Weapons Platoon. "It was only a matter of time, but I think we did a lot better than the Australians expected."

The Aussies eventually made their way to the building where the final three Marines remained. They cut down a number of soldiers before being eliminated.

Later, the Marine "casualties" assembled in one location as the Australians cleared all remaining areas of explosive devices.

While Exercise Hamel tested the operational capabilities of the Australian 1st Brigade, the Marines gained valuable lessons.

"There was a lot of exceptional small-unit leadership shown during the day from the top right down to the fire team leaders," said Moyer. "Every training opportunity is treated as a real scenario to build upon those skill sets. Overall, they've done an outstanding job."

With the main operation of Exercise Hamel completed, a final assault on the Marine/Australian contingency headquarters remains, after which the multiweek war draws to a close.

"I've been in for nine years and all I know is Iraq and Afghanistan," said Robbins. "To be attached to the 31st MEU and train with new foreign militaries is a great experience. We've definitely learned a lot from this deployment to Australia."



Cpl. Justin Wilson, team leader with Weapons Platoon, checks an alleyway for enemy movement during the siege of Raspberry Creek on July 5.



Lance Cpl. Erik Brasile, fire team leader with 3rd Platoon, fires a round from his M203 grenade launcher during the siege of Raspberry Creek on July 5.

MCRD PARRIS ISLAND EXPANDED FAMILY DAY SCHEDULE

MCRD Parris Island has expanded the events and activities available to families who are coming aboard the Depot to see their son or daughter graduate and become a Marine. The adjacent schedule outlines the events that are now offered to our new Marines' families and loved ones. The times and locations of these events are subject to change. For the most current information, please visit <http://www.mccs-sc.com/recruitfamilies>.



Wednesday

Welcome to Family Orientation Day at Parris Island

- 6AM-10PM Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) Open
- 6AM-6PM Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) Food Court Open
- 7AM-5PM Engraving Shop open
- 7:30AM-4PM Douglas Visitors' Center open - please register upon arrival
Java Café (9AM-11:30AM)
Graduation Station (8AM-4PM)
- 9AM-4PM Family Check-in at the Douglas Visitors' Center; Java Café open 9AM-12PM
- 10AM-12:30PM Marine Corps 101, including a "Behind the Scenes" tour, at Douglas Visitors' Center
- LUNCH Traditions (Officer/SNCO Club), Food Court, Subway, Golf Course, Back Yard Burgers
- 1:30PM-3:30PM Family Orientation Brief at the Lyceum
- 5PM-8PM Steak Night at Traditions (Officer/SNCO Club).
Reservations required

Thursday

Welcome to Family Liberty Day at Parris Island

- 6AM-4PM Douglas Visitors' Center open - please register upon arrival
Java Café (6AM-2PM)
Graduation Station (6AM-4PM)
- 6AM-10PM Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) Open
- 6AM-6PM Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) Food Court Open
- 7AM-5PM Engraving Shop open
- 7AM Motivational Run - Peatross Parade Deck
- 8AM Depot Museum Opens
- 8:15AM All Weather Training Facility (AWTF) Opens
- 9:30AM-10AM Battalion Commander's Brief to Families & Liberty Ceremony (AWTF)
- 10AM-2PM Marksmanship Training Unit Open House
- 10AM Liberty Begins
- 10:30AM-1PM Family Day Buffet at the Lyceum - new Marines eat for free!
- 2PM Warrior's Prayer at the Recruit Chapel
- 3PM Liberty Ends
- 3PM-4PM Marine Corps 101 at Douglas Visitors' Center
- 5PM Meet & Greet with Depot Command at Traditions Lounge
- 5:30PM Welcome from the Command
- 5:45PM Family Day Dinner with Depot Command at Traditions (Officer/SNCO Club)
Advance reservations guarantee admittance

Friday

Welcome to Graduation Day at Parris Island

- 6AM-2PM Douglas Visitors' Center open
Java Café (6AM-12PM)
Graduation Station (6AM-12PM)
- 6AM-10PM Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) Open
- 6AM-6PM Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) Food Court Open
- 7AM-5PM Engraving Shop open
- 7:45AM Morning Colors at Barrow Hall
- 9AM-10AM Graduation at Peatross Parade Deck (weather permitting)
- 11AM-1PM Lunch Buffet at Traditions (Officer/SNCO Club)

