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Marines of Truck Company Alpha, Headquarters Battalion, simulate exiting from the top of a humvee rolled over sideways during a High-Mobility, Multipurpose, Wheeled Vehicle Egress Assistance Trainer course at the 1st Marine Division Licensing training compound Feb. 24. HEAT training is designed to simulate Humvee rollovers caused by IED attacks.

Truck Company Alpha Marines feel the HEAT

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Alfred Lopez

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – “ROLL! ROLL! ROLL!” – That was the only warning four Marines receive to brace themselves for the disorienting turbulence. Smoke whisked inside the vehicle, and the feeling of nausea grew each time the vehicle tumbled. Within seconds, the heat was over, and without hesitation, the Marines quickly communicated and set security around the simulator.

Marines of Truck Company Alpha, Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division, participated in the High-Mobility, Multi-purpose, Wheeled Vehicle Egress Assistance Trainer, at the 1st Marine Division Licensing training compound Feb. 24.

The inside of HEAT is designed like a four-passenger Humvee. The machine simulates

rollovers by rotating to the left or right. Two trainers control the direction and speed of the machine, and can stop either upside-down or sideways, allowing trainers to simulate numerous scenarios.

“The purpose of the HEAT training is to familiarize the Marines with vehicle rollovers,” said Sgt. Adrian Salas, HEAT trainer of Truck Company A. “We give them different scenarios and the ideal response for each different one.”

Scenarios ranging from a flipped Humvee with one exit-point, to a simulated, improvised, explosive-device attack with multiple casualties are simulated during HEAT. The simulations are designed to give Marines an idea of the different scenarios that occur frequently during deployments.

“Quick response and communication are important, because it’s a group effort,” said Sgt.

John Hogan, a section leader of Truck Company A. “You have to be able to communicate with the Marines in the vehicle so when the rollover is done, they know who’s doing the security and evacuating the casualty.”

Marines have to be ready to provide immediate cover fire against an ambush and quickly care for any casualties.

“We also went through combat lifesaver steps to make sure the Marines know proper procedures of casualty response,” Hogan said. Marines refreshed their combat lifesaver skills, reiterating skills like applying a tourniquet and treating shock.

“It’s important to be able to simulate these scenarios so once Marines get to a combat environment, it’s all muscle memory,” Hogan said.



Cpl. Daniel Pizzaro and Cpl. Chris Lopez, motor transportation operators with Charlie Company, 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, perform a maintenance check on a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All-Terrain Vehicle engine at the Division Licensing compound, Feb. 25. The 13-day course familiarizes Marines with the MRAP, M-ATV and Mine Roller System and requires them to drive 251 miles of day, night, off-base, off-road, towed load and blackout driving in order to receive their tactical vehicle licenses.

Marines hit the road to earn tactical vehicle license

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Alfred J. Lopez

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Marines from various 1st Marine Division units began training for their Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle, MRAP All-Terrain vehicle and Mine Roller System licenses at the Division Licensing compound, Feb. 25-26.

The training is designed to familiarize Marines with the basic attributes and operation of the MRAP, M-ATV and Mine Roller system. The MRAP is the Marine Corps' current troop-carrying vehicle that provides mine protection and heavy bulletproofing, while maintaining highway and off-road maneuverability. M-ATV's are engineered from the Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement platform, designed to minimize operator and maintenance training, and also offer off-road capabilities. Mine rollers are the Marine Corps' latest addition to its repertoire of technology made to counter improvised explosive devices.

"Trainees learn the fundamental functions of the vehicles first," said Cpl. Adrian Alcorta,

an assistant instructor team leader with division licensing. "It's very important for them to learn the dimensions, capacities and the limits of the vehicle."

Marines are required to drive 251 miles of day, night, off-base, off-road, towed load and blackout driving in order to receive their licenses, Alcorta said.

Trainees began the 13-day licensing program with classroom instruction, which helped familiarize them with the basic statistics of each vehicle, such as dimensions, towing capability and safety precautions. Marines then received hands-on training on the vehicles' different functions and vehicle maintenance.

"The hardest part of the course is the driving," said Alcorta from San Antonio. "Knowing the dimensions is easy, but if you can't drive it, then that knowledge is useless."

The second day of training began with the Marines being split in two groups: one group driving MRAPs, and one group using the Operator Driver Simulator. The ODS, which resembles a video game, is used to log about 50 miles of the training, but cannot be used as a

substitute to driving the real vehicle.

"The ODS is a very helpful tool for inexperienced drivers to familiarize themselves with driving scenarios, before actually getting on the road," said Cpl. Chris Lopez, a motor transportation operator with Charlie Company, 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion.

What seems like endless days of driving still lie ahead for these Marines, but with each mile they pass, they become more familiar with the operation of the respective vehicles. Instructors will continue to evaluate the driver's turning, braking and parking skills, and most importantly, their confidence on the road.

"It's a lot of training on basic techniques," said Lance Cpl. Alex Rosado, an amphibious assault vehicle crewman with Charlie Company, 3rd AABn. "These trucks are only as good as the drivers behind the wheel. The best thing about this course is the patience the instructors have and the legitimate criticisms they offer us."

Most of the Marines currently involved in the course are undergoing the training in preparation for deployments with a Marine expeditionary unit or to Afghanistan.



Engineers provide security for road improvements

Story and photos by Cpl. John McCall

SANGIN, Afghanistan – Marines with Route Clearance Platoon 3, Mobility Assault Company, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, were focused on freedom of mobility while they provided security on Route 611 Feb. 25-March 3.

The 8th Engineer Support Battalion is responsible for conducting major road construction along 611. Improving the roadway is an ongoing process that will eventually replace the poorly maintained dirt roads with pavement. The route has been notorious for improvised explosive devices and enemy activity that disrupt vehicle convoys regularly.

Marines with RCP-3 cleared the road as well as spots that have been plagued by IEDs, such as culverts and ditches. After nightfall they set up a perimeter along 611 to ensure enemy fighters did not emplace any IEDs.

“What we do is essential to other units so they can do their job,” said Staff Sgt. Vince Mabalot, a 28-year-old platoon guide from Stockton, Calif.

Route clearance Marines are on the road



SANGIN, Afghanistan – Petty Officer 3rd Class Ryan King, 22, a corpsman from Ventura, Calif., asks an Afghan man about the symptoms that his sick child is suffering from, March 3, 2011. Marines with Route Clearance Platoon 3, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, provided security along Route 611 due to regular enemy activity.



SANGIN, Helmand province, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan – Marines with 8th Engineer Support Battalion repair a culvert along Route 611, March 3, 2011. Enemy forces use Culverts and ditches along the road to emplace improvised explosive devices. Route Clearance Platoon 3, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, cleared the culvert insuring it was free of IEDs before construction began.

for weeks at a time, ensuring the roadways of southern Afghanistan are safe for not only coalition forces but local residents as well.

“The missions are long and it can be tiring, but that is the nature of the beast,” said Cpl. Ryan Gliddon, a 24-year-old combat engineer from Santa Rosa, Calif.

With one deployment to Afghanistan under his belt, Gliddon has been in vehicles that hit IEDs on more than one occasion.

“Being on the receiving end of a blast showed me the importance of what we do,” Gliddon explained.

While holding 611, Marines responded to several IED incidents that occurred on the road. Even with all of the danger that revolves around their usual routine, Marines learn to deal with it.

“When you first expose the pressure plate or jug you feel a rush of excitement, but you have to stay focused and continue working,” Mabalot said. “After you’ve seen so many, you just get used to it.”

Third platoon continues to provide route clearance support to other units throughout Helmand province, clearing the way for friendly forces and protecting local residents from IEDs.

3/1 Marine, sailor awarded Silver Star

Photos and story by Cpl. Paul Basciano

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — Friends, family and the Marines and sailors of 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment gathered at the Camp Horno training area of Camp Pendleton to attend the award ceremony of two of the battalion's members, March 4.

Cpl. Larry D. Harris, a mortar man and Petty Officer 3rd Class Peter A. Gould, a hospital corpsman, both with 3/1 were awarded the Silver Star, the nation's third highest decoration that can be awarded to a member of any branch of the U.S. Armed forces for valor in combat.

Harris, a native of Thornton, Colo., was decorated the Silver Star posthumously for conspicuous gallantry while in combat with the enemy. During a patrol in the Garmsir district of Afghanistan, Harris' squad took fire from enemy forces. As his squad maneuvered to attack the insurgents, they made contact with a group of about 40 enemy fighters.

To assist his teams movement to a covered position, Harris constantly exposed himself to the insurgents fire. When his squad's machine gunner was shot in the leg, Harris, without the thought of his own safety, dashed to the fallen Marine's position and moved him to a more secure location.

After it was determined that the wounded machine gunner needed to be evacuated, Harris unhesitatingly picked up the Marine and carried him to the evacuation site. While Harris was carrying the downed Marine he struck an improvised explosive device.

Although his wounds were ultimately fatal, he saved the life of the Marine he carried.

"[Harris] was the greatest kind of Marine and the best guy I could know," said Sgt. Ian Gilbert, a squad leader with 3/1. "He was a very focused and caring individual."

In the same firefight where Harris showed his devotion to duty and love for his fellow Ma-



Lt. Col. Fridrik Fridriksson, commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, gives praise to Petty Officer 3rd Class Peter A. Gould, a hospital corpsman with 3/1, who was awarded the Silver Star during an awards ceremony at Camp Pendleton's Horno training area, Feb. 4. Gould, 24, from Syracuse, Kan., received the award for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against enemy forces in Afghanistan on July 1, 2010. The Silver Star is the military's third-highest honor for combat valor.

rines, a sailor was also showing the corpsman's dedication to saving the lives of Marines.

Gould, a native of Syracuse, Kan., was in the same firefight as Harris, also showing conspicuous gallantry in action against the enemy.

After one of Gould's squad was shot, he rushed to the wounded Marine's position, braving effective enemy fire to move him to a more secure position and render aid.

With the order to move to another location to evacuate the casualty, he assisted transporting the wounded Marine, braving more enemy fire, until they struck an IED.

Surrounded in wounded Marines and bleeding from severe wounds to his face and neck, Gould directed a Marine to stop his bleed-

ing coming from his neck with direct pressure.

While still under fire and barely stabilized himself, he turned his attention to the downed Marines around him giving direction and applying aid where he could.

His actions and toughness under fire directly led to saving at least one Marine's life that day.

"[Gould] was always responsible and dedicated," said Joseph Gould, father of the decorated corpsman.

Harris' wife was on hand to receive the award and spoke to the Marines and families present to thank them before they concluded the ceremony.

Facebook "Caption This" contest winner

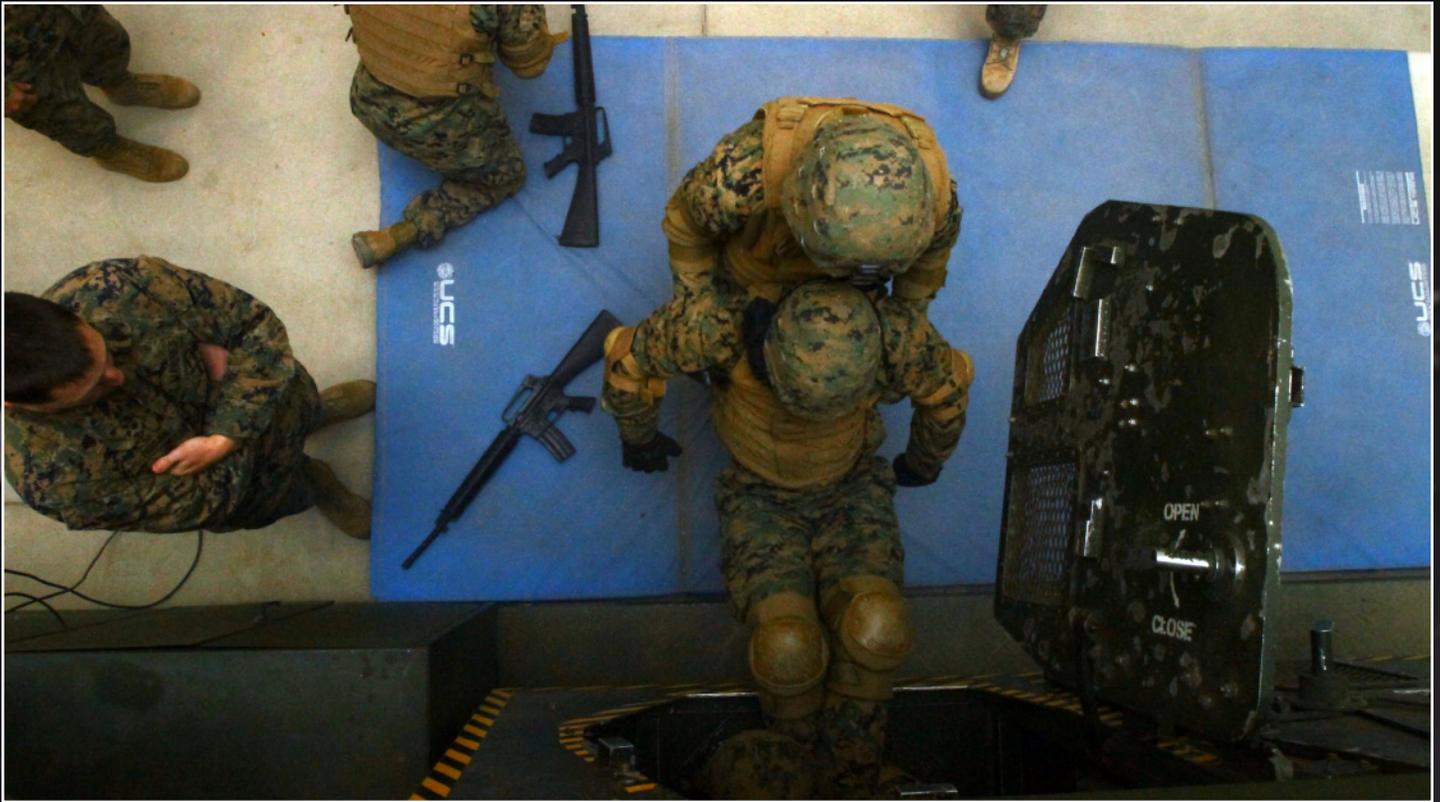
"I sure hope this is chicken"

- Anna M. Holyst-Sourile



Marines of Truck Alpha tempered in HEAT

Photos by Lance Cpl. Alfred Lopez



Marines of Truck Company Alpha, Headquarters Battalion, simulate providing security and rescuing a casualty of a Humvee rolled over by an improvised explosive device during a High-Mobility, Multipurpose, Wheeled Vehicle Egress Assistance Trainer course at the 1st Marine Division Licensing training compound in Feb. 24. HEAT training is designed to simulate humvee rollovers caused by IED attacks.



MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Marines of Truck Company Alpha, Headquarters Battalion, simulate rescuing a casualty through the turret opening of a Humvee rolled over by an improvised explosive device during a High-Mobility, Multipurpose, Wheeled Vehicle Egress Assistance Trainer course at the 1st Marine Division Licensing training compound Feb. 24. HEAT training is designed to simulate Humvee rollovers caused by IED attacks.



MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. –Marines of Truck Company Alpha, Headquarters Battalion, practice their combat lifesaver skills during a High-Mobility, Multipurpose, Wheeled Vehicle Egress Assistance Trainer course at 1st Marine Division Licensing training compound Feb. 24. HEAT training is designed to simulate Humvee rollovers caused by IED attacks.

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Marines of Truck Company Alpha, Headquarters Battalion, simulate providing security and rescuing a casualty of a humvee rolled over by an improvised explosive device during a High-Mobility, Multipurpose, Wheeled Vehicle Egress Assistance Trainer course at the 1st Marine Division Licensing training compound Feb. 24. HEAT training is designed to simulate humvee rollovers caused by IED attacks.



Marine awarded Bronze Star for combat heroism

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Alfred J. Lopez

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Staff Sgt. Ryan Stogner, a landing support specialist with the Adviser Training Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force, was awarded the Bronze Star with combat distinguishing device at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 25.

Stogner, a 30 year old from New Orleans, received the honor for his heroic service as a station team chief of the Police Advisor Team, Kajaki District Police, 1st Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, during a seven-month deployment to Helmand province, Afghanistan. Stogner, then a sergeant, played a pivotal role in the success of both his team and the Afghan Police he oversaw, demonstrating a great range of professional skill, tactical expertise and compassionate leadership, according to his summary of action.

“The threat level was very high where we were,” Stogner said. “My main mission was to bring home my Marines the same way they left the wire.”

Being third in command of a unique team of foreign advisors, Stogner was charged with dynamic and challenging missions that ranged from squad leadership, senior leadership mentor, chief instructor and tactical advisor. He carried a significant portion of the team’s mission on his shoulders, and exceeded in the performance of his duties, including those outside his formal training.

Stogner and his team work diligently to ensure that Afghan police under their charge were well versed in a wide array of tactical skills, enabling them to become an effective fighting force and improving their capability to work alongside with Marines. His time and experience as a police officer with the Los Angeles Police Department also proved vital in developing the Afghan Police focused and community-oriented policing skills.

“The LAPD made me a better leader,” said Stogner. “They made me a better communicator. You have to be able to take any situation



Staff Sgt. Ryan Stogner, a landing support specialist with Adviser Training Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force, is presented a Bronze Star with combat distinguishing device by Lt. Col. Adolfo Garcia, 1st Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment commanding officer, at the 43 Area football field, Feb. 25. Stogner, a 30-year-old from New Orleans, received the award for serving as a station team chief of the Police Advisor Team, Kajaki District Police, 1/11, during a seven-month deployment to Helmand province, Afghanistan. Stogner played a pivotal role in the success of both his team and the Afghan police he oversaw, demonstrating great range of professional skill, tactical expertise and compassionate leadership.

and be an active thinker.”

Stogner’s team engaged in more than 60 dismounted, partnered combat operations alongside the Afghan National Police in an area with no Afghan Army forces, and an extremely high Taliban presence. During one of the firefights, Stogner demonstrated calm and courageous leadership to rescue a Marine and repel enemy combatants during an enemy ambush.

“When I was lying on the ground, I looked up and the smoke cleared, I immediately saw my number-two man lying on the ground,” said Stogner. “The only thing I cared about was getting to him and making sure he was okay.”

While suffering from a concussion, Stogner ignored the pain and quickly began directing his team to provide security and rescue the casualty. His team began taking accurate machine-gun fire shortly after heading toward

the casualty collection point as they carried the casualty. Stogner quickly got his team out of danger and directed them to return suppressive fire. Only after all Marines and Afghan Police were back in friendly lines did Stogner seek medical attention.

“That was the first time I had to lead Marines in combat dismounted patrols,” said Stogner. “It was the first opportunity I’ve ever had to lead as a squad leader.”

The ceremony was attended by Stogner’s family, fellow police officers from the LAPD and by the Marines and sailors of 1/11.

“All of my experiences in the past 12 years in the Marine Corps and as a police officer came together and allowed me to be a good leader for my guys and helped us accomplish the mission,” said Stogner.

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Facebook page for 1st Marine Division. The page includes a profile picture, name, and location (Camp Pendleton, CA). There are several posts with photos and text, including one from 3/1/11 about a Marine getting a letter and another from 3/1/11 about a Marine's letter to Congress. A large blue Facebook 'f' logo is overlaid on the bottom right of the screenshot.

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Twitter page for 1st Marine Division. The page includes a profile picture, name, and location (Camp Pendleton, CA). There are several tweets with photos and text, including one about a Marine's letter to Congress and another about a Marine's letter to Congress. A large blue Twitter 't' logo is overlaid on the bottom right of the screenshot.

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