

THE PARRIS ISLAND BOOT



Firefighters practice water rescue exercises, Page 5



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HOTEL TAKES A BREATHER AT THE GAS CHAMBER



Cpl. J Nava
Staff Writer

The recruits of Hotel Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, fought through the effects of CS gas June 7 at the gas chamber in order to get one step closer to earning the title of Marine.

The training is designed to familiarize the recruits with their M40 Field Protective Masks and to give them a chance to employ the mask in a controlled environment, said Staff Sgt. Anthony Epperson, lead instructor for the June 7 gas chamber exercise.

The recruits filed into the gas chamber by platoon after a period of instruction on how to use their masks. Many of them had a hint of what lay in store for them when they saw the first group of recruits run out of the chamber with mucus- and tear-covered faces.

"[I] was very nervous before [I] stepped in," said Rct. Aquino Spann, guide for Platoon 2056, Hotel Company. "The instructors had told [us] stories about the chamber to intimidate us, but [I] believe the platoon made it through pretty successfully."

As soon as they stepped in the chamber, the recruits formed a school circle around the lead instructor. He shouted his muffled safety brief and initial commands from under the cover of the black, bug-eyed mask.

The recruits conducted several exercises such as side-straddle hops, running in place

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Recruits from Hotel Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, take off their M40 Field Protective Masks after exiting the gas chamber June 7. The recruits had to battle CS gas, also known as chlorobenzylidene-malononitrile, for several minutes as they broke the seals of their masks times while inside the chamber.

BRAVO SIGHTS IN WITH RCOS FOR FIRST TIME



Rct. Donald Mouton, from Platoon 2066, Bravo Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, practices aiming through his Rifle Combat Optic the week before qualification, also known as grass week, Tuesday. Next week will be the first time recruits will engage targets using the RCOs that replaced the iron sights on the M16-A4 as a test to see if qualification scores improve.

Cpl. Sarah Fiocco

Foreign soldiers attend DI School

Lance Cpl. Javarre Glanton
Staff Writer

The Parris Island Drill Instructor School occasionally trains service members from different countries' militaries.

In the current drill instructor school class 4-11, there are two soldiers from Czech Republic and one from the Republic of Suriname.

The three service members, who proved themselves among the most effective in their units, were granted the opportunity to train with the United States Marines.

"We've learned U.S. Marines are like family," said Staff Sgt. Martin Uvizl, an infantry school leader from the Czech Republic. "Since we're



Lance Cpl. Javarre Glanton

Gunnery Sgt. Charles Maddox (left), a Drill Instructor School squad instructor, explains how to properly form troops for formation to Sgt. 1st Class Shiam Manniesingh during drill practice July 21 aboard the depot. Manniesingh, of the Republic of Suriname, is one of three foreign students in DI School class 4-11.

foreign, we don't understand the language too well, but the Marines have been helping us out a lot with that."

The language barrier is only one of the challenges

they face in the environment of rigorous training at DI School.

"The physical training here in America is very

SEE DI PAGE 5

This week in Parris Island history

On Aug. 3, 1962, Marines and sailors who fought in the Battle of Guadalcanal were honored aboard the depot. A ceremony was held in recognition of the 20th anniversary of the World War II battle, which cost the lives of 1,500 Marines, as well as the lives of 23,800 Japanese soldiers.

NEWS BRIEFS

Notice to Mariners

Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island will conduct extended live-fire training Wednesday 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. The marsh and waterways in the range impact area, to include Archers Creek, Ribbon Creek and Edding Creek, will be closed to boater traffic.

For questions regarding firing times and waterway closures, please contact the Weapons and Field Training Battalion Range Control at 228-3170.

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HOTEL AND PAPA COMPANIES GRADUATE

Hotel Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion honor graduates

Pfc. A. R. Spann, Summerville, S.C.
Platoon 2056, Spann was trained by Staff Sgt. R. S. Parkes, and he was recruited by Sgt. C. Jennings

Pfc. D. J. Arterburn, Pearl River, N.Y.
Platoon 2058, Arterburn was trained by Staff Sgt. D. Rodriguez, and he was recruited by Sgt. M. Ferguson

Pfc. A. M. Gwynn, Chesapeake Beach, Md.
Platoon 2061, Gwynn was trained by Sgt. A. M. Gamber, and he was recruited by Master Sgt. C. Mattis

Pfc. Y. Coppin, Newport News, Va.
Platoon 2057, Coppin was trained by Staff Sgt. J. A. Kerby, and he was recruited by Sgt. B. Suiy

Pfc. J. W. Edwards, Mobile, Ala.
Platoon 2060, Edwards was trained by Staff Sgt. D. M. McGurrin, and he was recruited by Staff Sgt. O. Quinones

Pfc. W. O. Bing, Clifton Park, N.Y.
Platoon 2062, Bing was trained by Staff Sgt. M. T. Spera, and he was recruited by Sgt. C. Amaro

Papa Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion honor graduates

Pfc. J. E. Glass, Port Washington, Ohio
Platoon 4022, Glass was trained by Staff Sgt. Y. O. Ramos, and she was recruited by Staff Sgt. S. Gagnon

Pfc. A. L. Rouillard, Fort Collins, Colo.
Platoon 4023, Rouillard was trained by Sgt. C. I. Melendez, and she was recruited by Sgt. J. Adams

Platoon 2056 Platoon 2057 Platoon 2058 Platoon 2060 Platoon 2061 Platoon 2062 Platoon 4022 Platoon 4023

Pfc. M. A. Bennett	Pvt. C. M. Barrett	Pfc. D. J. Arterburn	Pvt. L. Accime Jr.	Pfc. C. Bell	Pfc. R. A. Allstaedt	Pvt. M. G. Benson	Pvt. D. M. Alonzia
Pvt. J. D. Brewington	Pvt. L. T. Beverly	Pfc. B. R. Ayerdis	Pfc. J. V. Andrade Jr.	Pfc. P. Bienaime	Pvt. R. E. Artsma Jr.	Pvt. B. L. Boyer	Pvt. J. Alvarez
Pvt. K. L. Buerger	Pvt. T. C. Beyerberner	Pfc. D. J. Cafarelli	Pfc. M. G. Artin	Pvt. T. J. Bothwell	Pfc. J. D. Barnes	Pvt. M. O. Bryant	Pvt. K. Anguiano
Pvt. B. S. Bufton	Pfc. N. J. Bidlack	Pfc. T. M. Caldwell	Pfc. C. R. Bankston	Pvt. J. C. Bramwell	Pfc. R. W. Bechaud	Pfc. K. M. Capra	Pvt. S. E. Boyden
Pvt. C. P. Bunting	Pvt. R. W. Biel	Pfc. M. Causerano II	Pfc. B. A. Bostwick III	Pfc. J. A. Brennan	Pfc. L. Beckford	Pfc. G. Cardona	Pfc. A. Chuong
Pvt. M. G. Cattaruzza	Pfc. T. A. Bloom II	Pfc. D. F. Colligan	Pvt. BracheHenriquez	Pfc. D. T. Brown	Pvt. E. S. Bell	Pvt. DenlingerPenney	Pfc. C. M. Dahn
Pvt. T. V. Cheadle	Pvt. D. A. Case	Pvt. E. A. Conboy	Pfc. J. L. Burnes	Pvt. J. E. Byrd	Pfc. W. O. Bing Jr.	Pvt. S. R. Dixon	Pvt. M. Fernandez
Pvt. A. R. Clark	Pfc. M. J. Comilloni	Pfc. P. L. Filipowicz	Pfc. H. K. Cao	Pvt. M. J. Campbell	Pfc. J. D. Bone Jr.	Pfc. E. Ferdinand	Pvt. J. C. Garcia
Pvt. C. P. Cook	Pfc. Y. Coppin	Pfc. M. A. Gagnon	Pvt. J. C. Carter Jr.	Pvt. A. ColemanReyes	Pvt. R. A. Calaf	Pvt. C. A. Finney	Pfc. B. S. Giddens
Pvt. C. R. Crum	Pfc. J. A. Dalane	Pvt. J. L. Golden	Pfc. V. A. Castillo	Pvt. L. A. Colindres	Pvt. B. J. Decormier	Pvt. D. J. Finney	Pvt. C. M. Goble
Pfc. S. A. Curfman	Pvt. B. L. Davies	Pfc. G. K. Hamil Jr.	Pvt. Z. B. Chesser	Pfc. B. D. Dougherty	Pvt. Z. E. Dempsey	Pfc. T. K. Forehand	Pvt. C. J. Guyton
Pvt. D. W. Davis	Pvt. N. A. Dixon	Pvt. G. S. Harvey	Pvt. D. Cortez	Pfc. A. M. Gwynn	Pfc. J. P. Diaz Jr.	Pvt. M. A. Friemoth	Pfc. R. S. Hall
Pfc. N. E. Dickman	Pvt. C. A. Dover	Pvt. N. J. Harvey	Pvt. A. D. Cross	Pvt. K. C. Hawley	Pvt. J. J. Dwyer	Pfc. J. E. Glass	Pfc. K. M. Harvey
Pfc. T. Q. Eason	Pfc. J. D. Eddy	Pvt. J. E. Hurtiz	Pfc. J. W. Edwards	Pfc. HernandezBaltazar	Pfc. A. Ellis	Pfc. H. E. Good	Pvt. A. L. Hinant
Pfc. A. R. Forest	Pvt. J. Fotheringham	Pvt. B. R. Ikenberry	Pvt. T. A. Flewallen	Pvt. G. C. Hobbs	Pvt. D. F. Eloi	Pvt. S. E. Granby	Pfc. C. M. Hogan
Pvt. S. N. Halfacre	Pvt. J. M. Furdock	Pvt. C. D. Lewis	Pvt. J. C. Flowers	Pvt. J. HowdeyShell	Pfc. J. L. Fernandez	Pvt. R. M. Hegg	Pvt. KarakeosianCastaneda
Pvt. M. V. Hall II	Pvt. J. M. Garlock	Pfc. I. Q. Manning	Pvt. K. J. Griffiths	Pvt. D. A. Howell	Pvt. R. J. Fisher Jr.	Pvt. A. J. Heikes	Pvt. D. M. Lamelin
Pvt. T. W. Henry	Pvt. R. D. Gaudreau	Pfc. B. O. McCulloch	Pfc. J. A. Hatfield Jr.	Pvt. S. M. Joo	Pvt. G. Gallego	Pfc. L. Hernandez	Pvt. D. Martinez
Pfc. P. A. Hoffman	Pfc. O. S. Goodrich	Pvt. MendiolaSalazar	Pvt. B. K. Hawks	Pvt. J. G. Kuruc	Pvt. Z. M. Gardner	Pfc. S. B. Hildebrand	Pfc. K. R. McAlister
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Pfc. J. L. McGinnis	Pfc. M. A. Marin	Pvt. M. M. McGrath	Pvt. K. R. Martin	Pvt. R. M. Nast	Pvt. J. W. Johnson III	Pvt. J. C. Newman	Pvt. M. V. Paredes
Pfc. R. C. Miles Jr.	Pfc. D. J. McCallister	Pvt. J. D. Mink	Pvt. D. M. Mattina	Pfc. M. J. Nejad	Pfc. B. M. Kell	Pfc. D. I. Oquendo	Pfc. I. Pasillas
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'Don't ask, don't tell' certified by Obama

Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Based on recommendations from military leaders, President Barack Obama certified to Congress Friday that the U.S. armed forces are prepared for repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law.

The law will officially come off the books Sept. 20, due to a 60-day waiting period before the repeal goes into effect. After that date, gay service members can be open about their sexual orientation.

Congress passed the repeal law in December 2010. The legislation gave the military time to prepare the force and said repeal would happen only after the president, the defense secretary and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff certified the force as ready for repeal.

The three men certified to Congress that repeal can be accomplished with no effect on military readiness, military effectiveness, unit cohesion, and recruiting and retention, said Clifford L. Stanley, un-

dersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness and former Marine Corps major general.

The repeal law also mandated that service members receive training on the effects of repeal. To date, more than 1.9 million active and reserve-component service members have received the training, and it will continue through September, said Stanley, who chaired the Pentagon's repeal implementation effort.

"Throughout this process, we have regularly engaged the services and combatant commands," Stanley said. "Feedback was consistently positive. Training was being well-received, and there were no issues or barriers arising."

Stanley stressed that for the military, this change "is all about leadership, professionalism discipline and respect."

"It remains a policy of the Department of Defense that sexual orientation is a personal and private matter and to treat all members with dignity and respect, and to ensure maintenance of good order and discipline," he said. "There will be zero tolerance

for harassment, violence or discrimination of any kind."

Since passage of the repeal act, military personnel have worked to prepare the necessary policies and regulations to implement repeal and to train service members, said Maj. Gen. Steven A. Hummer, chief of staff for the repeal implementation team.

"This thoughtful and steady approach to educating and preparing the force and revising policies and regulations has laid the groundwork for a smooth and orderly transition," Hummer said.

Defense Department personnel also identified regulations and policies that have to be revised to make them neutral with respect to sexual orientation. However, the majority of Department of Defense and service-led policies and regulations remain the same, "as they are already sexual orientation-neutral," said Hummer.

Repeal means changes to accessions, separations and re-accessions.

"Upon repeal, statements about sexual orientation will no longer be a bar to military

"It remains a policy of the Department of Defense that sexual orientation is a personal and private matter and to treat all members with dignity and respect, and to ensure maintenance of good order and discipline. There will be zero tolerance for harassment, violence or discrimination of any kind."

Clifford L. Stanley,
Under-secretary of defense
for personnel and readiness

service," Hummer said. "Upon repeal, former service members solely discharged under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" may re-apply for re-entry."

Living quarters will remain as they are today, and commanders cannot physically segregate members by sexual orientation. Gay service members will be subject to worldwide deployment.

During the next 60 days, Pentagon officials will examine benefits. Right now, eligibility for military benefits will re-

main the same, Hummer said. Service members may designate partners as beneficiaries for life insurance, the thrift savings plan and survivor benefits, he added.

"The Defense of Marriage Act and existing definition of 'dependent' in some laws prohibit extension of many military benefits to same-sex couples," Hummer said. "Those examples are health care, housing allowance, transportation allowance, etc. The department will con-

tinue to study existing benefits to determine those, if any, that should be reviewed based on policy, fiscal, legal and feasibility considerations to give the service member the discretion to designate persons of their own choosing as beneficiaries."

The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law went into effect in 1993. It allowed gay and lesbian personnel to serve in the military as long as they were not open about their sexual orientation.

DEPOT MASCOT PROMOTED



Lance Cpl. Erin Ross

Sgt. Archibald Hummer, the mascot for Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, shakes hands with Col. Brian T. Palmer, commanding officer, Headquarters and Service Battalion, after receiving his meritorious promotion to the rank of sergeant July 22 at the public affairs office.

Hummer achieved the distinction of becoming one of the only depot mascots in history to earn the rank. This milestone in his career came after he earned his gray belt in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program, lost 20 percent of his body mass over two years, earned a good conduct medal and made enormous contributions to public relations aboard the depot. Hummer has served in his meritorious assignment as mascot since early 2006 - more than 35 dog years. Now that he is a sergeant, Hummer plans to lead his Marines in daily tug-of-war physical training sessions to develop their core strength, and continue his volunteer efforts in the community.

Chaplain's Corner

Time in the simulator

Navy Lt. Stephen Cloer
WFTBn. Chaplain

As recruits are trained aboard Parris Island on how to fire their rifles, there is a precise series of training events that prepares them for qualification day — the day when they send actual rounds down range toward a target for score. Part of this process is the opportunity to practice firing in the Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer. This state-of-the-art trainer is really a room-size video game where the rifles are the controllers, and the targets are on a video screen just a few feet away. Recruits use a special rifle outfitted with some of the newest technology to allow them to shoot at the screen and see how well they implement the techniques they are learning. This specially outfitted rifle will even give recruits recoil when they shoot in order to feel as authentic as possible, as well as data feedback via the computer to inform the shooter what he or she is doing wrong.

This amazing simulation trainer makes teaching shooting techniques a much smoother process. However, as good as it is, it is not the real thing. Unfortunately, the best electronics in the world cannot fully simulate being outside in the wind, rain, sun and heat while trying to focus and fire on a tar-

get. One has to get out there and actually do it in order to fully put skills to the test. After spending a week aiming at targets, learning body positions, and shooting in the simulator, recruits spend a full week firing on real targets with real bullets, to bring all of their training together. At the end of the second week, it is time to shoot for score.

Time in a simulator is a good thing. It teaches the skills required for experiencing the real world. As a chaplain, let me ask you to consider a few simulators you may want to engage in to build skills for the real world. They include marriage enrichment classes and retreats, personal growth retreats and spiritual retreats. On Parris Island we have many to offer. Just contact your local chaplain, family readiness officer and Marine Corps Family Team Building to sign up for an upcoming event. Take a look at the MCCA website and the "Happenings" publication for every event offered in August. One such event is the Five Love Languages marriage weekend workshop, Aug. 26-27.

We also have retreats available at St. Simmons Island, Ga. It is in the context of these "life simulators" where you can learn new skills and insights to implement on the range of real life and achieve greater levels of success in your relationships.



Photos by Cpl. J Nava

A recruit from Hotel Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, rushes out of the the gas chamber after completing his training inside June 7. The training familiarized the recruits with their M40 Field Protective Masks.

GAS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and shaking their heads vigorously from left to right to prove the reliability of the seal between the mask and the recruits' faces.

The most dreaded command of all came next. The instructor ordered the recruits to poke two fingers through each side of their mask, touching the inside of the glass. They were to hold them there until the instructor had gone around and checked each recruit's mask and instructed them to remove their fingers simultaneously.

Just beforehand the recruits were instructed to shut their eyes, take a deep breath and hold it as long as they could.

"As soon as the gas entered [my] mask and [I] breathed it in, it felt like needles were poking into [my] lungs," said Rct. Yusuf Coppin, guide for Platoon 2057, Hotel Company. "[My] skin still feels like it's burning from the gas," he said several minutes after the training event.

As soon as they received the command to remove their fingers, the room filled with the buzz of heavy coughing and the gurgling noise, akin to flatulence, that comes with clearing gas out of the mask. It proved to the instructors that the re-

cruits had successfully learned to clear the masks.

When the training was complete the instructors opened the exit door, letting in the light from outside, which was probably the most welcomed sight the recruits had seen all day.

"[I] believe the training will help [us] to be able to keep [our] minds calm during moments of stress," Coppin said. "[I'm] proud that all of [us] made it through together."

The recruits filed out, and walked in a circle in a nearby patch of grass. When they received the command to shed their M40 Field Protective Masks, snot and spit clung from their faces. A few tried to wipe their faces clean with contaminated hands but soon realized what a mistake that was. The recruits then walked over to buckets filled with cleaning agents to decontaminate their masks.

"All the training here is to familiarize the recruits with their gear," Epperson said. "Whether it's rappelling, gas chamber or the range, the training is designed to help the recruits build trust in their gear."

They put away their masks and formed up by platoon, then marched away their next portion of training – a step closer to leaving the island for good, their minds forever clinging to the far away notion of graduation.



Recruits from Hotel Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, wait in line for the gas chamber June 7. The training was designed to familiarize the recruits with their equipment and to give them a chance to employ the masks in a controlled environment.



Recruits from Hotel Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, hold their M40 Field Protective Masks right before they head into the gas chamber June 7. The recruits were in their fifth week of training and will graduate Friday.



Recruits from Hotel Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, wash out their M40 Field Protective Masks after exiting the gas chamber June 7. The recruits entered the chamber and performed several exercises to gain confidence in the gear.



Recruits from Hotel Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, scramble to get their M40 Field Protective Masks in and out of a water bucket after exiting the gas chamber June 7.

Firefighters conduct marsh rescue training

Cpl. Isaac Lamberth
Staff Writer

Firefighters from the Parris Island Fire and Rescue department practiced water rescues in depot marshes July 22.

Firefighters went to the picnic areas on Horse Island to refresh their skills at retrieving individuals stuck in the marsh mud surrounding the depot as part of a monthly training event.

"People just don't realize how dangerous it is to get stuck in the pluff mud around here," said fire Capt. Shelly Gonzales, exercise safety officer.

Gonzales said the pluff mud around Parris Island will cause a person to sink into it. The more a person struggles, the more likely they are to sink deeper into the mud, similar to quicksand.

The exercise put firefighters in a situation to rescue a young woman who had gone out to the

marshes to retrieve a ball while playing with friends and family on family day.

For the exercise firefighters used a portable inflatable sidewalk to safely walk out to a stranded dummy.

Gonzales said PIFR has three such systems allowing personnel to "leap frog" the sections and walk deep into the marshes if necessary.

PIFR purchased the air trac system in 2007 to allow for quick and safe entry in the marshes surrounding Parris Island, said Gonzales.

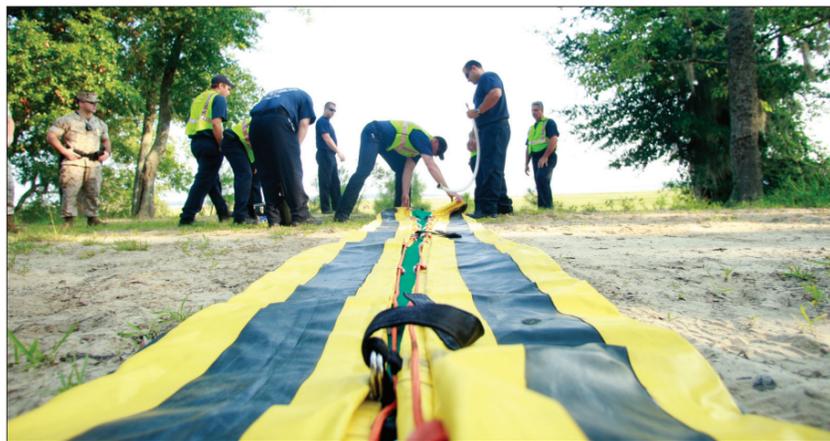
Originally used for walking across ice, the system proved versatile enough for use in marsh rescues, said Ralph Stanley, a fire captain for PIFR.

"Before we would lay down ladders and walk to the victims on them," Gonzales said. "What we have now is much more stable to walk across and a lot safer."



Photos by Cpl. Isaac Lamberth

Nathan Callender (left) and Seth Gollighugh, firefighters with the Parris Island Fire and Rescue department, drag a mobile-air platform through the marsh after completing a simulated water-rescue-from-land exercise July 22.



Firefighters with the Parris Island Fire and Rescue department unroll a mobile-air platform to help rescue a simulated victim trapped in the marshes surrounding Parris Island July 22.



Firefighters with the Parris Island Fire and Rescue department carry a mobile-air platform out of the marsh area after completing a simulated rescue July 22.



Compressed air is released from a tank to inflate a mobile-air platform during an exercise July 22. The Parris Island Fire and Rescue department used the inflatable platform to safely walk on top of the marsh and simulate a rescue of a stranded person in the marshes surrounding Parris Island.

DI
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

demanding," said Sgt. 1st Class Shiam Manniesingh, an administrative staff noncommissioned officer from Suriname. "With the support of the Marines I'm with, I hope to make the very best of it."

The service members view how the Marine Corps conducts training procedures and compare them to their

native militaries.

"Some things are similar and some are different," Uvizl said.

The commands are different, but a lot of the training is similar. It's just not as intensive as it is in DI School, he added.

Upon beginning training, each of the three was paired with a Marine from their squad to assist them with American customs and courtesies and communication, explained Master

Sgt. Justin Aiken, chief instructor of DI School.

"They send their best guys over here and so do we," Aiken said. "We're supposed to be getting the top 10 percent of the Marine Corps."

"What I've been told is that most of the foreign guys go back to their countries and become instructors. They come to us to become more well-rounded."

During the course of the 11 weeks, each student un-

dergoes multiple inspections, that test the students' attention to detail, including uniform inspections.

"When we inspect them, we inspect their issued uniforms," Aiken said. "We learn their regulations and add our level of detail while inspecting them. That's one thing we want them to learn - our attention and focus to detail."

Though the three stand out from the rest of their class because of the differ-

"They teach us how to be leaders with integrity and honor, courage and commitment... I want to take back the discipline that I'll learn here to my country."

Sgt. 1st Class Shiam Manniesingh
Drill Instructor School student
from Suriname

ent uniforms, they fit right in and were welcomed by the other students.

"I've learned about leadership and about American culture and the culture of the Marine Corps," Man-

niesingh said. "They teach us how to be leaders with integrity and honor, courage and commitment as well. I want to take back the discipline that I'll learn here to my country."

MCFTB hosts L.I.N.K.S. for "Tweens"

Lance Cpl. Javarre Glanton
Staff Writer

The Marine Corps Family Team Building staff, a division of Marine Corps Community Services — South Carolina, conducted Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills training for "tweens" for the first time July 11 at the Parris Island Youth Center.

Tweens, also referred to as preteens, are between the ages of 9 and 12 years old. It is an age at which many people strive to fit in, and being a child of a service member could make gaining new friends even more difficult by having to change duty stations every few years.

The intention of L.I.N.K.S. is to help families of Marines adapt to the Marine Corps lifestyle by providing knowledge and support to the service members and their families.

The classes began at 1 p.m. and ended at 4 p.m. with an informal graduation. Ashley McCartney, a L.I.N.K.S. administrative specialist, placed military identification tags on each participant's neck at the end of the class, symbolizing the graduation.

"I really enjoyed it because I really like playing with the kids," McCartney said. "I liked when they put on the uniforms so they could say 'I'm just like daddy or my mommy.'"

During the class, the children participated in several different interactive lessons, including the uniform race in which they raced to see who could properly put on the specified uniform the fastest.

"Just like with everything else, we cover things that deal with the Marine Corps," said Sylvia Sanchez, L.I.N.K.S. program trainer. She said the class is similar to the adult class, but it's streamlined to reach a younger audience.

Each class teaches the children something different about growing up with a parent who is a Marine. The classes are "My Hero's Away," "Friends Rule," "Community Connection" and "Are You Plugged In?"

"My Hero's Away" teaches participants what their parents do on a deployment and why and how long they are gone. "Friends Rule" pertains to making friends and how to handle bullying situations. "Community Connection" explains how the children can get involved with their community and volunteering options. "Are You Plugged In?" answers questions about internet safety with social media.

"We talk about the golden rule: treat others how you want to be treated," Sanchez explained. "We've adapted that to ensure that these kids have the tools needed to thrive in their world."

Sanchez aims to reach out to children during summer so they can become active while they are not in school.

"It's wonderful working with these kids. You never know what they're going to say."



Lance Cpl. Javarre Glanton

Sylvia Sanchez, Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills program trainer, gathers children participating in the first L.I.N.K.S. for "tweens" class in the gymnasium of the depot youth center July 11.

