

THE PARRIS ISLAND BOOT



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See
Echo and
Oscar
Company
Graduates

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Echo battles in the Octagon



Pg. 7

Photo by Lance Cpl. F. J. Abundes

Recruits from Echo Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, fight each other in the final pugil stick and body-sparring sessions of recruit training during the Crucible, Nov. 21. Pugil sticks simulate a rifle and are designed to help recruits learn and practice bayonet and butt-stroking techniques.

Oscar traverses crossing

Lance Cpl. F. J. Abundes
Staff Writer

"The Silver Star is presented to Gunnery Sgt. Phillip A. Jordan for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy..." read Staff Sgt. Christine Pedigo, drill instructor.

"...He courageously made three trips, dashed through a steel curtain of machine gun and rocket propelled grenade fire with 80 pounds to two separate mortar positions 80 meters apart."

The Oscar Company drill instructor read the citation to her recruits so they understood why they were about to undergo Jordan's Crossing, one of the obstacles at the Crucible, Nov. 21.

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Photo by Lance Cpl. F. J. Abundes

Recruits from Oscar Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, tiptoe their way across Jordan's Crossing during the Crucible, Nov. 21. Jordan's Crossing simulates a resupply mission over a rope bridge.



Photo by Lance Cpl. Michael Rogers

Echo Company recruits struggle to get their maximum number of pull ups during their final Physical Fitness Test, Nov. 17.

Echo attacks final PFT

Lance Cpl. Michael Rogers
Staff Writer

The hardened bodies of the recruits of Echo Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion were put to the test during their first Physical Fitness Test for score at the battalion's physical training field, Nov. 17.

The PFT is required to be taken and recorded by all Marines across the Corps once a year. But, recruits in training take the test twice, the final one being for score.

"The PFT is meant to test your physical capabilities to make sure you meet the standards set by the Marine Corps,"

said Staff Sgt. Jeremy May, Echo Co. chief drill instructor.

During the PFT recruits and Marines are evaluated on their time to run three miles, how many pull-ups they can do and how many crunches they can perform in two minutes.

Recruits take the PFT for the first time on training day 35 to gauge each recruit's ability and evaluate how much conditioning the recruit needs in each portion.

Recruits are given the option to use their free time to improve their score by working on the three different sections

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NEWS BRIEFS

Parris Island Marine Band free concert

The Parris Island Marine Band is scheduled to hold its 3rd Annual Low-country Christmas Concert, Dec. 11 at 7 p.m. at the Community Bible Church located at 638 Parris Island Gateway in Beaufort.

The free performance will be Parris Island band's only holiday concert open to the public. For more information, contact the church at 525-0089.

The band is also scheduled to march in Bluffton's Christmas Parade at 11 a.m. on Dec. 3 and Beaufort's Christmas Parade at 3 p.m. Dec. 4.

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rain down
steel

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Marines
train with
Australian
Army

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Soldier
turned
Marine

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ECHO & OSCAR COMPANY GRADUATES

Echo Honor Graduates

Pfc. M. W. Kilgallon, Atlanta

Platoon 2096, Kilgallon was recruited by Sgt. Temple and trained by Staff Sgt. Brown

Pfc. J. D. Erwin-Stubbs, Tyler, Texas

Platoon 2097, Erwin-Stubbs was recruited by Staff Sgt. Morgan and trained by Staff Sgt. Celestine

Pfc. A. D. Paterson, Bigalow, Mich.

Platoon 2098, Paterson was recruited by Staff Sgt. Ward and trained by Staff Sgt. Bradley

Pfc. M. L. Smith Jr., Tampa, Fla.

Platoon 2099, Smith was recruited by Sgt. Gamble and trained by Staff Sgt. Moreira

Pfc. A. J. Woytkiw, Palm Beach, Fla.

Platoon 2100, Woytkiw was recruited by Sgt. Davis and trained by Staff Sgt. Tyler

Pfc. C. Coffy, Queens, N.Y.

Platoon 2101, Coffy was recruited by Staff Sgt. Calder and trained by Staff Sgt. Lopez

Pfc. E. D. Doute, Morristown, Tenn.

Platoon 2102 Doute was recruited by Sgt. Miller and trained by Staff Sgt. Orellana

Oscar Honor Graduates

Pvt. C. M. Gonzalez, Methuen, Mass.

Platoon 4038, Gonzalez was recruited by Sgt. Makary and trained by Gunnery Sgt. Guillory

Pvt. T. K. Pike, Cincinnati

Platoon 4039, Pike was recruited by Staff Sgt. Thomas and trained by Gunnery Sgt. Askins

Platoon 2096

Pvt. M. D. Andrews, Pfc. W. C. Aschbrenner, Pvt. J. E. Baker, Pvt. M. A. Boyd, Pfc. J. M. Broughman, Pvt. H. C. Brown III, Pfc. P. R. Brown, Pfc. L. E. Burton, Pvt. T. E. Cavanaugh III, Pvt. C. O. Clark, Pvt. J. Clemente, Pvt. D. W. Cook, Pvt. M. A. Cudreasov, Pvt. D. D. Domenech, Pfc. A. F. Dornmeetez, Pvt. D. L. Dothard, Pvt. B. R. Dover, Pfc. G. N. Echevarriaberdecia, Pfc. X. Echeverriavidal, Pfc. T. N. England, Pvt.

A. S. Frimpong, Pfc. J. M. Fulmer, Pvt. M. B. Gerken, Pvt. R. W. Gray, Pvt. K. P. Harris, Pvt. S. E. Harvey, Pfc. D. F. Hefferly, Pfc. A. J. Hendrix, Pvt. J. M. Hention, Pfc. J. A. Hinojosa, Pvt. D. W. Hodges, Pfc. D. L. Hutchens, Pvt. K. R. Jamison, Pvt. R. P. Jones, Pfc. J. M. Jordan, Pvt. G. I. Kabui, Pvt. U. Y. Kbuor, Pvt. C. N. Kelley, Pfc. M. W. Kilgallon, Pfc. C. N. Lee, Pvt. O. Lee, Pvt. D. M. Marlor, Pfc. D. E. Mccoy, Pfc. B. J. Mccraw, Pvt. M. P. Mcdonald, Pfc. M. W. Mcguire, Pvt. R. B. Mckelvey, Pvt. D. W. Miller, Pfc. A. M. Mitchell, Pfc. R. J. Montgomery, Pvt. B. T. Morse jr, Pvt. J. S. Mowbray, Pfc. M. G. Moyer, Pvt. S. P. Noone, Pvt. M. E. Olsavicky, Pvt. C. E. Owings, Pfc. B. R. Parham, Pvt. H. E. Plowman IV, Pvt. M. N. Pruettt, Pvt. D. J. Reardon, Pvt. A. L. Register, Pvt. J. N. Robertson, Pfc. R. Rodriguez jr, Pfc. G. Rodriguez , Pfc. A. C. Savoia, Pvt. K. R. Shookman, Pvt. A. C. Simpson, Pfc. D. E. Starkweather Jr., Pvt. P. E. Stephens, Pvt. J. S. Sujka, Pvt. J. E. Sylvester, Pvt. B. D. Tranter, Pfc. J. E. Velez, Pfc. M. J. Volker, Pvt. Z. A. Weaver III, Pfc. A. N. Whitchurch, Pfc. B. M. Willard, Pfc. T. D. Williams, Pvt. D. D. Wise, Pvt. H. R. Workman, Pvt. A. X. Wright

Platoon 2097

Pvt. M. J. Aune, Pvt. J. D. Aureoles, Pfc. V. A. Avila, Pvt. C. A. Avina, Pfc. H. B. Baker, Pvt. D. S. Ball, Pfc. R. BarrientosMartinez, Pvt. M. C. Bickel, Pvt. R. N. Bower, Pvt. J. J. Boyles, Pfc. A. C. Brigman, Pfc. C. D. Brown, Pfc. R. D. Buttriss, Pvt. S. T. Carver, Pvt. C. Z. Chaffee, Pvt. B. L. Clugsten, Pvt. J. M. Colletti, Pfc. D. S. Corderman Jr., Pvt. J. A. Cormier, Pfc. J. M. Cuff, Pfc. N. D. Dean, Pfc. R. A. Dixon, Pvt. K.

W. Drew, Pfc. J. D. ErwinStubbs, Pvt. R. C. Farmer, Pvt. M. D. Gleaton, Pvt. R. Gomez, Pvt. D. L. Gorgas Jr., Pvt. T. E. Guadamuz, Pvt. J. R. Hadas, Pvt. J. C. Halliday, Pvt. N. C. Harger, Pvt. S. J. Harless, Pfc. C. D. Hawkins, Pvt. K. G. Hayden, Pvt. J. S. Holder, Pvt. A. J. Hoover, Pvt. A. S. Hornbaker, Pvt. J. T. Hughes, Pvt. J. D. Jenkins, Pvt. D. T. Jennings, Pvt. A. C. Justard, Pvt. S. A. Kamphaus, Pfc. J. P. Karpinski, Pvt. B. W. Kelly, Pvt. Z. W. Kenneway, Pvt. L. S. Knapic, Pvt. K. J. Krebs, Pvt. M. A. Kyrkychenko, Pfc. M. E. Luzier, Pvt. D. C. Machado, Pvt. G. A. Maciorowski, Pvt. M. J. Marston, Pvt. E. J. Martinez, Pvt. S. T. McEvoy, Pfc. J. D. Melvin, Pvt. N. A. Miles, Pfc. C. D. Mitchell, Pvt. T. A. Morales, Pvt. Z. P. O'Conner, Pvt. T. T. Partridge, Pvt. M. J. Peck Jr., Pvt. N. M. Porter, Pvt. R. A. Robles Jr., Pvt. B. J. Rodriguez, Pvt. S. L. Sanborn, Pvt. T. W. Schaffer, Pvt. C. S. Smalcer, Pvt. A. W. Sproul, Pfc. D. L. Stokers, Pvt. M. J. Sumner, Pvt. Z. W. Taylor, Pfc. J. E. Thompson, Pvt. T. H. Thompson, Pvt. C. A. Tullos, Pvt. D. A. West, Pvt. S. M. Whitaker Jr., Pvt. K. C. White, Pvt. J. W. Willick, Pvt. D. R. Wright, Pfc. J. L. Wright

Platoon 2098

Pfc. B. Acosta, Pvt. A. R. Allen, Pvt. M. A. Allred, Pfc. J. M. Amley, Pvt. T. Anstotz Jr., Pvt. R. P. Ball, Pvt. T. A. Barclay, Pfc. J. W. Baskeyfield, Pfc. J. E. Bedell, Pfc. I. D. Bennett, Pfc. J. B. Black, Pfc. C. A. Bly, Pvt. L. J. Boyd, Pvt. C. D. Buckner, Pvt. T. G. Cannon, Pfc. D. A. Colclough, Pfc. M. T. Coleman, Pvt. G. A. Colimore, Pvt. J. B. Cook, Pfc. T. D. Cool Jr., Pvt. O. E. Cornish, Pvt. D. A. Crane,

Pvt. S. D. Dandrea, Pvt. D. P. Davis, Pfc. Z. Q. Dubois, Pvt. C. T. Duggan, Pfc. J. W. Evans, Pvt. M. W. Feazell, Pvt. M. C. Fitzgerald, Pvt. A. J. Focareto, Pvt. M. S. Gaiownik, Pvt. T. J. Gilbert, Pvt. W. S. Gilland, Pvt. K. P. Gray, Pfc. L. D. Hange, Pvt. O. R. Hawkins, Pfc. J. R. Henderson, Pvt. B. K. Hewitt Jr., Pfc. R. E. Hillier, Pfc. W. J. Hines, Pvt. D. S. Holder, Pvt. N. A. Iezzi, Pvt. B. V. Jackson, Pvt. K. R. Jeffers, Pvt. S. C. Jones, Pvt. N. R. Knapke, Pfc. T. D. Kulesza, Pvt. J. M. Laughlin, Pvt. A. J. Lindsey, Pfc. J. C. Mayo, Pfc. D. M. McKee, Pvt. J. D. Mielke, Pfc. A. D. Paterson, Pvt. D. T. Payne, Pfc. W. K. Peterson, Pfc. J. S. Pieske, Pvt. A. J. Pinkowski, Pvt. H. P. Price, Pfc. L. L. Pritchett, Pvt. C. S. Puckett, Pvt. J. D. Reese, Pvt. L. Rodriguez, Pvt. J. T. Rogers, Pvt. G. W. Schell, Pvt. D. R. Schonter, Pvt. J. S. Shaffer, Pfc. T. A. Sherman, Pfc. J. A. Shields, Pvt. T. E. Spence, Pvt. K. R. Staggs, Pfc. J. M. Stojka, Pvt. B. R. Troup, Pfc. G. L. Turner Jr., Pvt. J. C. Urena, Pfc. D. J. Vandewarker, Pvt. N. A. Wilson, Pvt. S. T. Winkle, Pvt. D. T. Workman, Pvt. B. M. Young, Pfc. S. H. Young

Platoon 2099

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Platoon 2100

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Platoon 2102

Pvt. D. D. Allen, Pvt. L. A. Arocho, Pfc. E. C. Avis, Pvt. C. T. Barnes, Pvt. H. F. Boensel, Pfc. C. M. Bouchie, Pvt. K. T. Broussard, Pvt. E. J. Brown, Pvt. D. Chavez, Pvt. J. C. Combs, Pvt. Z. W. Cousins, Pvt. B. A. Davis, Pvt. J. E. Davis , Pvt. E. J. Diaz, Pfc. W. J. Donnelly II, Pfc. E. D. Doute, Pfc. C. A. Dufrene, Pfc. R. H. Easingwood, Pvt. T. A. Falin, Pvt. J. L. Flade, Pvt. A. J. Fleming, Pvt. B. J. Fonseca,

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Platoon 4038

Pvt. B. R. Aho, Pvt. E. L. Allen, Pvt. M. A. Anick, Pvt. A. Arnold, Pvt. F. E. Barrett, Pvt. J. S. Baskerville, Pvt. L. I. Begaye, Pvt. J. M. Belsito, Pvt. M. K. Brandon, Pvt. J. M. Burnside, Pvt. S. Y. Cavanillas, Pvt. M. M. Clark, Pvt. D. N. Corrado, Pvt. E. L. Craft, Pfc. N. E. Credell, Pfc. G. L. Darrah, Pvt. S. N. Durham, Pvt. E. Espinal, Pvt. J. R. Fine, Pvt. T. R. Fiske, Pfc. A. T. Gamboa, Pvt. S. O. Gibson, Pvt.

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Platoon 4039

Pfc. M. R. Appel, Pfc. S. Avilapalomar, Pfc. A. Blanco, Pfc. J. M. Busellini, Pvt. J. M. Endo, Pfc. K. A. Feraren, Pfc. N. M. Freiberg, Pfc. N. M. Fremgen, Pvt. L. R. Gonzales, Pfc. M. M. Gopardiaz, Pfc. D. G. Haggerty, Pfc. K. Hanula, Pvt. A. K. Henry, Pfc. L. C. Hernandez, Pfc. D. A. Hielsberg, Pvt. T. J. James, Pvt. M. Labra, Pfc. C. D. Linville, Pvt. G. Lozanopenaloza, Pvt. J. Luna, Pfc. J. E. Machado, Pfc. K. P.

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THE PARRIS ISLAND BOOT

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Eastern Recruiting Region

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Lance Cpl. F. J. Abundes
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3/12 makes it rain

Lance Cpl.
Erik Brooks
III Marine Expeditionary Force

CAMP FUJI, Japan - Behind every 155 mm round that rains down in an impact area, there are a number of Marines whose hard work and proficiency ensure those rounds will be on target and on time.

The Marines of 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, took part in an artillery relocation training program from Nov. 10-22.

The training provided an inside look at how artillery rounds go from being inanimate objects lying on ammunition crates to accurate and effective fire support for maneuver units in combat.

During the exercise, Marines fired more than 2000 155 mm rounds safely and accurately over the course of 10 live-fire days, said Staff Sgt. Robert L. McCoy II, gunnery sergeant for Hotel Battery.

More impressive than sheer numbers, however, is understanding the manpower and effort that goes into getting a 155 mm round from an ammunition crate to the impact zone.

The firing process starts when forward observers call in fire mis-

sions, McCoy said.

"The mission and number of rounds fired are determined by the forward observers," McCoy said. "It is their job to call back to the Fire Direction Center to begin executing the missions."

At the FDC, Marines take the mission from the forward observers, and put together directions for firing based on weather, ammunition and other factors, and relay this information to the gun sections, which carry out the actual firing.

"The FDC tells us the range, number of rounds and direction of fire for each mission," said Sgt. Daniel B. Goodman, a gun section leader for Hotel. "After getting all the information we need, we execute the mission."

Firing the howitzer is a nine-step process, McCoy said. First, the section leader receives the mission from the FDC and relays the mission to everyone on the gun section. Immediately, all elements of the gun section jump into action. The gunner moves the gun horizontally to find the exact location of the target in a process called deflection while simultaneously the assistant gunner moves the gun vertically for proper angle and depth, referred to as adjusting

the quadrant.

Once the howitzer is properly positioned, a Marine primes the gun and verifies the powder load. Additionally, two Marines take a 155 mm round and load it into the gun. After the rounds are seated and the powder is loaded, the breach is closed.

After the gun section chief verifies all information is correct and the gun is properly loaded, he gives the call to fire. Upon the call, a Marine pulls a lanyard to fire the round.

"This process is repeated until the mission is complete," said Goodman.

The battery consists of six guns, said McCoy. Exercises like this enhance each battery's ability to support fire missions from ground units.

"We conduct these missions to maintain efficiency and proficiency," said McCoy. "Having a fast artillery battery is important in order to provide continuous fire support to ground units."

According to Goodman, a good gun section comes from motivation, camaraderie and dedication.

"Being motivated to be a fast gun section is the key to success," said Goodman. "If the Marines are excited to go out and fire, then all will run smoothly."

Artillery in the Marine Corps is crucial to the



Photo by Lance Cpl. Chance M. Hiser

A gun section works together to fire an M777 howitzer, Nov. 16. Marines conducted live-fire exercises as part of an artillery relocation training program, Nov. 10-22. The program consists of regularly scheduled exercises on mainland Japan designed to maintain combat readiness for artillery units stationed on Okinawa, Japan. The Marines are from Golf Battery, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

success and safety of infantry units, said McCoy.

"Artillery is the infantry's only support in all types of weather," McCoy said. "Without us,

grunts wouldn't get crucial fire support when they most need it."

Those grunts can rely on the hard work of all Marines involved in the

artillery firing process, who ensure the 155mm rounds will be where they need to be, when they need to be there.

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Marines, sailors work together during unique vertical replenishment at sea

Lance Cpl. Garry Welch
31st Marine Expeditionary Unit

ABOARD USS ESSEX — Marines with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265 (Reinforced), 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, worked hand-in-hand with sailors of Amphibious Squadron 11 to fly supplies from the USS Tippecanoe to the USS Essex, Nov. 26.

Marines flying CH-46E Sea Knight helicopters took turns with their Navy counterparts flying an MH-60S helicopter, hooking cargo externally to their helicopters and flying it aboard.

“Being able to move external loads is a mission all our pilots are trained to perform and they have to maintain proficiency,” said Lt. Col. Damien M. Marsh, commanding officer HMM-265 (Rein). “We have to complete external missions periodically in order to remain proficient in this perishable skill.”

To maintain proficiency, pilots can conduct external lift missions on land, but what made the vertical replenishment mission so unique was that the Marine pilots had to lift an external load off the swaying deck of a moving ship. They then delivered it to another moving ship without damaging the cargo, while working with the Navy to accomplish the mission.

“We usually do it in a field or near tall trees, but rarely do we do it near the superstructure of a rocking ship where we have just a few feet of clearance between the turning rotors and the steel skin of the ship,” said Marsh. “It’s much more challenging, but it’s a great experience.”

Just attaching the cargo to the exterior of the helicopters is a challenge, because the pilots rely on a Marine or sailor signaling them into position while they hover in place. There is

also another Marine or sailor below them to actually attach the cargo to the helicopter when it is close enough, but the challenge does not stop there.

“It is like threading a needle when you place the load in amongst other loads on the flight deck without damaging the vital supplies,” said Marsh. “In Iraq, we would fly 20-40 miles to a combat outpost and then hover between houses and power lines to get the supplies into a small courtyard; it required skills similar to the mission today. So it is very possible that our pilots could put this experience to use in combat missions in the future.”

Another distinctive aspect of the mission was Marine pilots with the 31st MEU working so closely with their Navy counterparts. As Marines would deliver a load to the flight deck of the Essex, Navy pilots would then take their turn and attach cargo to the exterior of their helicopter. This took place until the mission was complete.

“It was a Navy mission,” said Maj. Christopher Horton, operations officer of HMM 265 (Rein), 31st MEU. “So being able to work with the Navy and have the opportunity to train at the same time as we were doing vertical replenishment was a big deal for us.”

Marsh went on to say that while the Navy allowed the Marines to train with them during the vertical replenishment mission, the Marines of HMM 265 (Rein) are planning to give the Navy an opportunity to train with them during some of the missions they will conduct in the future.

The elements of the MEU aboard the Essex are currently participating in theater security operations at sea. The 31st MEU is the only continuously forward-deployed MEU and remains the nation’s force in readiness in the Asia-Pacific region.



Photo by Cpl. Garry Welch

Marines with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit prepare to detach cargo as it is dropped by a MH-60S helicopter of Amphibious Squadron 11, Nov. 26. The Marines and sailors were working together to move cargo aboard the USS Essex (LHD 2), during a vertical replenishment at sea.

More of the story

PFT
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of the PFT, said Capt. Douglas McDonough, series commander for Lead Series, Echo Company. Every squad bay has an elliptical machine for cardiovascular, and multiple pullup bars.

On training day 60 recruits finally take their PFT for score.

"The final PFT is the last graded event for recruits," May said. "It lets them know that they meet the standard of a basically trained Marine."

Their score will travel with them when they leave the depot and go on to follow-on training and their first duty stations.

"The final PFT allows us to establish a baseline for their physical fitness levels before we send them to the fleet," McDonough said. Recruits are spoken to often on the importance of their PFT score

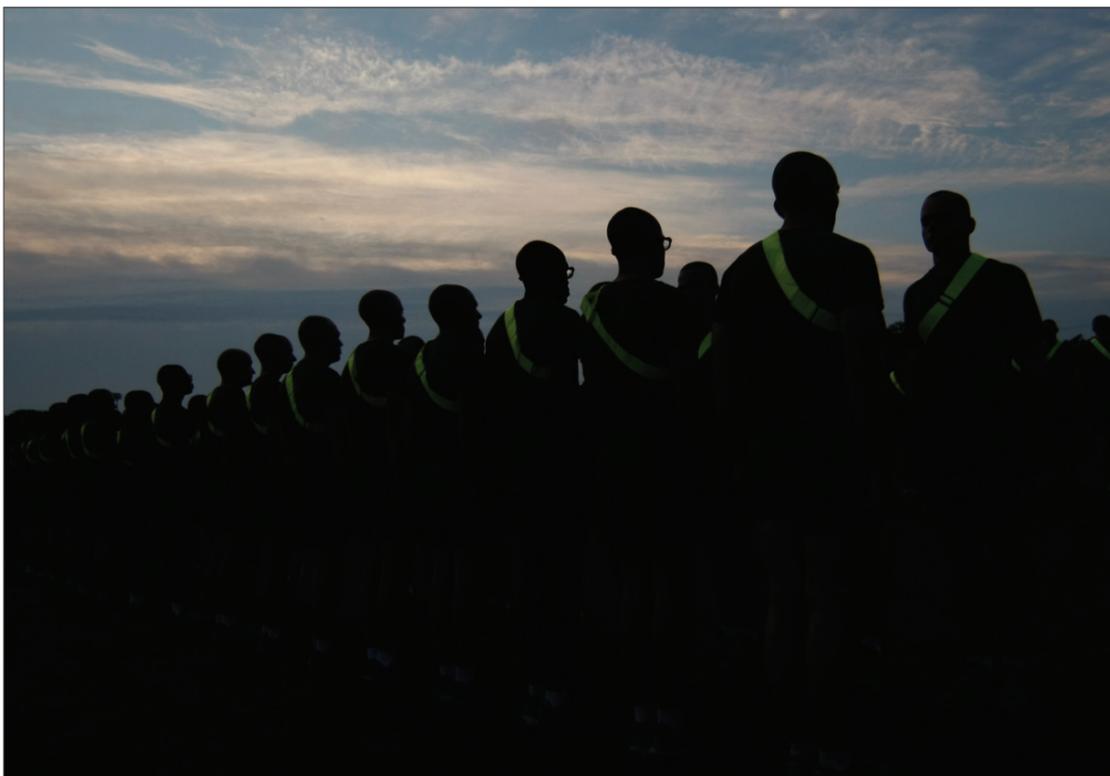
by their drill instructors throughout training.

The PFT score of a recruit distinguishes the company "iron man," the title given to the recruit with the highest score and can help earn a recruit a meritorious promotion. For Marines, the PFT score is a variable in deciding whether an individual gets promoted and also whether an individual has the option to re-enlist.

While every Marine and recruit must take a PFT, it is up to the individual to strive for a high score and keep a high standard of physical fitness.

Rct. Michael W. Kilgallon, guide for Platoon 2096, achieved a near perfect and the highest score for his platoon; 298 out of 300.

"I trained a lot before I got here," Kilgallon said. "It's very important. It's a competition and it shows who cares and who is trying the hardest."



Photos by Lance Cpl. Michael Rogers

Recruits from Echo Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, stand shoulder to shoulder in the early morning on the battalion's physical training field as they wait to do crunches for their final Physical Fitness Test, Nov. 17.



◀ Rct. Kierston Broussard, Platoon 2102, struggles to reach the amount of crunches needed for a perfect score. Broussard, 19, is from Bell City, La.

▶ An Echo Co. recruit finishes the three-mile run portion of the Physical Fitness Test with a sprint through the finish line. The final PFT ensures recruits will meet the fitness standards of basically trained Marines upon graduation.



Rct. Tommy Cavanaugh, Platoon 2096, attempts to reach his maximum number of pullups. Cavanaugh, 18, is from Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

Army green to Marine mean



Photos by Lance Cpl. F. J. Abundes

Rct. Andrea M. Robb, guide for Platoon 4039, Oscar Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, stands with the rest of her group as their drill instructors speak to them before an event during the Crucible at Page Field, Nov. 21.

Lance Cpl. Michael Rogers
Staff Writer

Andrea M. Robb used to be a private first class in the Army National Guard. Now, she is a private first class in the Marine Corps.

A private first class in the Army National Guard is one pay grade higher than in the Marine Corps, but to Robb it was worth losing one pay grade to earn the title Marine.

"I told myself if I was ever going to stay in I was going to be the best," said Robb, Platoon 4039, Oscar Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion. Robb initially joined the service to help pay for college but quickly fell in love with the life of a service member and made the choice to switch to the Corps.

Recruit training is designed to be difficult. But, Robb came to recruit training with a heads up on all the other recruits in her platoon and it earned her the position of guide, the head recruit of her platoon. Robb is also the platoon honor graduate.

"She came here with some disci-

pline already," said Gunnery Sgt. Holly Askins, senior drill instructor for Platoon 4039. "She came with the expectations that it would be hard."

While she came in with an idea of what would be happening, and experience from her prior service, the Army National Guard doesn't make Marines.

"She learned a lot about teamwork here," Askins said. "She had to learn to hold not only herself, but everyone else, to a high standard."

She took it all in stride, Askins said. She was modest and knew she wasn't a Marine yet and that there were things she needed to learn.

Robb's husband is a Marine and she said that was a large factor in her decision to switch. Robb said that day-to-day she saw the differences in the soldiers around her and the pride of being a Marine.

"Marines look sharp all the time," Robb said. Marines always present themselves in the best manner possible.

Now after 13-weeks of hard work she has regained the rank of private first class, except this time it was coupled with the Eagle, Globe and Anchor.



Rct. Andrea M. Robb runs with her group to the next event of the Crucible.

OSCAR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Spanning 54 hours, the Crucible is the recruits' last test before earning the title Marine.

In this event, the women would traverse a two-line bridge under simulated enemy fire in order to resupply units at the front.

As soon as they were given the order, the group from platoon 4038 gathered around Rct. Danielle Riolo, leader for the event, and made a plan to get all three 48-pound ammunition cans across the "river" without losing any recruits or gear in the process.

They had 30 minutes to execute and had to move quickly.

Three recruits took the first can. Once those recruits got across, they stabilized the rope to keep it from moving as much.

When the next group crossed, they had assistance from those already there.

The second group was comprised of twice as many recruits. The added weight caused the rope to sink lower to the ground. With their rifles slung behind their backs and Kevlar helmets off-balancing the women's heads, the rope lost stability and the recruits barely made it across.

"The cans were heavy and we're really light, and there were not enough people to carry the cans," said Pfc. Leyshla Solerrodriiguez, a recruit from Plt. 4038. "Coming up with strategies to get the cans across without the hitting the floor was difficult."

The last couple of recruits took their turn at the bridge. No one had realized two of the most petite females were left to carry gear with the least amount of help. They shimmied across, inching their way with death grips on the ammunition can and one of the ropes.

The load was too great for them and one fell.

"It was hard, but I had to continue holding onto the ammo can," said Riolo, who was left on the rope.

Pedigo told both the girls they were dead and had to start over.



Photos by Lance Cpl. F. J. Abundes

Recruits from Oscar Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, use the teamwork they have learned throughout recruit training to traverse an obstacle known as Jordan's Crossing.

The fallen recruits replanned their approach and were back on the bridge in no time.

"When we fell down, we got right back up and did it again," said Solerrodriiguez. "The second time we did it, we came up with a better strategy and we were able to get it across."

Being extra careful, they succeeded in "resupplying the forward units." With a minute left on the clock, they quickly dismantled the obstacle before time ran out.

"We had to use a lot of teamwork in this course,"

Solerrodriiguez said. "There was no way you could have done it by yourself. You needed more than three people to get those ammo cans across and be able to get each recruit across to the other side."

The recruits had learned the secret to almost every event at the Crucible – teamwork.

Riolo said Jordan's Crossing was a good introductory obstacle for the Crucible because it gave them a taste of what the recruits would need to make it to the end and earn their Eagle, Globe and Anchors.



Recruits from Oscar Company near the end of Jordan's Crossing during the Crucible. The obstacle simulates a resupply mission over a rope bridge.



Rct. Danielle Riolo, Platoon 4038, briefs her fellow recruits on how they will take on Jordan's Crossing.

Echo fights to the end



Lance Cpl. F. J. Abundes
Staff Writer

Recruits from Echo Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, battled within the confines of the Octagon during the Crucible, Nov. 21.

The Octagon is an arena where recruits face each other in body sparring and pugil stick bouts. The gladiator-like event challenged their endurance, control and combat frame of mind.

“The purpose of the event and pugil sticks in general is to provide an initial inoculation into interpersonal violence for the recruits,” said Sgt. Freddie Groen, chief instructor at Leatherneck Square. “The Crucible is the culminating event, but here, it’s their last chance to engage in a fight and develop the proper mindset.”

The wooden arena’s high walls prevent the recruits waiting outside from catching a glimpse of the bouts within. The only way into the eight-sided ring is through one of four hallways jutting out of the arena. The only way to enter the hallways is by donning their gear, ready to fight.

“[Recruits] have to understand that it’s not a game when we go out there,” Groen said. “It’s not sports fighting – they’re going in there defending their lives.”

Either the enemy dies, the fighter dies or they both do, Groen continued. The recruits need to keep an offensive mindset and use the techniques they were taught in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program to destroy their opponent.

“I don’t have much of an opportunity to fight at home,” said Pfc. Ethan Doute, Platoon 2102, Echo Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion. “But that’s why we’re here, to become warriors – and this is the true test of that.”

Doute said the event helped him learn control. “It gave me a chance to find out how to control an adrenaline rush, because there is a very large one right before you get into the fight,” he said. “You have to learn how to control that so you don’t burn yourself out.”

Doute said the scariest part was not knowing who he would fight.

“[Recruits] don’t know if they’re going to be defending themselves from someone swinging wildly or if they’re going to have someone go in there and execute perfect technique and plant a pugil stick right in their face guards; it’s fear of the unknown,” Groen said.

Once in the arena, it is up to the recruit to come out on top. If he chooses to execute everything he has learned and control himself, he will leave successfully, Groen said. But if the recruit chooses to not follow the rules or not attack, they have to pay.

“We want to see controlled aggression,” Groen said. “If they’re violating the rules we’ll kick them out and let the drill instructors deal with them in the penalty box.”

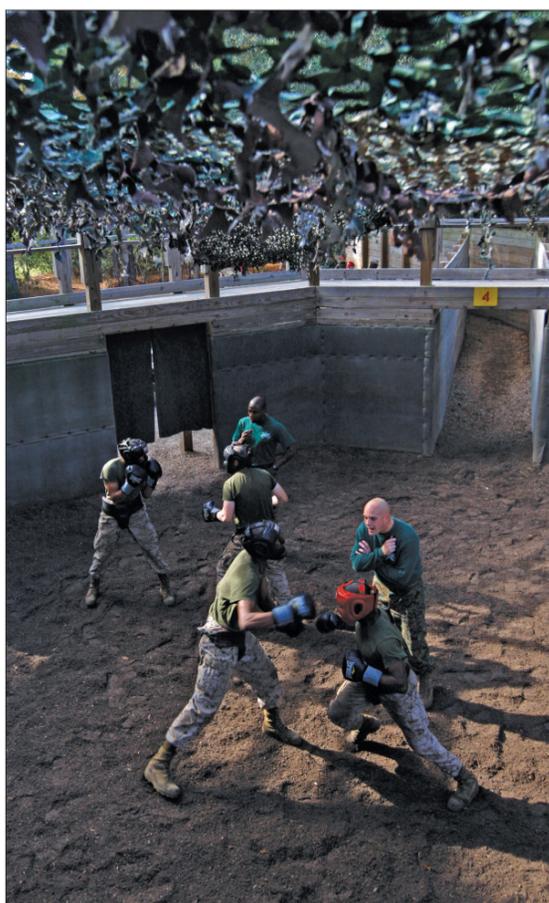
Groen said the penalty box reinforces what is being taught. Recruits must perform exercises that the drill instructors order quickly and correctly while under intense pressure.

“They have to move faster in order to gain the tactical advantage,” Groen. “So it gives them the opportunity to realize how important initial contact is.”

Once the recruits fought in both the body sparring matches and pugil sticks, they tended to the rest of their gear needed for the Crucible. They had finished one day time event, five were left.

Recruits from Echo Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, wait to battle in the Octagon during the Crucible, Nov. 21. The Octagon is an arena where recruits face each other in body sparring and pugil stick bouts. The event challenges their endurance, control and combat frame of mind.

Photos by Lance Cpl. F. J. Abundes



Echo Company recruits spar in the Octagon which is an eight-sided wooden arena.



Rct. Jay Pfauth, Platoon 2101 fights another recruit during a pugil stick bout in the Octagon.



Echo Company recruits spar in the Octagon.



Echo Co. recruits observe their fellow recruits sparring in the Octagon.



Recruits from Echo Company, fight each other in the final pugil stick bout of recruit training during the Crucible. Pugil sticks simulate a rifle and are designed to help recruits learn and practice bayonet and butt stroking techniques.

Marines train down under



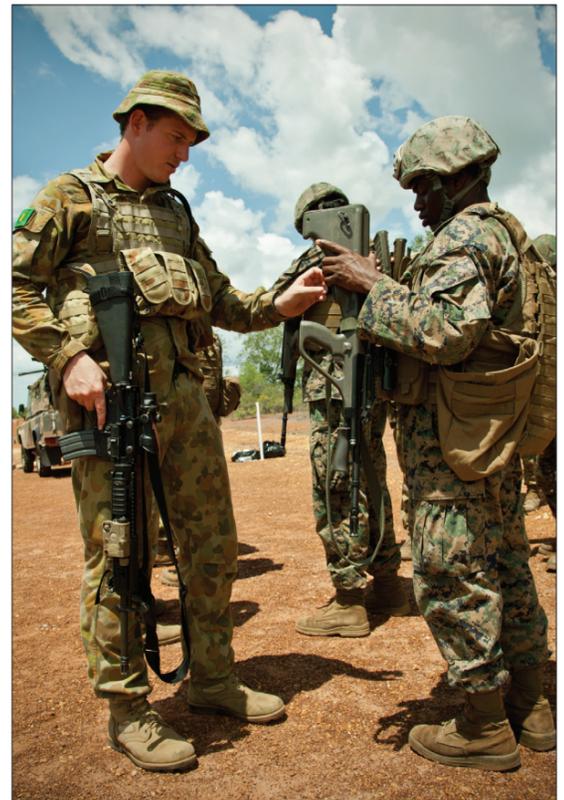
Photos by Sgt. Pete Thibodeau

An Australian Army Soldier with 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, practices a choking technique on Lance Cpl. Joseph Abadiotakis, with 2nd Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team out of Norfolk, Va., during Marine Corps Martial Arts Program training at Robertson Barracks, Darwin, Australia, Nov. 28. FAST Marines are attending Exercise Semper Fast 2011, a combined training event hosted by the Australians focusing on small-arms ranges, direct-fire ranges, military operations in urban terrain, and light-infantry operations.



An Australian Army Soldier and Sgt. Anthony Simmons, with 2nd Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team out of Norfolk, Va., compete in speed reload drills using the other service's standard issue assault rifle during an exchange of weapons tactics, techniques and procedures at Robertson Barracks, Darwin, Australia, Nov. 24.

▶ Lance Cpl. Tyrone Wilkes, with 2nd Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team, and an Australian Army Soldier exchange weapons during a live-fire range, Nov. 25.



◀ Cpl. Brandon Baggett, with 2nd Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team, demonstrates ground fighting techniques for FAST Marines and Australian Army Soldiers during Marine Corps Martial Arts Program training, Nov. 28.