

THE PARRIS ISLAND BOOT



See Kilo Company graduates

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Confidence

Builder

Photo by Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis
Rct. Franklin Jimenez, 20, of Platoon 3070, struggles to hoist himself back onto the bars of the Arm Walk at the Confidence Course on Parris Island on July 3. This obstacle is one of 15 that recruits must complete. Jimenez, a native of Queens, N.Y., graduates today with his fellow recruits.



Photo by Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis

Rct. Luke Smulski, an 18-year-old from Platoon 3069, Kilo Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, punches Rct. Joey Rollins, 18, of Platoon 3068, during a boxing match at the Crucible on Aug. 31 in a training area on Parris Island. Rollins is from Somerset, Ky., and Smulski is from Wilmington, Del.

KILO KILLS CRUCIBLE

Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis
Staff Writer

Early on the morning of Sept. 1, the recruits of Kilo Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, stood in front of Parris Island's Iwo Jima flag-raising statue waiting to be presented their Marine Corps emblems. Just 24 hours prior, the recruits were in the middle of the Crucible, their final test before earning the title U.S. Marine.

The recruits endured daily physical, mental and emotional strain throughout training. The goal they spent nearly three months striving for became some recruits' sole incentive to finish what

they started. "It's right there, less than 24 hours away," said Pfc. Aaron Johnson, 18, of Platoon 3065.

The Crucible is the culminating event of recruit training, said Sgt. Brian Bianchi, a drill instructor for Platoon 3064. This is the time to see how the recruits have progressed and how they tie together everything they have learned in training.

"Everyone in the platoon has really turned around and matured a lot for the better," said Johnson, a native of Columbus, Ohio.

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Recruits fuel up for fight

Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis
Staff Writer

Recruits on Parris Island are no strangers to the fact that food is the body's main source of power and energy. Food could not be more important to them, as they endure 15-hour days full of high stress and physically demanding activity.

Chow replenishes the recruits' bodies with

the energy they need to maximize their daily performance throughout training.

"You need to be on top of your game, and that takes all of the chow you can get," said Pfc. William Gebhart, 19, with Platoon 3065, Kilo Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, and a native of Pittsburgh.

The mess hall menus originated from dietitians of Sodexo, Inc., a company that provides

food service to the Marine Corps, said Navy Capt. Linda Hite, nutrition programs officer for Marine Corps headquarters.

Recruits consume foods of a 21-day menu cycle, said Joey Carles, general manager of the consolidated mess hall aboard Parris Island.

Recruits eat lean meats, whole grain products, and fresh

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Photo by Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis

The recruits of Kilo Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, eat their evening meals at the consolidated recruit mess hall on Parris Island on Aug. 14. The recruits eat three meals a day to ensure their bodies remain well nourished as they go through the 13 weeks of recruit training.

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Kilo Company Graduates

Honor Graduates

Pfc. H. M. Waters, Royston, Ga.
Platoon 3064, Waters was recruited by Staff Sgt. Ulveling and trained by Sgt. Berry

Pfc. R. S. Rozbicki, New Hudson, Mich.
Platoon 3066, Rozbicki was recruited by Sgt. Stowe and trained by Staff Sgt. Hogue

Pfc. S. A. Stewart, Alexandria, Va.
Platoon 3069, Stewart was recruited by Sgt. Santiago and trained by Sgt. Christian

Pfc. Q. H. King-Holder, New Brunswick, N.J.
Platoon 3065, King-Holder was recruited by Sgt. Burchett and trained by Staff Sgt. Hickman

Pfc. E. J. Rubin, Uncasville, Conn.
Platoon 3068, Rubin was recruited by Sgt. Langager and trained by Sgt. Sylvester

Pfc. B. J. Flowers, Plant City, Fla.
Platoon 3070, Flowers was recruited by Sgt. Price and trained by Staff Sgt. Roess

Platoon 3064

Pvt. L. Albarran Jr., Pvt. A. A. Allen, Pfc. B. J. Anderson, Pvt. B. S. Andreu, Pvt. C. A. Arwood, Pvt. C. A. Barlie Jr., Pfc. C. Belizaire, Pvt. Z. A. Bixby, Pfc. Z. S. Bradley, Pvt. D. C. Brooks, Pfc. C. T. Brown, Pvt. D. D. Bussey, Pvt. R. J. Cancinosdeleon, Pfc. M. R. Catinazzo, Pfc. H. O. Claros, Pvt. M. D. Clore, Pvt. S. P. Colegrove, Pvt. R. G. Coleman, Pvt. M. T. Connell, Pfc. C. R. Cornell, Pfc. T. J. Courson, Pfc. D. A. Crawford, Pfc. L. D. Crawford, Pvt. N. A. Criner, Pvt. J. M. Dobson, Pfc. J. G. Durham, Pvt. H. S. Enciso, Pvt. V. C. Esposito, Pfc. O. E. Garcia, Pvt. H. J. Gibson, Pvt. B. J. Giddings, Pfc. A. P. Gosnell, Pfc. P. J. Greene, Pfc. R. A. Grimaldi, Pvt. K. C. Grinold, Pfc. C. D. Hans, Pvt. H. Hernandez, Pfc. J. O. Hernandez, Pfc. H. N. Johnson III, Pfc. A. D. Jones, Pfc. B. W. Jordan, Pfc. G. A. Juedes, Pvt. M. W. Kibler, Pfc. C. R. Leroy, Pvt. A. J. Lorans, Pvt. C. D. Martin, Pvt. T. E. Mays, Pfc. T. J. McDonald, Pfc. R. P. Melendrez Jr., Pvt. C. E. Miller, Pvt. K. J. Napier, Pvt. J. Nguyen, Pvt. J. V. Nielsen Jr., Pfc. T. D. O'Callaghan, Pvt. H. D. Olvera, Pvt. D. A. Pace, Pvt. D. A. Perez, Pfc. D. A. Peters, Pvt. J. L. Putman, Pvt. C. L. Quesenberry, Pvt. J. T. Reichardt, Pvt. D. W. Rhoades, Pvt. N. Rivera Jr., Pfc. J. Rodriguez, Pfc. D. R. Russell Jr., Pvt. M. R. Ryan, Pvt. C. S. Seager, Pfc. W. C. Shearer, Pvt. E. Sieniarski, Pvt. Q. A. Sloan, Pfc. J. M. Smothers, Pfc. K. N. Stephens, Pfc. V. A. Storelli, Pvt. D. A. Stratton, Pfc. N. A. Tolbert, Pfc. J. M. Toombs, Pvt. B. A. Torres, Pvt. J. Tran, Pvt. W. W. Trimble III, Pvt. B. C. VanHook, Pfc. T. J. Vaughn, Pvt. B. S. Ward, Pfc. H. M. Waters, Pvt. D. M. Wilharm, Pvt. S. T. Williams, Pfc. K. D. Young, Pvt. A. W. Zimmer

Platoon 3065

Pvt. C. M. Abbott, Pvt. N. R. Adams, Pvt. A. M. Anderson, Pvt. B. A. Atkinson, Pvt. A. J. Ayasoto, Pfc. P. J. Bacon, Pvt. C. Bellino, Pfc. M. D. Burgos Jr., Pvt. S. P. Burt, Pvt. R. Bush, Pfc. S. M. Doublet, Pfc. S. Eliassaint, Pvt. C. J. Emerson, Pvt. D. M. Engled, Pvt. T. A. Faircloth, Pfc. C. C. Faircloth, Pvt. K. A. Featherston, Pfc. D. M. Folk, Pvt. J. M. Freyhagen Jr., Pvt. N. C. Gardiner, Pfc. T. L. Gardner, Pfc. M. D. Gaymon, Pfc. W. M. Gebhart, Pfc. P. M. Gilchrist, Pvt. R. T. Glass Jr., Pfc. J. R. Graham, Pfc. P. J. Hagen II, Pvt. A. J. Haseley, Pfc. T. J. Haslet, Pfc. L. D. Hobbs Jr., Pvt. T. A. Holcomb, Pvt. A. C. Hussey, Pfc. J. Hutchins, Pfc. A. R. Iman, Pfc. I. H. Inyang, Pfc. A. C. Johnson, Pfc. J. S. Jones, Pvt. J. D. Kaman, Pfc. Q. H. King-Holder, Pfc. D. E. Kito, Pfc. A. W. Knight, Pfc. N. B. Kunkel, Pfc. C. J. LaPrade, Pvt. P. F. Larson, Pfc. C. J. Lemasters, Pfc. A. M. Lockinour, Pvt. A. B. Long, Pvt. D. J. Marschke, Pfc. K. S. Mearle, Pfc. I. L. McCleve, Pvt. J. J. McKinney, Pfc. S. M. Mordick, Pvt. T. J. Nielsen II, Pfc. M. A. Orr, Pvt. R. A. Ortiz, Pfc. M. J. Ouellette II, Pvt. R. K. Philbrick, Pfc. J. A. Pinckney, Pvt. D. L. Quarles Jr., Pvt. B. T. Queck, Pfc. M. P. Ranucci, Pvt. J. S. Rhodes, Pfc. O. G. Rizograjales, Pfc. L. C. Roberts, Pvt. B. A. Rook, Pvt. A. M. Scott III, Pfc. R. F. Siewert, Pfc. T. T. Smith, Pvt. S. R. Smothers, Pfc. J. R. Sobieraj, Pfc. C. R. Solly, Pvt. J. E. Speight, Pfc. R. A. Spencer, Pfc. D. T. Stamey, Pfc. E. L. Steinke, Pvt. M. R. Tamayo, Pfc. O. N. Tequida, Pfc. M. S. Thompson, Pvt. W. W. Tronolone, Pvt. J. B. Utley, Pfc. B. F. Vaillancourt, Pfc. A. M. Vandemark, Pvt. B. M. Wallace, Pfc. A. W. Webber, Pvt. D. R. Weston, Pfc. K. Whigham, Pvt. J. T. Winn, Pvt. J. S. Wong, Pfc. J. P. Yore, Pvt. A. M. Zimmerman

Platoon 3066

Pfc. R. J. Acevedo, Pvt. D. R. Aiello, Pvt. F. R. Alvarenga, Pfc. W. M. Arcila, Pvt. S. Arias, Pvt. T. D. Arnold, Pfc. C. H. Arrieta, Pvt. A. A. Ayr, Pfc. D. L. Baker, Pfc. J. A. Barrineau, Pvt. D. W. Bass Jr., Pvt. W. D. Bryant, Pfc. W. S. Butler, Pvt. S. L. Camma, Pvt. P. B. Campbell, Pfc. J. S. Cannioto, Pvt. A. J. Cariaslemus, Pvt. D. M. Carpenter, Pvt. J. C. Casey, Pvt. K. D. Caudill, Pvt. R. Cechet, Pvt. D. M. Chauvin Jr., Pfc. M. J. Church Jr., Pvt. T. Q. Clark, Pfc. J. A. Crawford, Pfc. M. T. Cusick, Pfc. D. A. Daly, Pvt. M. J. Dandrea, Pvt. N. G. Dierks, Pfc. J. Dolan, Pfc. B. J. Donegan, Pfc. J. C. Ennis, Pvt. J. A. Erazopaez, Pvt. J. J. Ferris, Pvt. J. G. Gamble, Pfc. C. S. Gayheart, Pvt. M. A. Gonzalez, Pvt. Z. R. Gottlich, Pfc. W. S. Green, Pvt. Z. J. Gulbranson, Pfc. J. S. Haleen, Pvt. J. D. Harville, Pvt. J. D. Jackson, Pvt. D. C. Johnson, Pvt. E. B. Johnson, Pvt. S. S. Johnson, Pvt. M. P. King, Pvt. J. S. Kirchner, Pvt. T. E. Kyser, Pfc. B. M. Larkin, Pvt. B. A. Leon, Pvt. C. A. Mantis, Pfc. J. P. Marconi, Pfc. R. M. McLeod, Pvt. J. L. Musselwhite, Pvt. K. A. Naudsch, Pvt. J. J. Neamonitis, Pvt. J. M. Newton, Pvt. K. A. Noble, Pvt. S. A. O'Neill, Pvt. D. A. Park, Pvt. B. A. Pittman, Pvt. V. N. Plouffe, Pfc. A. D. Prince, Pfc. A. M. Reyes, Pfc. B. W. Rice, Pvt. D. J. Riggsbee, Pfc. R. S. Rozbicki, Pvt. J. A. Saintjean, Pfc. C. M. Sanchez, Pfc. H. A. Sanders, Pvt. T. J. Seybert, Pvt. C. R. Silva, Pfc. A. J. Smith, Pvt. M. J. Smith, Pvt. J. W. Sonderman, Pvt. N. J. Spevak, Pfc. X. C. Stinchcomb, Pfc. D. J. Sutherland, Pvt. J. T. Tinkham, Pvt. W. A. Tunis, Pvt. T. D. Tupper, Pfc. R. Vadrine, Pfc. J. A. Waid, Pfc. E. D. Walden, Pvt. W. M. Ward, Pfc. A. J. Welch, Pvt. J. W. Yelvington

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THE PARRIS ISLAND BOOT

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Photo by Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis

Rct. Carlos Lora-Moreno, 18, of Platoon 3070, Kilo Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, pulls himself onto the top bar of the Reverse Climb obstacle of the Confidence Course at Leatherneck Square on July 3.

Kilo Company builds its confidence

Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis

Staff Writer

The Marines of Kilo Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, built confidence in themselves as they climbed, jumped and ran their way through Parris Island's Confidence Course at Leatherneck Square on July 3.

The obstacles of the Confidence Course tested the recruits' brawn and stamina and gave them a better sense of self-assuredness upon completion.

"Some of the obstacles were difficult, but I just pushed through it,"

said Pvt. Nathan Adams, with Platoon 3065, and a 19-year-old from Orlando, Fla. "Pushing through made me feel really good about myself."

The recruits tackled 15 different obstacles while on the course. Each obstacle presented a unique physical challenge, wearing on the recruits' bodies as they progressed through the course.

"I was very fatigued," Adams said.

Obstacles such as the Arm Walk were particularly difficult for some recruits to finish. The structure is made up of two parallel bars that require recruits to hold up their bod-

ies and cross to the other side.

The course takes more than just strength, said 18-year-old Pvt. Brian Tyras, of Platoon 3068 and a native of Rochester, Ohio. It takes confidence to maneuver through and complete the events.

The Slide for Life was another challenge recruits faced. They climbed a 37-foot ladder and pulled themselves across a diagonal, 85-foot rope, over a pond, back to the ground.

"I had to push myself to my limits," said Pvt. Joshua Flores, a 21-year-old from Miami and of Platoon 3068.

Overall, completing the course's physically taxing events was a con-

fidence booster for recruits.

The course was by no means easy, said 18-year-old Pfc. Aaron Johnson, with Platoon 3065, from Columbus, Ohio. Getting through it made the recruits of Kilo Company feel accomplished, rewarded and more convinced they could succeed during the remainder of recruit training.

The Marines of Kilo Company, who graduate today, have been required to complete a series of demanding tasks since they arrived on Parris Island. They proved they could withstand the physical and mental challenges of their future careers as U.S. Marines.



Photos by Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis

Rct. Joshua Sobieraj, 18, of Platoon 3065, Kilo Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, climbs a rope at the end of an obstacle course during the Crucible in a training area on Parris Island on Aug. 31. The recruits work together to complete each event of the Crucible. Their ultimate goal is to make it to the finish together and earn the title of U.S. Marine. Sobieraj is from Oneida, N.Y.

CRUCIBLE

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The recruits crawled, leaped and sprinted through the events of the Crucible. They ran through the combat endurance course and applied their warfighting skills inside the ring during pugil stick matches. Strenuous hikes, nighttime courses and obstacle courses were all parts of the recruits' final test.

Pfc. Blake Heard, 18, of Platoon 3070, said the Crucible "pushes you to your limits. It definitely shows what you can do."

However, through their exhaustion and discomfort, the recruits remained motivated by the ultimate prize – earning their place in the Corps.

"Everyone is tired and sore, but it's all worth it," said Pfc. Gregory Juedes, 19, of Platoon 3064, from Atlanta. "All the pain and the mud and the water we crawled through, it's all worth it."

After just a few hours of sleep, the recruits awoke on the final day of their Crucible and threw on their uniforms,

packs and rifles to begin the nine-mile hike – the last event that stood between them and their Eagle, Globe and Anchor. Some recruits eagerly anticipated what was ahead.

"I'm excited for today," said Heard, who is from Soddy Daisy, Tenn. "Something that I've always wanted to be is a Marine."

Several hours later, the recruits arrived at the flag-raising statue. Drenched in sweat, they dropped their packs and grouped themselves around the statue. The time had come.

The drill instructors presented each of them with a Marine Corps emblem, officially making them U.S. Marines.

This is something they had to earn, something they can take pride in, Bianchi said.

"We've worked hard and this is what we came here for," Juedes said. "To finally join the brotherhood and earn the title."

"I'm a United States Marine," said Imikan Inyang, 20, from Orlando, Fla., and Platoon 3065.



Tears stream down the face of 19-year-old Rct. Quadir King-Holder, Platoon 3065, Kilo Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, during the Eagle, Globe and Anchor ceremony at the Iwo Jima flag-raising statue on Parris Island on Sept. 1. The recruits receive their emblems after completing the 54-hour Crucible.

More of the story

FUEL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

fruits and vegetables throughout the week, Carles said. Male recruits consume approximately 3,950 calories per day, while females eat about 2,700.

"We have to ensure that additional calories are included to compensate for energy expenditure," Hite said. "And we ensure that they get as healthy a meal as possible."

The foods on the menu consist of about 60 to 65 percent carbohydrates, 10 to 15 percent protein and less than 30 percent fat, she added.

"It gives you everything you need to give 100 percent throughout the day," said 24-year-old Pfc. Lennon Hobbs, of Platoon 3065, from New-

burgh, N.Y.

After several draining hours of nonstop training, recruits crave nourishment and are eager to enter the mess hall.

"You can see other recruits looking forward to [chow] because their bodies are dead," said Pfc. Quadir King-Holder, 19, of Platoon 3065, from New Brunswick, N.J. "They don't have any more energy left."

"After you eat chow, you feel so much better. You have 10 times more energy," Hobbs said.

Recruits gather their trays, cups and cutlery and dispose of the uneaten remnants of their meals. They exit the mess hall feeling re-energized and rejuvenated, ready to take on whatever challenges they may face during the remainder of the day.



Photo by Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis

Rct. Charles LaPrade, 21, of Platoon 3065, Kilo Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, takes a bite of his apple during his evening meal at the consolidated recruit mess hall on Parris Island on Aug. 14. Recruits are provided fresh fruits and vegetables as part of the daily diet. The three meals they receive each day help keep them energized throughout training.

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Marines consider increased role for women in Corps

Jim Garamone

American Forces
Press Service

WASHINGTON – The Marine Corps has opened a number of fields to women, the service's commandant said Aug. 28, and the experiences of the first women to go through the Infantry Officer Course next month will help him as he makes recommendations for an increased role for female Marines.

Gen. James F. Amos spoke at the National Press Club, and reporters asked about the future for women in combat.

The commandant said many women have been in combat in the wars fought over the last decade. "Women in combat have not been an issue," he said.

Marine Corps officials have identified specific "open specialty" billets in units that have been closed to women to allow women to serve in

those units. For example, though a female company grade officer will not be assigned to an artillery battalion as an artillery officer, a female logistics officer can be assigned as an artillery battalion's logistic's officer.

"Early indications are that that was precisely the right thing to do," Amos said.

The question of women serving in infantry positions needs more data to answer, and the Corps is in the process of getting that information, the general said. Marines are receiving a survey on the subject now.

"That has yet to come in, and when it does, it will answer a lot of questions we have about women, specifically in infantry," Amos said.

The general told reporters he wants to "get past hyperbole and past the intuition and instincts."

"I need to get facts," he said.

Next month, two wom-

en will attend the Marine Infantry Officer Course at Quantico, Va. They will spend 13 weeks going through very difficult training, and must meet the same standard that men do. "That's the standard," the commandant said.

"That's what it takes to be an infantry officer in the Marine Corps."

The two women will provide him with the data he needs to make recommendations to Congress, to the defense secretary and to the secretary of the Navy, Amos said.

"We will collect the data, and then we will see where we are," he added. "I'm not the least bit afraid of the data."

The Corps is running a series of studies on aspects of physical strength needed in the Marines for both men and women, the general noted.

"We are going to do this the right way to set the conditions for success," he said.

Marine Corps shooting teams: competition breeds excellence

Cpl. Chelsea Flowers Anderson

Defense Media Activity

A Marine stares through the scope of his weapon at a target just 200 yards away. His finger rests lightly on the trigger as he breathes in slowly and steadily. As the Marine exhales, he gently squeezes the trigger. The carefully aimed projectile twists out of the barrel and sails through the air, striking the target with flawless accuracy.

The acutely honed marksmanship skills Marine marksmen strive

to perfect will aid in destroying the enemy. And the dead-on accuracy of expert shooters helps ensure Marines win competition medals as members of the Marine Corps' shooting team.

Winning, or even ensuring every Marine is a rifleman, hasn't always been the case for the Corps.

Before 1900, marksmanship in the Marine Corps was far from impressive – less than an estimated 100 Marines could meet basic marksmanship requirements. And when Marines on the Corps' rifle team fin-

ished poorly in their first shooting match in 1901, they decided to take aim on becoming the best.

Born out of that very first Marine Corps rifle team were the drive and desire that developed into ensuring every Marine is a rifleman.

The Corps' leadership instituted training and standards for marksmanship. They also provided incentives, such as a three dollar per month pay bonus for those that qualified as rifle experts. Their hard work paid off – by 1911, the Corps was winning competitions. Better yet, the ethos of

excellence was taking hold and by 1917, every Marine sent to the fight was a trained and qualified marksman.

This dedication to excellence no doubt played a pivotal role in Marines winning in battle as well. The accounts from the fierce fighting at Belleau Wood bear evidence that the enemy could not advance, even with artillery and machine gun fire, against the accuracy and range of Marine riflemen.

"Marksmanship is something that's in our roots," said Capt. Nicholas J. Roberge, officer in charge of the

Marine Corps rifle and pistol shooting teams at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. "Marines are good shooters. We should keep that tradition going as long as we can."

Team members appreciate their unique experience to represent the Corps and are willing to put forth the effort and discipline required to maintain their expertise, said Cpl. Neil Sookdeo, small-arms weapons instructor and a member of the 2011 Marine Corps shooting team.

Team members spend as much of their time as possible putting rounds down-range. They host mini competitions to keep training diverse and interesting.

"If you shoot the same thing over and over, you get bored with it," Roberge said. "We try to shoot different weapons at rapid and slow fires just to change the training up."

All the work that team members put forth gives them a sense of pride in what they do.

"It's a big honor," Sookdeo said. "There aren't a lot of people in the Marine Corps that get to do it. It takes a lot of work to get here, and the people that do get here recognize it. We don't take it for granted, not for a second."

Those with the top marksmanship skills to become members of the rifle and pistol teams join a rich history of elite marksmanship in the Corps, a history cur-

rent members and future members will continue in coming years.

Qualifying for one of the Corps' shooting teams is tough. Roughly a dozen Marines were chosen to compete on the Corps' 2012 rifle and pistol teams. Although team members represent various military occupational specialties, the Marines have two things in common: their skill in marksmanship and their eagerness to learn then share their knowledge with the rest of the Corps.

"The whole intent of the shooting program is to obtain and master as many advanced marksmanship skills as you can and then share those techniques with other Marines," Roberge said.

One of the Marines chosen to share his expertise is Sgt. Louis Esparza. He was selected to be head coach of the Marine Corps pistol team after racking up an impressive record for marksmanship competition at division matches on Okinawa and the Marine Corps championship at Quantico. He furthered his record, advancing to third place out of more than a hundred competitors at the 2011 interservice pistol competition – the first Marine to place in the top three in the past five years.

Esparza said experience on the teams ensures team members have more in-depth expertise on marksmanship, making them better teachers for other Marines.

"We take Marines and teach them how to digest all the little bits of fundamentals," Esparza said. "They go out and teach other Marines. That's why it's really important."

The passing of this knowledge begins with instruction on shooting. The Marines train and coach all second lieutenants who attend The Basic School in Quantico as well as Marines requalifying in and around Washington, D.C. Team members also pass their marksmanship knowledge on to more elite shooters and possible future Marine Corps team competitors during intramural competitions and the yearly division competitions at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Hawaii, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., and Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan.

The best shooters from around the Marine Corps participate in these matches and the top competitors are often considered for the official shooting teams.

In addition to Marines, the shooting team members work with civilian groups and other service members at various matches and clinics around the country. This only further helps to diversify the team's techniques.

"Whether Marine, other service member, or civilian, each type of shooter brings his individual experiences to the table," Roberge said. "This exchange of ideas enhances each shooter, and furthers the development of marksmanship throughout the nation. Where we may be limited in certain areas or disciplines, civilians may have different techniques we were otherwise not aware of."

These additional techniques enhance the Marines' performance as they prepare for competitions later in the year.



Photo by Cpl. Chelsea Flowers Anderson

Sgt. Sean Morris, member of the Marine Corps shooting team, sights in during practice at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. on Dec. 8. For the last 100 years, the Marine Corps shooting team has carried on the legacy of elite marksmanship in the Corps by scoring high in competitions as well as instructing other Marines in the fundamentals of marksmanship.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Buckwalter

Maxx, a dog trained to find improvised explosive devices, stands next to his handler, Lance Cpl. Stephen Mader, at Combat Outpost Paserlay in Afghanistan on July 26. Mader, with 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, volunteered to go through a five-week school in the U.S. to work with improvised explosive device detector dogs. He's an infantry mortarman by trade, but deployed to use Maxx to help sniff out IEDs and other explosives before they could damage vehicles or Marines.

FOLLOWING THE SCENT:

EXPLOSIVE DETECTOR DOG, HIS HANDLER PROTECT MARINES

Staff Sgt. Brian Buckwalter
Regimental Combat Team 6

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Riding in an armored truck over Afghanistan's rutted dirt roads is scarcely a smooth or comfortable experience.

Each bump is felt as leaf springs groan and creak under the weight of the mine resistant, ambush-protected vehicle. The air conditioner circulates dusty air, and unless you're right next to the vents, you're drenched in sweat. Body armor weighs down on shoulders and compounds the pain of sitting in one spot for hours on end.

For Lance Cpl. Stephen Mader and his dog Maxx, this experience is routine. Mader is an improvised explosive device detector dog handler with 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment.

Their vehicle hits a large bump. Water in a metal dish near the truck's back entrance splashes onto the floor. Maxx, who was dozing, stands up, puts his front paws on Mader's lap and nuzzles his head against Mader's body armor.

Mader wraps his arms around Maxx, gives him a pat on the side, a scratch behind the ears and reassures him everything is alright.

Maxx, settles back down, his chin across Mader's boots – his spot – and closes his eyes again.

"It's basically like having a 3-year-old in Afghanistan," said Mader, who is responsible for every aspect of Maxx's care.

He feeds him, cleans him and even monitors Maxx's behavior for signs of stress or fatigue.

And like most 3-year-olds, Maxx, a yellow Labrador, always wants attention.

"Otherwise, he'll start licking me," Mader said.

Mader and Maxx have been together for seven months since they met at the five-week handler school in Southern Pines, N.C. The dogs come to the school pretrained to obey commands and

track explosive scents. Human students go to learn how to handle the dogs.

School instructors interviewed Mader about his demeanor and personality and asked questions like, "Are you laid back or a hard-charger?" to get an idea of which dog to assign him (Mader said he's a mix of both).

Mader, who joined the Marine Corps in 2009, said the dog needs a good rapport with their handler. If there is a personality clash, the dog won't perform. Maxx is a perfect match, he said.

"If I want to be playful and active, he will be. But, if I want to relax, he'll lay down next to me," Mader said.

Overall, Maxx, who is 4-years-old, is "pretty chill," and will sleep when he's not working, Mader said. But, Maxx does have his wild streaks like when he breaks out of his kennel. He also likes to try to swim in the canals in the southern Helmand River Valley where the battalion often travels.

"He'll try, and I'll have to stop him," said Mader.

Unlike some military working dogs, IDD's are not trained to be aggressive. Because of this, handlers have the discretion to allow other Marines to approach or pet their dogs. Maxx is popular with the Marines and gets a lot of attention. But, when it comes time to work, he's ready to go.

"In the truck, he's like a pet, but whenever we're out there, he's like a tool," said Mader. And, "they're a great tool to have if you use them correctly."

The duo spends a lot of time on the road. Maxx can sense where they are.

"It's weird, but he'll know what (forward operating base) we're going to," said Mader. When they're getting close to Forward Operating Base Geronimo, a larger, more built-up base, Maxx will get excited and start pacing. When they approach a smaller, more desolate place like Combat Outpost Rankle, "he'll just lay there."

When Mader and Maxx aren't on the road or working, they're training. After missions, while other Marines are relaxing, Mader is making sure Maxx's tracking skills stay sharp.

Maxx isn't trained with food, rather, with a rubber bouncy toy called a bumper. The bumper is used as a reward for performing a task – either in training or a real scenario – successfully. When the bumper comes out, it's a morale boost for the dog, Mader said.

Even with the long hours and the extra responsibilities of being a dog handler, Mader said it's "the best thing to happen to me in the Marine Corps."

After this deployment, if there is a need and an opportunity, Mader said he would volunteer to be a handler again.

"I love being with the dogs," he said.

As the Afghan National Army continues to take over more of the security responsibilities in Helmand province, Marine Corps officials said they anticipate the number of dogs currently serving to be reduced in the near future, correlating with the reduction in Marine forces in the region.

If Maxx is no longer needed, Mader said he wants to adopt him.

"I don't want to give him up," Mader said. "I've bonded too much to give him up."

Mader looks down at Maxx, who is still asleep across Mader's boots, unaware of the potential dangers outside of their vehicle. The occasional hard bump in the road is the only thing that stirs him from his nap on this ride.

However, if needed, the pair will be ready to go on a moment's notice to track down the scent of any explosives on the route, potentially preventing vehicle damage, injuries or worse.

"A local kid asked if he could buy Maxx for \$10," Mader recalled. "I had to tell him he's worth a little bit more than that."

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-10PMMarine Corps Exchange (MCE) Open
- 6AM-6PMMarine Corps Exchange (MCE) Food Court Open
- 7AM-5PMEngraving Shop open
- 7:30AM-4PMDouglas Visitors' Center open - please register upon arrival
Java Café (9AM-11:30AM)
Graduation Station (8AM-4PM)
- 9AM-4PMFamily 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
- LUNCHTraditions (Officer/SNCO Club), Food Court, Subway, Golf Course, Back Yard Burgers
- 1:30PM-3:30PMFamily Orientation Brief at the Lyceum
- 5PM-8PMSteak Night at Traditions (Officer/SNCO Club).
Reservations required

Thursday

Welcome to Family Liberty Day at Parris Island

- 6AM-4PMDouglas Visitors' Center open - please register upon arrival
Java Café (6AM-2PM)
Graduation Station (6AM-4PM)
- 6AM-10PMMarine Corps Exchange (MCE) Open
- 6AM-6PMMarine Corps Exchange (MCE) Food Court Open
- 7AM-5PMEngraving Shop open
- 7AMMotivational Run - Peatross Parade Deck
- 8AMDepot Museum Opens
- 8:15AMAll Weather Training Facility (AWTF) Opens
- 9:30AM-10AM.....Battalion Commander's Brief to Families & Liberty Ceremony (AWTF)
- 10AM-2PMMarksmanship Training Unit Open House
- 10AMLiberty Begins
- 10:30AM-1PM.....Family Day Buffet at the Lyceum - new Marines eat for free!
- 2PMWarrior's Prayer at the Recruit Chapel
- 3PMLiberty Ends
- 3PM-4PMMarine Corps 101 at Douglas Visitors' Center
- 5PMMeet & Greet with Depot Command at Traditions Lounge
- 5:30PMWelcome from the Command
- 5:45PMFamily Day Dinner with Depot Command at Traditions (Officer/SNCO Club)
Advance reservations guarantee admittance

Friday

Welcome to Graduation Day at Parris Island

- 6AM-2PMDouglas Visitors' Center open
Java Café (6AM-12PM)
Graduation Station (6AM-12PM)
- 6AM-10PMMarine Corps Exchange (MCE) Open
- 6AM-6PMMarine Corps Exchange (MCE) Food Court Open
- 7AM-5PMEngraving Shop open
- 7:45AMMorning Colors at Barrow Hall
- 9AM-10AMGraduation at Peatross Parade Deck (weather permitting)
- 11AM-1PMLunch Buffet at Traditions (Officer/SNCO Club)

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