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CHEVRON



AND THE WESTERN RECRUITING REGION



Pfc. Michael R. Gama, Platoon 1074, Delta Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, pushes himself while performing crunches during the Physical Fitness Test aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Oct. 30. Gama endured and overcame family hardship while growing up, which solidified his decision of becoming a United States Marine.

Marine overcomes obstacles, joins Corps

STORY & PHOTOS BY
SGT. BENJAMIN E. WOODLE
Chevron staff

With the creation of a Marine comes the forging of the skills and traits that have been carried throughout the life of the Corps. Some of those traits include being able to make do with what they have and the ability to adapt and overcome. Pfc. Michael R. Gama, Platoon 1074, Delta Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, displayed these traits well before joining the Corps while growing up.

Gama was born and raised in Redding, Calif. As he recalled, his first couple of years as a child was spent in a bad family situation. Because of this, he was removed from the family when he was three-and-

a-half-years-old and was adopted by another.

“I was put into a really good family,” said Gama, who was recruited out of Recruiting Substation Redding, Calif. “My dad was a United States probation officer and my mom worked for her dad at his construction company. I also lived with my two stepsisters.”

Gama enjoyed a good life with a good family. While in the 3rd grade he took a test that labeled him a genius. His parents were given the option to let him skip a grade, but decided they wanted him to stay with the kids his age and keep his regular schedule.

Gama’s life suddenly changed in the 7th grade, when he was temporarily removed from the family and placed back into fos-

ter care. Gama recalled the living conditions were a far cry from standards he had grown up in.

“The foster housing I lived in wasn’t very adequate,” said 18-year-old Gama. “It was a small room with just a bed, blanket and pillow. I didn’t have a lot of space for clothes, and I only had a couple pairs that I was sent, so I was always wearing the same set over and over. I was made fun of a lot at school because of it and eventually just looked filthy.”

While with the foster family, Gama wasn’t allowed to talk or receive any visits from his parents until it was determined it was safe for his return. When he did return, things weren’t the same.

see **MARINE** ▶4

Company F recruits begin journey to master rifles

STORY & PHOTOS BY
SGT. BENJAMIN E. WOODLE
Chevron staff

The Rifleman’s Creed, which is basic part of the Marine Corps doctrine, outlines the important relationship between a Marine and his rifle. That relationship begins during the first training day of recruit training.

Recruits of Fox Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, began the journey to mastering their rifle during the Rifle Issue event aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Nov. 3.

During recruit training, each recruit is required to learn and memorize the creed, and its requirement is due to one simple fact.

“Every Marine is a rifleman,” said Sgt. Trevon L. Wilson, drill instructor, Platoon 2126. “With their rifle we’ll train them in marksmanship and drill, which will help instill an instant obedience to orders.”

Recruits arrived at the depot armory and lined up behind a workbench. They were issued a rifle cleaning kit, and then each piece of the kit was inspected to ensure all the parts were functional and

included. After the gear was inspected, recruits were issued their M16-A4 Service Rifles.

Some recruits were inspired with in-

stant motivation to learn all about the weapon.

see **RIFLES** ▶4



Sgt. Steven J. Kelly, drill instructor, Platoon 2125, Company F, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, teaches recruits how to label their newly issued M16-A4 service rifle during Rifle Issue at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Nov. 3. Over the course of training, drill instructors and primary marksmanship instructors will teach recruits all aspects of the rifle, from cleaning and maintenance to marksmanship.

BRIEFS

Winter Safety Stand Down

A Winter Safety Stand down will be held at McDougal Hall, Nov. 18.

Two sessions will be held. The first is from 8 to 10 a.m. The second is from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

For information call Kathleen Atkins at (619) 524-8770.

Thanksgiving celebration

The depot’s Single Marine Program will celebrate Thanksgiving from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Nov. 27, at the Boathouse and Marina.

There will be free food and beverages, and the free use of paddle boards, kayaks, pedal boats, etc.

For information contact Johanna at jonesjoa@usmc-mccs.org.

Thanksgiving buffet

The Bayview Restaurant offers a Thanksgiving Buffet Nov. 27, from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

The menu includes sirloin of beef Au’Ju, turkey, Cornish game hens, pasta, salads and all the trimmings; and a dessert station featuring cakes, pies, Bailey’s Irish Cream bread pudding with Bailey’s Cream glaze, assorted cookies, brownies, fruit-&-nut bars.

Cost is \$31.95 for adults, \$25.95 for active duty and seniors, \$15.95 for children five to 11 years of age. Children under five eat for free.

Call (619) 725-6388 for reservations.

2014 Turkey Trot 5K Fun Run

The depot is scheduled to hold its annual Turkey Trot Nov. 21 at the MCRD Fieldhouse Lawn. This is a Commanding General Cup event.

The run is free for all authorized patrons (active duty, dependents, reservist, civilian employees and retirees). A \$10 fee is required for all guests. Registration for authorized patrons may be accomplished via the net at mcrdturkeytrot.eventbrite.com. Online registration closes at 11:55 p.m., Nov. 18. Authorized patrons and all guests may register on the day of the race from 10:30 a.m. at the Fieldhouse.

The race begins at 1 p.m.

For information call (619) 524-5655.

Tun Tavern Tea

The MCRD Museum Foundation will host its annual Tun Tavern Tea at the depot’s Command Museum Visitor Reception Center Dec. 6, from 2 to 5 p.m.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

This holiday event includes hors d’oeuvres and holiday refreshments compliments of the Foundation.

The event will recognize Volunteers of the Year from the Command Museum, the Foundation and the Docent Program, as well as thank all Foundation volunteers and supporters of the past year.

Those attending the event are asked to bring at least one new, unwrapped toy for the Marine Corps’s Toys for Tots program.

Dress is civilian informal.

For information call the Foundation office at (619) 524-4426.

Send briefs to:

rdsd_pao@usmc.mil. The Chevron staff reserves the right to publish only those briefs that comply with Department of Defense regulations and the standards of the U.S. Government.



Marines with 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, drag their Zodiac boat to shore at Onslow Beach, N.C., during beach operations training at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Nov. 4, as part of Exercise Bold Alligator 14. Bold Alligator 14 is a scenario-driven exercise designed to improve naval amphibious core competence, increase proficiency in operations ranging from foreign disaster relief to limited force entry and help grow interoperability with coalition forces.

Bold Alligator 2014 moves to beach operations training

STORY & PHOTOS BY
CPL. JAMES SMITH
II Marine Expeditionary Force

JACKSONVILLE, N.C. – The silhouettes of U.S. naval ships could be seen in the distance cruising off the coast of Onslow Beach, North Carolina, on the morning of Nov. 4.

Marines with 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force slipped ashore early in the morning to scout possible landing areas as part of Exercise Bold Alligator 14. The joint, scenario-driven exercise was designed to hone the naval services' expeditionary model for the 21st century.

Beach operations began with reconnaissance Marines securing a small foothold ashore to pave the way for follow-on forces.

"Once we landed our teams at Onslow Beach, we posted security, got the boats up onto the high water mark, pushed [inland] and started performing reconnaissance," said Sgt. Kyle Czapp, a team leader with 2nd Recon Bn. "For Bold Alligator, what we are testing out is getting these [reconnaissance] reports from the beach back to the ship so that follow-on forces can follow us in here and have an idea of what they're looking at before they get to shore."

Czapp said that his Marines have been preparing for this operation by conducting vigor-

ous training and performing numerous run-throughs of the exercise.

"We've been doing amphibious operations for the past six to seven months, not only in preparation for Bold Alligator, but just for our regular tasks as well," said Czapp, a native from Warren, Michigan. "We've been sending people through dive school, practicing hydrographic surveys and going through rehearsals of this for the past three weeks."

Beyond amphibious operations, Czapp said his Marines are also able to utilize their various land and airborne insertion capabilities to provide commanders with valuable intelligence on the ground.

"Battle-space shaping is a huge ability that we bring to the fight," said Czapp. "It allows commanders to make better timely decisions on what forces they want to bring in after us and gives them a better idea of what's happening on the ground."

Shortly after the reconnaissance Marines landed, assault amphibious vehicles began making their way toward shore, sliding in behind the Marines of 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion.

"Our purpose is to move in, assault and secure the beach with a company of (infantry) embarked with my platoon," said 1st Lt. Lee McKinnon, assault amphibious vehicle platoon commander for 1st

Platoon, Charlie Company, 2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 2nd Marine Division. "We are the first wave to come through and secure the beach. Once we secure the beach, we push inland and secure main supply routes, essentially opening up supply lines for the Special Purpose [Marine Air Ground Task Force]."

Throughout the operation, the Marines were able to work hand in hand with U.S. Navy vessels and their Brazilian counterparts, who were familiar with operating the AAVs and

performed the beach operation alongside 2nd AA Bn.

As the Marine Corps prepares for future operations, coalition partners will continue to play a large role alongside forward deployed crisis response and Marine Expeditionary Units around the world.

"The future of the Marine Corps is shifting back more toward amphibious roots," said McKinnon. "Now that we're moving that shift more toward the maritime forces again, we're putting a lot more effort into building our readiness as a sea-

going military."

By practicing these types of maneuvers and executing operations on both land and sea, the Navy-Marine Corps team can aid force projection from the sea and support MAGTFs with logistical capabilities.

"The amphibious assault vehicles are what make the Marine Corps amphibious," said McKinnon. "Bringing these vehicles to the fight and coming with that type of firepower and overwhelming force is essential to the Marine Corps' mission and what we do as Marines."



Assault amphibious vehicles with 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, 2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, drive ashore at Onslow Beach, N.C.

CHEVRON

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Platoon 1074 SERIES HONOR MAN Pfc. J. R. Mott Norwalk, Calif. Recruited by Staff Sgt. F. Castil-Blanco
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1st RECRUIT TRAINING BATTALION



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 Battalion Drill Master

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* Indicates Meritorious Promotion

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 Pvt. R. B. Gastelum
 Pvt. J. D. Graves
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 Pfc. S. S. Best
 Pfc. B. S. Blagrave
 Pvt. C. C. Cannon
 Pfc. K. B. Cell
 Pfc. P. W. Cooksey
 Pvt. M. A. Copeland
 *Pfc. T. H. Cross
 Pvt. J. J. Demkowicz
 Pfc. A. C. Doehrmann
 Pvt. B. N. Ford
 Pvt. K. A. Freer
 Pvt. D. M. Hill
 Pvt. P. Khadka
 Pvt. P. D. Kilbourne
 Pfc. H. C. Knight

Pvt. J. J. Kohler
 Pfc. A. L. Kristof
 Pfc. M. E. Lassak
 Pvt. Z. D. Lederer
 Pvt. G. T. Long
 Pvt. A. Lozano
 Pvt. C. J. McDow
 Pvt. L. H. McGruder
 Pvt. J. H. McQuinn
 Pvt. M. L. Meek
 *Pfc. P. C. Mikus
 Pvt. B. K. Mundhenk
 Pvt. S. D. Murphy
 Pvt. A. R. Ocampo
 Pvt. D. S. Palacios
 Pvt. A. W. Pruitt
 Pfc. V. Quintero III
 Pfc. J. H. Ressler
 Pfc. S. E. Ressler
 Pvt. M. Reyna
 Pvt. A. T. Richards
 Pvt. N. S. Rock
 Pvt. R. S. Rodriguez
 Pvt. A. M. Roediger Jr.
 Pvt. A. Roman-Villalobos
 Pvt. B. M. Ryner
 Pvt. A. N. Saldana
 Pvt. B. D. Sanders
 Pvt. S. A. Sandoval Jr.
 Pvt. D. D. Schroeder
 Pvt. C. M. Schumacher
 Pvt. A. E. Silva
 Pvt. D. T. Simmons
 Pvt. O. A. Solis
 Pfc. W. S. Spence III
 Pvt. P. J. Steffanic
 Pfc. R. T. Stewart
 Pvt. A. N. Sturdivant
 Pvt. D. J. Svir
 Pvt. H. A. Szostek
 Pfc. K. W. Tallchief
 *Pfc. M. J. Taveras
 Pvt. X. M. Thao
 Pvt. D. Valenzuela
 Pfc. L. T. Vance
 Pvt. T. S. VanSickle
 *Pfc. I. Y. Vue
 Pvt. D. R. Wallmann
 Pvt. S. D. Ward
 Pvt. T. B. Wenck
 Pfc. D. N. Wescott Jr.
 Pvt. B. A. White
 Pvt. T. S. Wilson
 Pfc. D. J. Wofford
 Pvt. C. S. Worley
 Pvt. A. J. Wurst
 Pfc. H. A. York
 Pfc. S. K. Young
 *Pfc. D. C. Zebell



Pfc. Michael R. Gama, Platoon 1074, Company D, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, sprints to the finish line during the three-mile portion of the Physical Fitness Test. Gama endured family hardship while growing up, which solidified his decision of becoming a United States Marine.

MARINE ◀ 1

"I didn't feel normal anymore," said Gama. "Everything was ripped from me and my life was completely upside down."

Gama had excelled so much in soccer that he was sponsored by Nike in 7th grade. However, due to the family situation and his move, he was dropped and had to leave the team.

"The drama had caused a lot of tension between the family and started to make me feel like I didn't belong there anymore," said Gama. "My father had to get a truck driving job and was gone all the time, and my mother had to pick up an extra job, so no one was ever home. When I turned 16 I got a job as well, so when I came home at night my mom was already asleep because she would have to get up early before I was awake for school."

Seven months before Gama was scheduled to graduate high school, he decided to move out unexpectedly.

"I didn't give anyone a warning," said Gama. "My parents didn't even know I was gone half the time, so I figured I'm just going to continue living by myself doing what I needed to do."

He occasionally stayed with friends but mainly lived out of his car. He explained the reason he moved out was because the tension became high with his parents and he didn't have anyone to talk to except his recruiter or friends he had made from the recruiting station.

The path to the Marine Corps started years before when Gama was sent back to foster care.

"That time really changed my personality," said Gama. It wasn't about myself anymore. I started thinking about all the other people who were in my situation and had the desire to help others and not be so self-

centered."

Gama explained he had a friend whose father was in the Marine Corps, and passed away while in the service. His friend wanted to carry on his father's legacy and explained the Marine Corps to Gama.

"In talking to my friend, I learned more about the Marines and the strong brotherhood and great legacy they had," said Gama. "The impact they leave on people was so overwhelming that I decided that's what I wanted to do."

Standing on the yellow footprints at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Gama started to doubt his desire to be there, but things changed after making a simple realization.

"I started to realize that drill instructors were telling us to do the same thing over and over again to get that attention to detail," said Gama. "When they scream and yell at you, at first I thought it was miserable, but realized that when you're in combat, you're going to have people screaming and yelling at you so you shouldn't take offense to any of it."

Drill instructors noticed that Gama had seemed to figure out how to handle the chaos and took to their direction very easily.

"From day one he stood out as being one of those kids who was most motivated and really wanted to be there," said Sgt. Aaron S. Torres, senior drill instructor, Plt. 1074. "We would instruct him one time, and he would automatically get it and know what he needed to do."

Forging a new brotherhood now as a United States Marine, Gama moves on to the School of Infantry at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., to complete his military occupational specialty training as an infantryman.

RIFLES ◀ 1

"I wanted to learn every bit and piece so I know how to use weapon to the best of my ability," said Recruit Jerry A. Ramos, Plt. 2126. "We're considered the best fighting force in the world, so we need to be able to shoot like it."

Recruits, some of who have never touched a weapon before, will learn all aspects of the rifle over the course of recruit training and fulfill the passages of the Rifleman's Creed.

"We'll teach them the parts, how to break down the weapon, simulate attacks with it during the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program training, and with the help of primary marksmanship instructors, teach them to utilize and put rounds effectively down range," said Wilson, a Downingtown, Pa., native. "They'll also learn that during recruit training, the weapon they are being issued is their weapon. They will be required to memorize its serial number and have it on them at all times or always be able to account for it."

The Marine Corps prides itself with the fact of 'every Marine a rifleman.' It is one of the critical aspects that allows for the flexibility with employing a Marine in a combat environment.

"In order to be 'every Marine a rifleman' you must be trained that way," said Ramos, an Anaheim, Calif., native recruited out of Recruiting Substation Anaheim, Calif. "Once you master



Cpl. Cesar Alvarado, armorer, Headquarters Company, Headquarters and Service Battalion, left, hands an M16-A4 Service Rifle to Recruit Koree D. Cartwright, Platoon 2127, Fox Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, during Rifle Issue, Nov. 3. Cartwright is a native of Houston and was recruited out of Recruiting Substation Memorial City, Texas.

how to use it, no matter what job you have, you have to continue to be the best at it."

Fox Company left the armory with their weapons at

their sides in an effort to earn the title Marine. Their drill capabilities will be tested during Initial and Final Drill as well as their marksmanship skills

at Edson Range aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

"Most of everything we do it teamwork, but the rifle is about

the individual," said Wilson. "It's critical that they focus and become one with the weapon or else they won't be able to properly utilize it."