



CHEVRON

AND THE WESTERN RECRUITING REGION



Lance Cpl. James M. Cates, Platoon 3245, Lima Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, mans a fighting hole during the Basilone's Challenge event at Edson Range, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 20. Cates graduates today as the Lima Company honorman.

Guide, honorman explains his ways

STORY & PHOTO BY
CPL. TYLER VIGLIONE
Chevron staff

When it comes to recruit training, just completing it is tough enough. But it takes a special person to stand up and take the responsibility to lead his platoon.

Lance Cpl. James M. Cates, Platoon 3245, Lima Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, took charge of his platoon as soon as he got the chance early in recruit training.

Cates is a native of Prior Lake, Minn., where he attended Prior Lake High

School, and he began thinking about the Marine Corps during his sophomore year when a Marine Corps recruiter visited at his school.

Cates explains that serving in the military has always been in his mind because he has family members who have also served.

"I saw my cousins and my uncle and the discipline and brotherhood they learned and received from the military, and it was something that I always wanted," said Cates.

He enlisted on June 17, 2014, and left for recruit training on Nov. 3.

"When I first arrived to the depot, I

was in shock, just like everyone one is supposed to be," said 19-year-old Cates. "I was excited and nervous but also anticipating what was to come."

During his first weeks of training, Cates explains he just observed and took mental notes to get a grasp on recruit training. He had no intentions of being guide.

On training day 18, the platoon's guide was fired, and the drill instructors were looking for a new recruit to stand up and lead.

"When we asked the recruits who they wanted to vote as guide they all said

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Center opens

STORY BY
CPL. TYLER VIGLIONE
Chevron staff

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program is open to service members, veterans and their families at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. The center is located in Building 12 and offers tax preparations free of charge.

The tax center is comprised of seven fully-trained Marines who have undergone rigorous training from both the Internal Revenue Service and the California Franchise Tax Board to ensure they are capable of handling every situation.

"We have been trained for anything really," said Sgt. Jesus J. Colon, Quality Control non-commissioned officer in charge. "We spent two weeks at (Marine Corps Air Station) Miramar receiving all day classes dealing with both state and federal tax forms. Also we spent weeks training for our certifications and qualifications here in the center."

While the center is focused on getting Marines the most money back, they also offer advice to Marines, especially young ones.

"We want to focus on junior Marines," said Colon, a native of

Lajas, Puerto Rico. "Many times they bring in the wrong documents or don't bring documents that need to be filed for them to get the money back. Marines can use the money that we are saving them to go out and buy things they need."

Colon explains that some common mistakes are Marines not bringing prior employment documents, in the case they are new to the Marine Corps and had been employed elsewhere for part of the year. Another common issue is that parents still claim the Marines on their taxes, which could result in a smaller refund for them.

The tax center makes it easy for Marines who are on a tight schedule to still be able to file their taxes.

Applicants must bring a copy of their military identification card, social security card and any applicable tax documents.

Walk-in hours are from 8 to 11 a.m., and appointments can be made from 1 to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The deadline for filing taxes this year is April 17, but the tax center will be open through May 1 in the case of late returns or ones that need to be corrected.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, the Tax Center can be reached at (619) 524-8643 or by e-mail at MCRDSD_VITA_TAX1@usmc.mil.

BRIEFS

VITA MCRD Tax Center

The VITA MCRD Tax Center will open Jan. 26, with walk-ins from 8 to 11 a.m. and appointments from 1 to 4 p.m. The MCRD Tax Center is located at Bldg. 12. Service is free for service members, dependents and retirees.

Bring two forms of ID, social security cards for self and dependents and the prior year's tax returns.

To make an appointment call (619) 524-8643 or (619) 524-8713.

Gate 5 construction

The first phase of construction for Gate 5 has begun near Building 230 (Pass & ID). Construction consists of a new gate/guard house, additional vehicle inspection lanes, a new Pass and ID Building and improved traffic routing through the Gate 5 area.

Vehicle traffic patterns inbound and outbound of Gate 5 will change over the course of construction. Changes will be published.

For information, call Jim Vogel, FACDIV Engineer, at (619) 524-4392.

Super Bowl party

MCCS is sponsoring a Super Bowl party as a troop appreciation event, Feb. 1 in the recreation center. Doors will open at 10 a.m.

The first 100 patrons (age 18 and older) to arrive will receive a free T-shirt and automatic entry into the Squares Game. Pizza, wings and drink specials will be available and the game will be viewed on 25 large flat screen TVs and on a 200 inch projection screen television.

Career & Education Fair

The depot will host a Career & Education Fair Feb. 11, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m.

The event will be held at Building 650, the Semper Fit Fieldhouse, and is open and free to active duty, reserve military, family members, military retirees, DoD civilians and others with access to military installations.

Come dressed to impress. You will meet with representatives from top employers and education agencies. Those attending will receive free academic advisement and will learn more about GI Bill Benefits.

For information or updates, contact Mina Threat at mina.threat@usmc.mil, or call (619) 524-1283 or 8440. Or contact James Brooks at James.brooks@usmc.mil or by calling (619) 524-8158 or 1275

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.



An AV-8B Harrier lands on the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3). Kearsarge is underway conducting Afloat Training Group basic phase training.

VMA-223 aviators hone landing skills aboard USS Kearsarge

STORY BY CPL. J. R. HEINS
II Marine Expeditionary Force

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C.

– Pilots with Marine Attack Squadron 223 continued integration training with the crew of the USS Kearsarge Jan. 20, building the squadron's proficiency for operations at sea.

The squadron, which is scheduled for deployment as part of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit later this year, coordinated with the Kearsarge to complete the initial qualifications for flight operations underway, giving the squadron's naval aviators hands-on experience to sharpen their vital skills.

"Our mission during the training was to give the ship personnel their initial qualifications with the AV-8B Harrier," said Capt. Will Mahoney, a naval aviator with VMA-223.

According to Mahoney, each pilot slated to deploy with the 26th MEU took part in the training. Each aircraft completed multiple day and night landings on the Kearsarge during the qualifications.

Harriers provide combatant commanders with close air support, air-to-air combat and sea-based force projection capabilities, said Mahoney. The ground work for future operations as part of the Aviation Combat Element with the 26th MEU begins during initial qualifications, he said.

"Our squadron takes every opportunity to hone our landing abilities, especially aboard an aircraft carrier," said Mahoney, a native of Athens, Ga.

According to Capt. James Pollard, a naval aviator with the squadron, landing a Harrier on



An AV-8B Harrier takes off from the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge. Each pilot with Marine Attack Squadron 223, scheduled to deploy later this year, completed multiple day and night landings on the vessel.

a moving amphibious assault ship from the rear is one of the most important skills pilots must master.

"Harriers have the unique capability to perform vertical landings," said Pollard, a native of Atlanta. "When approaching an aircraft carrier the pilots have to transition from flight to a vertical hover. This can be dangerous, especially at night or in a low light environment."

According to Pollard, training aboard an assault landing ship is critical for the squadron as it continues to prepare for future operations and deployments.

"As a squadron we train regularly to keep proficient," said Pollard. "There is nothing better than practicing the skills and techniques in the actual environment in which we will be operating."



The sun rises over the assault ship USS Kearsarge. The ship provides pilots scheduled to deploy, with the environment in which they will be operating, an underway carrier.

CHEVRON

ESTABLISHED 1942

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Platoon 3241 SERIES HONOR MAN Pfc. J. A. Mickley Menifee, Calif. Recruited by Sgt. K. Rouse
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Platoon 3241 HIGH SHOOTER (340) Pfc. S. G. Bauman Ramona, Calif. Marksman Instructor Cpl. D. A. Martinez
Platoon 3241 HIGH PFT (300) Pfc. D. E. Valleroy Ellis Grove, Ill. Recruited by Staff Sgt. R. O. Branscum



LIMA COMPANY

3rd RECRUIT TRAINING BATTALION

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Sergeant Major
Battalion Drill Master

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Sgt. Maj. J. D. Ferriss
Gunnery Sgt. J. M. Pocaigue



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* Indicates Meritorious Promotion

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 Pfc. J. C. Zuniga



Sgt. John D. Weltzin, drill instructor, Delta Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, performs dips with recruits during interval training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Jan. 15. During the event, recruits completed two half-mile sprints followed by a circuit course compiled of multiple stations such as inside and outside rotations, step-ups, dips, monkey bars, leg lifts, straight bar curls, crunches, upright rows and overhead presses.

Interval training prepares Delta Co. for challenges ahead

STORY & PHOTOS BY
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Marine Corps recruit training introduces recruits to a variety of exercises. Each evolution of training serves a specific purpose and pushes recruits to the next level of their physical capabilities.

Recruits of Delta Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, performed interval training exercises at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Jan. 15.

The Marine Corps uses interval training to help recruits gain physical endurance and to prepare them for upcoming challenges.

"This training helps build recruits' strength and endurance," said Staff Sgt. Sergio J. Ramirez, senior drill instructor, Platoon 1062. "This is the first step to building them up to the Marine Corps' physical standards. If we don't do this, how will they get stronger to do more pull-ups or have the endurance to run faster?"

During the event, recruits completed two half-mile sprints followed by a circuit course compiled of multiple exercise stations such as inside and outside rotations, step-ups, dips, monkey bars, leg lifts, straight bar curls, crunches, upright rows and overhead presses. Recruits performed the exercises for a specific amount of time and then moved to the next station to perform the next exercise.

"Right now a lot of us don't have a strong endurance to

keep up for an event like this," said Recruit Karl E. Gomez, Plt. 1063. "During the interval sprints, some recruits didn't pace themselves and ended up getting tired early on, but then right after we had the stations, so it was tough."

Although recruits arrive at the depot at different physical fitness levels, the training

schedule is geared to help recruits reach the Corps' physical standards and prepare them for future deployments.

"You can't succeed if you don't get strong enough to earn the title," said Gomez, a Santa Rosa, Calif., native who was recruited out of Recruiting Station San Francisco. "During the event I thought to myself to

push as hard as I could so I can get stronger and better endurance to face the challenges of combat."

The Marine Corps prides itself on being the first to fight; ready to go at a moment's notice. Physical and mental training becomes an essential part in order to sustain that level of readiness. Recruits are devel-

oped and prepared to uphold the long history and tradition of the Marine Corps.

"Over the course of recruit training we'll build their mental and physical endurance," said Ramirez. "I want to test and motivate them to push harder so that when they're deployed, they can confidently react in any environment."



Delta Company recruits run a half-mile sprint during interval training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Jan. 15. The Marine Corps uses interval training to help recruits gain physical endurance and to prepare them for upcoming challenges.

GUIDE 1

Cates," said Staff Sgt. Sean E. Dix, drill instructor. "He had strong leadership skills, and he was always helping out the rest of recruits in the platoon even though he didn't have to."

Dix explained the position of guide is the highest level of responsibility that one can have as a recruit. A guide is expected to lead by example, have strong leadership skills and, at the same time, perform as a recruit.

To his drill instructors and fel-

low recruits, that was what Cates demonstrated.

"My first few days as guide were tough," said the young Marine. "I had a lot to work on if I wanted to be successful. You just always need to be on the top of your game and be very persistent when it comes to picking up things fast."

Cates explained being guide makes the recruit a key component to his platoon's successes. The drill instructors put more trust in the guide, but he has to find the difference between del-

egating authority and delegating responsibilities.

"That was my biggest problem," said Cates. "I thought delegating meant giving people things to do, but at the end of the day, it's still my responsibility as guide."

Cates' leadership skills increased throughout training and taking on the guide position doubled what he needed to do as a recruit.

"I taught the recruits a lot," said Cates. "Whenever we had free time I would start study circles to reiterate the next thing

in recruit training. It helped the recruits, but it also helped me because I was learning as I was teaching."

While in recruit training, recruits are required to undergo a series of graded written and physical tests. If they do not pass, they are not allowed to continue with their platoon.

Cates will be graduating recruit training with Lima Company, not just as his platoon honorman but as the company honorman. He competed against guides from the rest of the com-

pany's platoons and was selected as the highest performer.

Following graduation, Cates will take on the School of Infantry in Camp Pendleton, Calif., to pursue a career as an infantryman and plans on learning as much as he can from the Marine Corps while he is enlisted.

"When I first arrived at training, I had no idea what I was getting myself into, but I sat back and watched," said Cates. "Observe and learn before you go in. Go in fast and hard because you'll be in for a hell of a ride."