



**A Kilo Company recruit sets out on his 880-meter run in the company's first Combat Fitness Test**

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"WHERE MARINES ARE MADE"

FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2015



**Private Akeem A. White, Echo Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, cleans his weapon prior to the Battalion Commander's Inspection at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, July 20. Following recruit training, White will move on to the School of Infantry, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., where he will pursue his career as an infantryman. He plans on finishing his degree and making a career in of the Marine Corps. White graduates recruit training today.**

## Marine uses adversity to change his life

STORY & PHOTO BY  
CPL. TYLER VIGLIONE  
*Chevron staff*

Unexpected events happen in life and it often takes a person being stronger than he has ever been to overcome them. One Marine used tragic events in his life to motivate and guide him to become a better person.

Private Akeem A. White, Echo Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, experienced the unexpected leading him to look for, and find, everything he ever wanted in the Corps.

White grew up in Victorville, Calif., with his parents. He attended school and spent his free time hanging out with his friends like every other normal teenager and young adult. The year he graduated, tragedy struck and turned his life upside down.

In 2011, White's father passed away unexpectedly, leaving him and his family in shock.

"It was so sudden that it threw my whole family through a loop," said White. "Personally, I didn't know what to do, and I did not know where my life was going to head when I got my head back on straight."

Two years later, he attended school at San Joaquin Valley College in Visalia, Calif., where he achieved a 4.0 grade point average and made the Dean's List

for his efforts. He felt his life had settled down and things were going well, but little did he know, tragedy was about to strike again.

White's mother passed away, forcing him to withdraw from college and lose his home.

"My mom was my main supporter," said White. "After she passed away, I didn't have anywhere to go or live. I had to work small jobs just to be able to afford some food."

White was now on his own, and lived house to house with whomever would open a door for him. He knew he had to figure something out.

"I always wanted to join the military," said 24-year-old White. "My father was in the Air Force, and when he talked about all of his experiences, it made me really interested."

White began looking at his options for what branch he thought would fit him best and, after meeting a Marine Corps recruiter, he knew right away he had found the one.

"Just everything they stand for is what I need in my life," said White. "Stability, brotherhood, seeing the world and just being able to say I was a part of the legacy is anything a person could ever want."

White explains that he always has felt the need to be a protec-

tor, to protect people he has never met and to protect the country where he has lived his whole life. He pushed through his life's adversity but is still looking for more challenge and wants to be part of the rich heritage the Marine Corps has to offer.

White arrived at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego April 27. He excelled in events such as the rifle range with a final score of 330 out of 350 total point, making him the third highest shooter out of hundreds

of recruits in his company.

Following recruit training, White will move on to the School of Infantry, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., where he will pursue his career as an infantryman. He plans on finishing his degree and making a career in the Marine Corps.

"I am just graduating recruit training right now," said White, "but I already want to thank the Marine Corps for all they have done for me and cannot wait to live my life as a Marine."



**Private Akeem A. White is a native of Victorville, Calif., and was recruited out of Recruiting Station San Diego.**

### BRIEFS

#### Gate 4 closure

Gate 4 is closed to all vehicular and pedestrian traffic until construction is completed in December.

During Gate 4 renovation, operating hours of Gates 2 and 5 will be as follows:

#### Gate 2:

Open 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week

#### Gate 5:

Open 24 hours

#### NNOA Conference

The National Naval Officers Association (NNOA) will host its 43rd annual Professional Development and Training Conference from July 28-30 at Naval Base Point Loma.

Keynote speakers scheduled for the conference are Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul F. Zukunft, Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michele J. Howard, and Lt. Gen. David H. Berger, Commanding General of the Marine Corps' First Marine Expeditionary Force.

Registration for the conference may be made at [www.nnoa.org](http://www.nnoa.org). For information call Lt. Col. Taylor at (619) 524-1954.

#### Boots to Business

The team at Personal and Professional Development will host a Boots to Business presentation Tuesday and Wednesday from 7:30 a.m. until 4 p.m., in the Personal and Professional Office classroom, Building 14.

The event is presented by the Small Business Association. Participants will formulate an awareness of business basics to enhance future business planning efforts.

The event is open to active duty and reserve service members, veterans, retirees, spouses and DoD/NAFi employees.

For information and registration call Mina Threat (619) 524-1283

#### Grand re-opening

The depot's Pacific Marine Credit Union holds its grand re-opening August 5, from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m., and has extended an invitation to everyone at MCRD San Diego.

The event celebrates the credit union's move to new quarters in building 2.

Light refreshments will be served.

Call 760-631-8743 not later than July 31 to RSVP.

#### Send briefs to:

[rdsd\\_pao@usmc.mil](mailto: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 Assault Amphibious Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, make landfall in assault amphibious vehicles during amphibious training operations at Camp Lejeune, N.C., July 16. Marines use white smoke canisters during exercises and assaults to conceal ground forces as they leave the AAVs before moving inland.

## 2nd AA Battalion maintains amphibious readiness

STORY & PHOTOS BY  
CPL. SULLIVAN LARAMIE  
*II Marine Expeditionary Force*

**CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C.** – The whisper of engines slowly grew louder until it was a roar over the crash of waves on sand. Dots on the horizon, dwarfed by the silhouette of the USS Whidbey Island, crawled along in the ocean until the distinct shapes of assault amphibious vehicles formed and appeared larger than the landing ship in the distance.

The AAVs left spouts of water and plumes of white and black smoke in their wakes, and growled as tracks met the beach and the vehicles rushed forward. The Marines had landed as approximately 40 Marines with 2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, conducted amphibious operation training aboard Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, July 15–16.

“This is the first time we’re doing this together as a platoon,” said Cpl. Kyle Severt, an AAV crew chief with 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company. “It’s important because our job is to keep the Marine Corps amphibious. We have to practice in the water to be good at it because this is one of the most dangerous things that we do.”

The exercise began with the platoon’s 10 vehicles plunging into the Atlantic Ocean and practicing various maneuvers. The Marines conducted landing drills several times before heading several miles out to sea to board the Whidbey Island and complete their well deck training.

After a night on the ship, the Marines again boarded their vehicles and splashed into the ocean, making one final beach assault.

“The Marine Corps is amphibious by nature,” said Lance Cpl. Matthew Carstensen, an

AAV crew chief with the unit. “We hit beaches and we hit with speed and ferocity. That’s our job and if we don’t get that training, how is the infantry going to rely on us to get them to the beach safely?”

The use of amphibious operations allows Marines to land personnel and equipment without the need of secure aircraft landing zones. The AAVs have the

capability to carry personnel and supplies, as well as provide their own firepower and security.

“We are the first wave to hit the beach,” said 1st Lt. Ian Budge, the commander of 3rd Platoon. “AAVs let us project power from any kind of naval platform that can travel the world. The operators are the only Marines who will actively practice this, and we will be the

direct advisors for ground assaults.”

Naval-based assaults are not the only option the military utilizes to move troops into hostile territory, but they can be more practical in certain situations. Direct assaults from the sea carry’s less risk of being surrounded than inserting personnel and equipment by aircraft in an area controlled by an enemy,

and allows for more direct supply lines.

“Aircraft have great potential to go inland over long distances,” Budge said. “AAVs, however, are the primary means for establishing a foothold on any land where we don’t already have a presence. Constant training with AAVs is important for us so that if anything kicks off, we’re ready to answer the call.”



The USS Whidbey Island floats offshore during amphibious training operations in the waters off the coast of Camp Lejeune, N.C., July 16. Marines with 2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, trained with the crew of the Whidbey Island to build camaraderie between Marine and Navy personnel and complete annual requirements.

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# ECHO COMPANY

2nd RECRUIT TRAINING BATTALION



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Battalion Drill Master

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Recruit Ian A. May, Kilo Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, pushes to lift a 30-pound ammunition can as many times as he can during his Initial Combat Fitness Test at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, July 15. Ammunition can lifts were the second portion of the CFT. Each recruit performed as many presses as he could in two minutes, attempting to reach 91 repetitions to achieve a perfect score. May is a native of Noblesville, Ind. Kilo Company is scheduled to graduate Sept. 18.

## Recruits dig deep and push through their first CFT

STORY & PHOTOS BY  
CPL. TYLER VIGLIONE  
*Chevron staff*

Marine Corps recruit training is difficult and many times recruits are put through situations that are unfamiliar to them. By completing these exercises, they learn to push themselves to limits they never thought possible.

Expanding their limits, recruits of Kilo Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, conducted their first Combat Fitness Test at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, July 15. The event consists of an 880-yard run, timed 30-pound ammunition can lifts and a maneuver under fire drill.

The CFT is a training requirement for all recruits as well as an annual requirement all Marines. It is conducted in the Marine Corps Combat Utility Uniform and boots to simulate combat environments. All three events are each worth a maximum of 100 points, leading to a perfect score of 300.

The first event of the CFT began with recruits running the 880-yard timed run. Wearing combat boots makes the sprint around the track difficult for some recruits. The purpose of the run is to simulate moving quickly through a combat situation. In order to gain 100 points on this event, recruits must complete the run in less than 2 minutes and 45 seconds.

The second event was the ammunition can lifts. The ammunition cans weigh 30 pounds and were used to conduct overhead presses. Each recruit performed as many presses as he could in two minutes, attempting to reach 91 repetitions to achieve a perfect score of 100.

The final event of the CFT was the maneuver under fire. The maneuver under fire is a

course that covers 75 yards, which requires recruits to perform exercises such as sprints, ammunition can carries, fireman's carry and throwing a simulated grenade at a marked target. Recruits were timed as they ran through the course and needed to finish it in less than 2 minutes and 14 seconds to receive 100 points.

"The CFT teaches us how to push ourselves to limits we never thought possible," said

Recruit Travis J. Garska, Platoon 3236. "It is meant to put you under high stress and have you still put your best out there, even when you feel like giving up. In combat, we might face the same adversity."

The initial CFT is taken in first phase of training, but it is just to familiarize the recruits with the course. The final CFT is taken toward the end of training and is recorded in their basic training record.

"We try to prepare recruits for things they will see in their careers," said Sgt. Daniel A. Mendibles, drill instructor, Alpha Company. "Teaching them the correct techniques and familiarizing them with the course is our main goal."

Recruits are put through several physical training sessions leading up to the final CFT to prepare them, explained 28-year-old Mendibles, a Tucson, Ariz., native.

"We have trained enough leading up to this event," said Garska. "Marines have to be ready for anything that is put in front of them."

Gaska explains that after recruit training he will continue to train his body and mind to attempt a perfect score on his CFT every time he takes it.

"It helps you be a better all-around Marine," said Gaska. "I will do whatever it takes to become better."



Recruits of Kilo Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, begin the 880-meter run portion of their Initial Combat Fitness Test at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, July 15. The first event of the CFT, movement to contact, called on recruits to run 880-meters while being timed. The purpose of the run is to simulate moving quickly through a combat situation. In order to gain 100 points on this event, recruits must complete the run in less than 2 minutes and 45 seconds.