**Marines receive insight on Corps history**

Retired Capt. Joe Larkin, museum docent, teaches Marines about Marine Corps uniforms during a Command Museum visit aboard the depot, Feb. 19. Since 1775, the Marine Corps has left a trail of history and traditions ranging from different battles to the uniforms worn today.

Since 1775, the Marine Corps has a history of tradition and values that are instilled in every Marine. Recruits learn these traditions and values as part of their training and are expected to maintain them throughout their military career.

Recruits of Company A, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, hit the books during a customs and courtesies class aboard the depot, Feb. 19. The lecture was given by Sgt. Bud T. Tate, museum docent. "The thing I love most about the Marine Corps is no matter where you go or what you do after, being a Marine is always the high point of your life."
CUTS & RETURNS

salute is traditionally used as a greeting to officers. While saluting an officer, a Marine will say the proper greeting of the day followed by the proper rank that is demanded from the Marine Corps, such as giving the proper respect that is demanded from the Marine Corps such as giving the proper尊重 that is demanded from the Marine Corps, respected rank and fighting for our country, explained Pvt. Turner Ray, Platoon 2114. "They showed great interest in all of the history that he was a part of the code of honor in the Marine Corps," said Pvt. Finnegan, a Dewey, Ariz., native. "The Battle of Belleau Wood took place in 1918 during World War I. On that battle, casualties were the highest in Marine Corps history. The Marine Corps was successful and won one of the most important battles in Marine Corps history: it came at the cost of 9,777 United States casualties and 3,811 fatalities. After the battle, General Pershing said, ‘The deadliest weapon in the world is a Marine and his rifle.’"

"Each piece of artifact in the museum tells a story about the Marine Corps and shows us our Corps’ great accomplishments,” said Pvt. Turner Ray, Platoon 2114. "My grandfather fought in the Vietnam War and it gives me a sense of pride looking back on the history that he was a part of.”

It’s humbling looking at historical facts past Marines went through protecting and fighting for our country, explained 21-year-old Ray, a Pryor, Okla., native. “It’s motivating to get us focused for the Crucible,” said Ray. "The Crucible is a 54-hour test of endurance where recruits must conquer more than 30 obstacles while they experience food and sleep deprivation; this is the last test the recruits face before they earn the title "Marine." With the knowledge and motivation obtained from the museum, Co. E moves on to the Crucible. Once recruits hike up the mountain known as the Reaper, they will receive their eagle, globe and anchor along with the title "Marine." From that moment on, they will be a part of a Marine Corps history.

Recruits of Company A, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, study during a customs and courtesies class aboard the depot, Feb. 19. Customs are a representation of some of the long standing traditions in the Marine Corps.


Customs & COURTESIES

HISTORY

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According to Tate, a 69-year-old Provi-
dence, R.I., native, he wanted to make sure the Marines truly understand each piece of history they talked about, which was easy because all of them listened eagerly. "They showed great interest in all of the pieces of history that were displayed throughout the museum,” said Tate. "Every Marine is given the opportunity to explore the museum and all of its arti-
facts during Final Week. They were given approximately two hours with an instructor who guided them around the museum as they explained the history of the Marine Corps, such as the Battle of Belleau Wood. The Battle of Belleau Wood took place in June 1918 during World War I. On that battle, casualties were the highest in Marine Corps history. The Marine Corps was successful and won one of the most im-
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Motorcycle

instated to promote bike rider safety. Commanders are in charge of struc-
turing the club and assigning a club president. Like any other organization, club members have duties and bylaws to abide by and it is their responsibility to uphold the basic core values and mentor each other through their experiences. "The first time I rode my bike I crashed. When I purchased my first bike I wasn’t educated enough on procedures and gear," said Staff Sgt. Marques C. Jackson, club president and chief drill instructor. Company M. “That’s why we have a mentoring program to ensure what you are doing is correct.”

According to Ferriss, he is one of the more experienced Marines with his current motorcycle having more than 60,000 miles; where as some of the rid-
ers in his battalion have just began to ride their motorcycles.

"You have to give them pointers. They teach you the basics at the rider safety course, but there are a lot more hikes on the road," said Jackson. "It’s important for bikers to promote safety and good driving skills for their fellow Marines.

After recruits make it through recruit training, they’re a direct representation of the Marine Corps. Today’s class gave knowledge on how to apply themselves and to know what will be expected of them.

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Col. AbdullHai Neshat, the executive officer of 2nd Brigade, 215th Corps, Afghan National Army, invited Col. Christopher Douglas, the team leader of SFAAT 2-215, to visit the outposts and see the progress that was made in a recent operation, Oqab 144.

“It was pretty inspiring knowing what they had cleared and put in place as a result of Oqab 144, seeing that it’s still there and the ANA are still providing security with the police,” said Douglas, a Marine Corps reservist from Ballston Spa, N.Y. “It’s really positive. The bottom line here in Sangin, the ANA are still standing.”

The outposts overlook the Sangin Valley and Route 611 and are vital to mission success in the region, said Neshat. During the operation, several bridges were put in place over the Nah-e Saraj Canal. The bridges will allow easier access for the ANA and Afghan police to cross the canal between outposts and are open for use by the local populace.

They serve as a literal and metaphorical bridge between the ANA and the people. Before the bridges were in place, people would have to walk several miles to cross a bridge put in place by coalition forces or risk going into the canal to cross.

“I showed them the areas where the operation went,” Neshat said. “That was great. I think the enemy is no longer in those areas where they were influencing before. Right now, people are working. Sometimes the Taliban come to those areas, but have to escape back. They can’t stay. They don’t have their positions there now. The ANA is going to guard their position.”

Oqab 144 was conducted to clear the Sangin Valley of hostile threats in preparation for the upcoming Afghan presidential elections. The desire of the brigade is to provide a safe voting environment for the citizens.

“We’re looking forward to how we’re going to support the elections and bring people to vote,” Neshat said. “The concern is to facilitate the people coming to these polls. The enemy wants to hurt people and entrap the election. We are planning to do more operations before the elections and we have a security plan for it. Hopefully we succeed.”

Douglas expressed his confidence in the ability of the 2nd Brigade to effectively support the election process.

“We’re been planning, coordinating and reaching out to all the other Afghan partners between the police and the governance,” Douglas said. “I believe we’re going to see success in that area.”

Oqab 144 served as the first successful Afghan National Security Force operation in the Sangin Valley completed solely by Afghan forces with coalition forces in an advisory-only role.

“Afghans came up with their own solution and they’re solving the problems that come up,” said Maj. Scott Shadforth, the forward air controller for SFAAT 2-215. “They know what needs to get done here. They understand the geography, the culture, the ethnicity, and a lot better than we’ll ever be able to.”
Recruits of Company I, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, overcame challenging obstacles during the Combat Fitness Test around the depot, Feb. 20.

The purpose of the CFT was to ensure recruits were ready for the arduous demands of combat operations.

“The Marine Corps implemented the CFT due to our combat focused orientation,” said Cpl. Mark D. Reconsal, drill instructor, Platoon 3210. “This event will train their combat mindset and make them realize not everything is base physical training type events of running and pull-ups, it’s a dynamic obstacle.”

The CFT events recruits went through were a timed 880-yard run, 30-pound ammunition can overhead lifts for two minutes and a maneuver-under-fire event, which consisted of sprints, low and high crawls, buddy-drag, fireman’s carry, dummy grenade toss and ammunition can carries. Recruits performed the event wearing boots and the camouflage utility uniform.

To begin the 880-yard run, recruits were broken into groups of 15 and lined up on the track. An Instructional Training Company instructor then blew a whistle to signal the start of the event for the first group.

Recruits started the event by sprinting past a set of cones below the starting line. For this event, recruits, age 26 and below, received a perfect score of 100 if they finished the course in 2 minutes, 14 seconds. If recruits were able to throw a dummy grenade and land it in a target area at the end of the course, five seconds was deducted from their time. If not, five seconds was added to their final time.

In this event, age 26 and below, a perfect score of 100 was related to a score, which for males of the age 26 and below, a perfect score of 100 was 2 minutes, 45 seconds.

After recruits completed the run they were taken over to the next event, which was the ammunition can lifts. Recruits were partnered up; one performed the lifts while the other counted the repetitions. ITC and drill instructors walked down the line to ensure recruits were utilizing proper form for the repetitions to count.

Recruits received a perfect score of 100 in this event, age 26 and below, if they performed 91 lifts in the two-minute time period.

Recruits moved on to the next and most challenging event – the maneuver under fire. By this time recruits were exhausted from the previous events, exactly the purpose of the CFT.

“We learn how much we can push ourselves even though we want to quit,” said Recruit Nathan E. Houser. “We think we can’t go on anymore but afterward can look back and realize we can actually push hard and do well.”

Recruits started the event by sprinting out, followed by dropping to the ground to low crawl and then high crawl. Recruits had to navigate through a set of cones before they reached their partner to drag and carry back to the start point. As recruits progressed through the event, they were forced to look deep in themselves to keep going.

After we ran out there to buddy drag and fireman carry our partner back, I set my partner down and looked at the ammunition can and thought ‘Oh man, I have to go back out there again,’” said Houser, a Waco, Texas, native. “I was absolutely exhausted, but know I still had to push hard to get a good time.”

Finishing strong was one area drill instructors noticed recruits struggled with during the event.

“There are multiple areas that challenge recruits during the event,” said Reconsal, a Honolulu, native. “They struggle with running with the fireman’s carry and keeping the recruit on their back, but have trouble the most on pushing to the end. Some become so tired on the final stretch that they give up and walk the last little bit.”

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As they progressed through the test, recruits began to realize the significance and importance the CFT is for Marines.

“A shows how we react to strenuous activities and the stress of a drill instructor constantly beside us pushing us,” said 24-year-old Houser. “In combat nothing is certain, in regards to what physical aspects you may encounter. This was a quick test of our mental courage, toughness and dedication to mission accomplishment. If you can’t get through this then you signed up for the wrong job.”

After they completed the CFT, Co. I recruits came away with a new perspective about themselves and their abilities. Building a recruit, both physically and mentally, is one of the main goals during recruit training. It is something the Marine Corps has been very efficient in since its inception.

“I’ve done something I’ve never done before and excelled,” said Houser. “I’m excited to keep pushing hard to grow and strengthen my body and mind to be the best.”

Recruitsdigdeep to overcome CFT
New Marine finishes six year journey

Cpl. Pedro Cardenas

The quest to earn the title Marine usually starts at recruit training. But for Pfc. William N. Cunningham, it started when he attended the Platoon Leaders Course to become a commissioned officer.

Cunningham, Platoon 2111, Company E, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, battled adversity and waited almost six years for the opportunity to become a Marine. He decided to enlist in the Marine Corps. Cunningham’s enlistment package took 23 months before it was approved. He had to obtain several waivers in order to go to recruit training because of his failure to complete his commissioning program. His quest to become a Marine would take longer, nevertheless, it made him more determined than ever.

At his local recruiting station, Cunningham met Gunnery Sgt. Robert K. Keller, who took him under his wing. Keller died in a car accident while he was transporting a potential recruit to a Military Entrance Processing Station. Cunningham explained, “I became close to him; he was a good mentor to me during the entire enlistment process,” said Cunningham. “I have pursued the Marine Corps as an education, but something that is real. It was not just an advertisement, but something that is part of being a Marine.”

According to Cunningham, Keller’s sacrifice meant that “Gunnery Sgt. Keller embodied the Marine Corps was,” said Cunn igham, a native of Abilene, Texas. “Being in OCS and around Marines bolstered my desire of wanting to be a Marine?”

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Fifteen Marine Corps veterans received a tour of the depot as well as celebrated the Iwo Jima Veterans 69th Anniversary Reunion with their families, Feb. 21.

Their reunion aboard the base included a visit to the yellow footprints, a tour of the Command Museum and lunch at the base’s dining facility.

For many it was a nostalgic event that filled the former Marines with esprit de corps.

“What I’ve seen from today’s Marines amazes me and makes me proud,” said retired Gunnery Sgt. Damaso Sutis. “They look so fit and seem to be very intelligent and I’m satisfied knowing they are going to continue our legacy. We started it, but they are going to carry it on. They have the attitude and there is no doubt in my mind. I’m 89 years old, but if I live to see 90 at least I’ll remember I was in the Corps. The Corps is truly a family wherever you are.”

During their first stop, the veterans were shown where today’s recruits are brought in for processing—the yellow footprints. Drill instructors then explained what the receiving process is like in today’s Marine Corps.

Staff Sgt. Dennis Joy, chief drill instructor, Company B, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, was one of the Marines assisting with any questions the veterans had as he escorted them around the depot.

“I’m absolutely honored to have them come here,” said Joy. “To see the legacy of the Marine Corps and to hear their war stories about Iwo Jima—it’s a privilege. Every generation of Marines has its own legacy. The Marines of World War II left a giant legacy. They are the giants that we try and live like today and it makes me happy to see the legacy continued.”

After the yellow footprints, the veterans entered the depot’s Command Museum and were able to see paintings, weapons and photographs from various battles and eras in Marine Corps history. Their time at the museum also provided a time for veterans to share their war stories with Marines.

Retired Master Sgt. William A. Behana was one such Marine who shared his experience of the battle of Iwo Jima.

“We got in the boats and started moving in for the shore. They were bombarding the beach at the time. We landed on the beach and I came busting out of the end of the boat and I saw nothing but dead Marines around us. I was on the beach and stuff was really hitting the fan. I didn’t have anything to dig with so I tore the top off of an ammunition can and scooped a hole on the beach,” said Behana.

Behana explained waves of Marines were supposed to come every five minutes, but no one got on the beach for two hours because they were being hit hard with artillery. By the following day, his unit had set up a regimental headquarters.

“I was there the morning the first flag went up, and I saw the second one also,” said Behana, an El Cajon, Calif., native. “Then after we secured Suribachi, we turned and started north and fought our way all the way up the island.”

After seeing much of the depot, the Iwo Jima veterans concluded their visit with a meal at the depot’s dining facility. There, they were able to get to know and have lunch with many of the Marines stationed aboard the depot.

“I think today’s Marines are highly trained, highly educated and they sure have better equipment than we had and I know darn well they have better chow than we had,” said Behana with a laugh.

Retired Gunnery Sgt. Damaso Sutis (left), is given background information on Marine photographs by Ray Lebron (right), museum docent, aboard the depot, Feb. 21. The Iwo Jima veterans and their families were given a tour of the base by Marines of the depot.

Staff Sgt. Dennis Joy, chief drill instructor, Company B, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, responds to a question about recruit training from an Iwo Jima veteran aboard the depot, Feb. 21. Joy was one of many Marines who assisted the 15 Iwo Jima Marines to have an informative and enjoyable visit of the depot.

Iwo Jima veterans have 69th reunion on the depot