Rifle combat optic scope helps create Marine marksmen

**Story & Photos by Cpl. Jericho W. Crutcher**

The Marine Corps is not only taking advantage of advancing technology on big ticket equipment such as tanks, aircraft and amphibious vehicles, but it is also taking advantage on personal equipment as well by transitioning the M16-A4 service rifle from iron sights to a rifle combat optic scope. Traditionally, every Marine was trained using iron sights. These are the metal alignments used to assist shooters when they try to adjust windage and elevation. Successful marksmen use proper rear and front sight alignment to ensure their rounds hit the target. The rear sight is mounted perpendicular to the line of the front sight and is used to adjust windage and elevation. During recruit training, recruits are taught how to maneuver these sights to make an accurate shot. Using the new RCO increases the percentage that rounds hit their intended targets. Recruits at the depots are taking advantage of this new rifle combat optic, which magnifies the target during sighting in.

These scopes attach to the rifle where the rear sight aperture was located. Instead of using the front sight post to aim at the target, shooters learn to use a red chevron that appears in the RCO scope.

When deployed, every Marine is issued a service rifle with the new sights. "Recruits learn the basics on how to operate the rifle while at recruit training," said Sgt. Justin Rungel, primary marksman instructor, Edson Range, Weapons and Field Training Battalion, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif. Every year Marines are required to qualify on the M16-A4 service rifle. While many recruits were able to shoot expert, the highest qualification, they are more likely to achieve it with the improved sights.

"Once the recruits reach the Fleet Marine Force, they are able to see SIGHTS > 2

MCRD offers taste of recruit training

**Story by Sgt. Cristina N. Porras**

Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego is scheduled to open its gates to the public Sept. 27, allowing people to get a small taste of recruit training during the 13th Annual Boot Camp Challenge as part of San Diego's Fleet Week.

"The Boot Camp Challenge came about when we were looking for a way to feature the depot as part of Fleet Week," said Kelly Sitar, deputy Semper Fit director and Boot Camp Challenge race director. "We decided to showcase what we do best – boot camp."

The Boot Camp Challenge is a three-mile obstacle run, consisting of more than 50 obstacles used by recruits, including hay jumps, tunnel crawls, log hurdles, cargo net climbs and more. Drill instructors will be at each station, motivating participants through the course. "A lot of people have said that they never realized how much they could push themselves until the Boot Camp Challenge," said Sitar. "The drill instructors helped them and motivated them to keep going. The drill instructor experience is what people enjoy."

According to Sitar, there were approximately 2,800 participants last year. This year she is anticipating more than 3,000 participants for the race, which has a capacity for 4,000 participants.

"The race has evolved significantly over the years. Every year it gets bigger," said Sitar. "This year we have more obstacles, and for the first time we are going to be using chip timing, due to feedback we have gotten in the past."

Participants must be at least 15 years old and can choose to compete as an individual or create a 3- or 5-person team. The oldest participant in Boot Camp Challenge history, says Sitar, was an 88-year-old, legally blind

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**Charlie Company learns importance of mentorship**

**Story & Photo by Sgts. Walter D. Marino II, Chevrons staff**

Charlie Company recruits learned the importance of mentorship in the Marine Corps and the assistance it gives toward a young Marine's professional development in the Corps.

Recruits of Company C took advantage of such advice during a mentorship class at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif., Sept. 1. Prior to recruit training, many recruits relied on family members or coaches to act as mentors, but in the class they learned in the Marine Corps it can be beneficial to have more than one mentor, specifically one that is of equal or higher rank.

First Sergeant Cristopher Demosthenous, the company first sergeant, Charlie Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, said he has three mentors, his father and two fellow first sergeants.

Demosthenous explained mentors play a crucial role for young Marines new to the Fleet Marine Force.

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First Sergeant Cristopher Demosthenous, company first sergeant, Charlie Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, engages recruits during a mentorship class at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif., Sept. 1.
A Co. B recruit sights in using the rifle combat optic during grass week at Edson Range, Weapons and Field Training Battalion, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Sept. 4. Using the new rifle combat optic (RCO) increases the percentage of rounds that hit their intended targets.

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to enhance their skills with the rifle,” said Riungel, a 25-year-old Scio, Ohio, native. Although the target seems larger with the RCO, the fundamentals of shooting remain the same and are paramount to effectively firing the weapon. “The fundamentals for shooting the rifle are the same with the RCO or without it,” said Riungel. “These recruits are the forebears of our Corps, and it’s vital that we make sure they are properly trained with the rifle.”

While most Marines have different military occupational specialties, which do not require firing the rifle, they are still expected as Marines to be a basic rifleman.

The annual Boot Camp Challenge gives participants the opportunity to use the depot’s facilities and obstacles for a few hours to get an idea of what a Marine recruit does during the 13 weeks of recruit training.

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woman who ran the race with her granddaughter.

All participants will receive an official race t-shirt and are invited to participate in a post-race party, which will include music, food and beverages.

Gen. James W. Bierman, MCRDSD commanding general, will present awards to the top three finishers in each category. “This is primarily for those people outside the gates looking in who don’t know what we do here,” explained Sitar. “They get to experience firsthand what a drill instructor does, then after the race they can interact with the drill instructors and take pictures with them.”

Although the majority of participants are civilians, military participation, to include military spouses and family members, has increased over the years and there are award categories for military participants.

Online registration is available at www.bootcampchallenge.com until midnight on Sept. 24. The price for individual participants is $39, $117 for a 3-person team and $195 for a 5-person team. Race day registration is also available at a higher entrance fee.

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While speaking to the recruits in the class, Demosthenous asked them what they thought was the first thing young Marines buy when they get to their first duty station.

“Buy a car,” replied the recruits in unison.

Demosthenous explained often times young Marines buy cars they cannot afford, and situations such as this can be avoided by good mentorship.

The questions continued as Demosthenous asked the recruits to tell him who their mentors were and how they impacted their lives.

One recruit immediately stood up and told a story of how his recruiter mentor helped him when he was having problems with his mother.

Many recruits appeared to take the class to heart as they continued to respond with stories of their mentors.

“My mentor was my martial arts instructor who led me by example,” said Recruit Benjamin P. Landers, Platoon 1045. “It wasn’t so much what he said, but what he did. He was really relaxed and modest even though his skills were dangerous.”

Lander’s mentor was not just a martial arts instructor, but also a retired Marine who encouraged his decision to join the Corps.

The Rolla, Mo., native, explained his desire to join the Marines was cemented by his admiration of his mentor.

At the end of the class, it appeared all the recruits were inspired to either be or find a mentor after becoming Marines.

“I want to find a Marine mentor who has good experience in my job field to help me learn fast and learn to do things the right way,” said Recruit Stanly D. Compton, Platoon 1045. “A good mentor can take you far.”

Fall into volunteering

The depot’s Marine Corps Community Service is sponsoring a volunteer resource fair Sept. 23, on the Bayview lawn from 10:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. If you want to volunteer to help your community, this is for you. There will be opportunities in family readiness, Marine and family programs, Semper Fit and multiple San Diego organization.

Children are welcome and activities will be provided.

For information call Tracy Genica at (619) 718-3765 or contact her via e-mail at genicate@usmc.mccs.org.

Brown Bag Seminar

The depot’s MCCS sponsors a Personal Financial Brown Bag Lunch Seminar Sept. 19, noon to 1 p.m. “Rental Property Ownership as an Investment.”

The seminar will be held in the personal and professional development classroom in building 14, from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Seminars are open to the first 50 individuals to call and register. The seminar is free and open to active duty, reserve, retired civil service, NAF and contract personnel and their family members. A free light lunch with water or juice will be available, but attendees are welcome to bring their own lunch.

Call Personal and Professional Development at (619) 524-3728 to register.

Boot Camp Challenge

The depot will host the annual Boot Camp Challenge, a 3-mile obstacle run Sept. 27 starting at 9 a.m.

Participants must register. Advanced registration is available at Bootcampchallenge.com for $39 per person, $117 for 3 people and $195 for 5 people. Registration is also available on race day for $45 per person.

Child, youth & teen flag football & cheerleading registration

Marine Corps Community Services has scheduled registration for the Fall child, youth & teen flag football and cheerleading programs.

Registration started Sept. 1 and will continue through Oct. 5. Participants may sign up Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Bldg. 6E. Flag Football participants will be divided into age groups 5-7, 8-10 and 11-13. The cheerleading program is for participants aged 5-13.

For more information call (619) 524-0956, or contact Marry Young via telephone at (661) 475-1334 or e-mail at youngma@usmccs.org.

Vanpool openings

There are two openings for active duty or civilians living between Long Beach and San Diego who are interested in joining a vanpool.

In the past, the van has made stops in Mission Viejo, Camp Pendleton and Oxnard areas.

If you live in these areas or anywhere in between the starting and finish point and are interested, call Derrick Womack at (619) 524-4239 or email derrick.womack@usmc.mil.

Notary public service ended

Notary Public service is no longer available at the depot library. Those in need of this service should contact the legal office for assistance. Call (619) 524-4110 or 4111.

Send briefs to:

ndsd_pa@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 learn land navigation in the mountains

**Sgt. Emmanuel Ramos**

**Story & Photos by**

Sgt. Emmanuel Ramos

15th Marine Expeditionary Unit

**BRIDGEPORT, Calif.** - When Marines deploy to a combat zone knowing how to read a map, use a compass and navigate through unfamiliar terrain can be the difference between life and death.

Marines with 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment continued Mountain Exercise 2014 by conducting land navigation training aboard Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, Calif., Sept. 3, 2014. Marines started their training with a refresher course on terrain association. If they plot their [locations] wrong, then you can be doing everything else wrong and end up in the wrong location. With terrain association you look at distinguished features and use them to your advantage to get you where you need to be.

In addition to exercising their land navigation skills, Marines are learning these techniques knowing they benefit not only them, but also partner nations.

"A lot of the stuff we learn here we share with different countries we train with," said Naseer, 21, from Overland Park, Kansas. "On my last deployment with the 11th MEU, we were teaching this training to a lot of the different armies we were training with. It benefits them, which ultimately helps us out in our mission."

Overcoming the physically demanding terrain, Marines succeeded in traversing their new environment and finding their locations.

"They all did very well," said Capt. Christopher O’Melia, company commander, weapons company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment. "It’s amazing. We haven’t fired a single round throughout the training here, yet we’ve received a wealth of training and knowledge, that will ultimately help us out when we head out with the MEU."

Lance Cpl. Anthony P. Kaigler plots his locations on a map. Kaigler is a field radio operator with Communications Company, Headquarters and Service Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment.

Marines navigate their way through the wilderness during Mountain Exercise 2014. The exercise develops critical land navigation skills their battalion will need during deployment next year.

Marines re-plot their destination during Mountain Exercise 2014.
A common philosophy of the Marine Corps is that the title Marine is “earned, never given.” That is because many events in recruit training require recruits to push past personal limitations and do things they never thought possible.

Recruits of Hotel Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, used strength and determination to conquer the Obstacle Course while learning their bodies physical and mental limits at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Sept. 5.

The course is designed to test the recruits’ upper body strength as well as their confidence in obstacles,” said Staff Sgt. Miguel Cortes Jr., senior drill instructor, Platoon 2169.

Recruits had to complete each obstacle before moving on to the next. If a recruit could not complete an obstacle, he was sent to the beginning to start again until he completed it.

“This is their first time doing the course,” said Cortes, a native of Port Isabel, Texas. “They struggle now, but they will do it with ease by the end of Third Phase.”

Before recruits began the course, their senior drill instructor demonstrated the techniques of climbing a rope that minimizes the strength it takes to reach the top. The rope is often the hardest obstacle because it requires strength to complete it and it is the last obstacle. Recruits are very fatigued when they reach it.

“Because the course is primarily upper body, once they reach the rope climb, they will be tired,” said 30-year-old Cortes. “The techniques we teach them helps them use their legs to hold them in place to give their arms a short break.”

The difficulty of each obstacle varied between recruits because everyone has different strengths and weaknesses. Obstacles such as the single bar or the high log were easier for the recruits who were taller.

“I am lucky that I am average height,” said Lay, a native of Lake Geneva, Wis. “I was able to get over it my first or second try, but I saw some recruits really struggling with it.”

After the rope climb, the recruits were required to conduct a fireman’s carry and buddy drag. This was the most difficult part of the course, according to 18-year-old Lay.

“When I got off of the rope, I thought I was done,” said Lay. “When the drill instructors pointed me to the buddy drags and fireman carries, I didn’t know if I had it in me to complete it.”

The course is ultimately designed for recruits to push through fatigue because it will be similar to the stress they might encounter while in a combat environment, explained Cortes.

“This is just the beginning of their Marine Corps careers,” said Cortes. “This is where they begin dealing with stress and pushing past their limits because it doesn’t stop after recruit training.”

Now that the recruits of Hotel Company have completed their introduction to the Obstacle Course, they will have a baseline on the improvement they make over the next three evolutions of the event.

“If the recruits learn to prevail and work hard through practice, they will get through anything that comes their way in recruit training,” said Cortes. “If they can learn how to get over obstacles like this, it can pave the way for them to apply that to anything in life.”

Recruits push past their limits during O-Course

Recruits of Hotel Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, run a mile before starting the Obstacle Course at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Sept. 5. The course consists of exercises such as conducting log and wall jumps, maneuvering over bars and climbing a rope.

Recruits of Hotel Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, use strength and determination to conquer the Obstacle Course while learning their bodies physical and mental limits at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Sept. 5.
Marine once homeless, applies ethics to Marine Corps

By LANCE CORPORAL ISAIAH K. KALUHIWA, PLEATON 2146, GOLF COMPANY, 2ND RECRUIT TRAINING BATTALION

Kaluhiwa’s family was once homeless, and he has learned many of these lessons, to not only help himself, but others as well.

His family was forced to move in with a friend who gave them a spare acres of land to live on.

At that time, Kaluhiwa was in high school, and he worked for his family’s day care. After a while, the land owners let them live there rent-free.

“Getting knowledge about each other, and their own personal specialties, is something no one can take away from you,” said Kaluhiwa. “It’s something you can use later on.”

After commissioning and initial training, Harris’ first assignment was with 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines, 1st Marine Division. While he served as platoon commander, forward observer, artillery liaison officer and assistant battalion logistics officer.

Col. John “Jay” Harris Jr.

Parade Reviewing Officer

Col. John “Jay” Harris Jr. is the Deputy Commander of Expeditionary Strike Group (THREE), a Navy unit with the mission of providing amphibious expertise and a deployable staff for combat and contingency operations in support of the nation’s interests and maritime strategy.

Harris enlisted in the United States Navy Reserve in 1989. He was subsequently commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps Reserve in 2000.

Harris possesses both infantry and artillery arms military occupational specialties.
Bearing is defined as the way one conducts and carries him or herself in a manner that reflects alertness, competence and control.

Recruits of India Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, displayed their bearing during their senior drill instructor’s inspection. Only 16 days into training, the recruits were also tested on Marine Corps knowledge, uniforms and rifle manual at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Sept. 5. The purpose of the SDI inspection was to test the recruits, while under the pressure of drill instructors, on what they’ve learned in recruit training.

“The senior drill instructor inspection shows us where the baseline is for the recruits’ confidence and bearing,” said Gunnery Sgt. Cornell S. Cornish, drill instructor, Platoon 3209. “It shows the drill instructors what they’ve instilled in their recruits and what they need to work on.”

The inspecting drill instructor faced each recruit and snapped his heels together coming to the position of attention, which signaled the recruit to report to the drill instructor by sounding off with his name, hometown and military occupation specialty. After reporting, the inspector began drilling the recruit with Marine Corps knowledge questions and then inspected his uniform.

At the same time, other drill instructors swarmed the platoon creating chaos, which tested the recruits’ bearing, one of the Corps’ leadership traits. It was crucial for the recruits to remain calm, keep their eyes forward while at attention and answer the questions they were asked. It was a sign of confidence and bearing - two traits drill instructors were seeking.

“Marines must be able to react under pressure or in the middle of chaos in a combat environment. Your actions of what you do or don’t do could risk the life of a fellow Marine,” said Recruit Dustin A. Rits, Platoon 3209.

Rits, a 17-year-old, Denver, Colo., native explained Marines find themselves in stressful environments, especially on deployments. When things go wrong in combat, Marines must be able to stay calm and react to the situation without freezing up or second guessing their decisions. Thus, upcoming Marines must be trained to adapt, whether it’s drill instructors yelling or in a combat situation while being fired upon.