Welcome

Today’s graduation ceremony recognizes the successful transition from civilian to basic Marine and consists of a traditional military parade followed by special recognition for those who have excelled while in Recruit Training and final dismissal.

After the graduation ceremony, we encourage you to visit the Command Museum across the parade deck. For your dining convenience, we offer the bowling alley, snack bar, and the individual food vendors at the Marine Corps Exchange.

Due to security concerns, our guests are not allowed into the recruit training areas to include the recruit barracks and physical training areas.

The mission of the Recruit Depot and the Western Recruiting Region is to exercise operational control of enlisted recruiting operations in the 8th, 9th, and 12th Marine Corps Districts; to provide reception, processing, and recruit training for male enlisted personnel following initial entry into the United States Marine Corps; and to produce a basically trained United States Marine embodied with the fighting spirit, core values and esprit de corps which have ensured our Corps’ success for over 240 years.

The unique relationship between the Marine Corps Recruit Depot and San Diego is the result of almost 150 years of mutual support, assistance and growth. This relationship is reflected in the history of the Marine Corps in San Diego, the Depot as a post of the Corps, and the heritage of San Diego itself.

Above all else, We Make Marines.

Sequence Of Events

Band Serenade
Chaplain’s Prayer *
“Attention”, “Adjutant’s Call” and March-On
The National Anthem *
Sound Off
Presentation Of The Command To The Commander Of Troops
Report
Publication Of The Order And Officers Center
Battalion Commander’s Remarks
Presentation Of The Command To The Reviewing Officer
Pass In Review (Please Rise When The American Flag Passes)
Anchors Aweigh/The Marines’ Hymn *
Graduates Return Front And Center
Recognition Of The Company Staff
Retirement Of The Platoon Guidons And Recognition Of Honor Graduates
Final Dismissal

* PLEASE RISE
The United States Marine Corps has long established a tradition of rending proper honors and courtesies to the American Flag with ceremony and decorum. If this is your first visit to a military installation, we would like to acquaint you with the Flag Etiquette and welcome you to join us in showing courtesy to our Flag as defined by U.S. Code Title 4 and 36, and as observed aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego.

In observance of U.S. Code Title 4 and 36, individuals in uniform, members of the armed forces not in uniform, and military veterans may render a military salute to the American Flag while it is being hoisted, being lowered, passing by. The same courtesies should be rendered while the National Anthem is played.

Gentlemen wearing hats who do not render a salute to the flag should remove their headgear and on the first note of the National Anthem, place their right hand over their heart until the last note of the National Anthem.

Ladies are not required to remove their headdress. On the first note of the National Anthem, ladies should stand, face the flag, and place their right hand over their heart until the last note of the National Anthem. All present should remain standing until the last note of the National Anthem is played.

If the flag is not visible during the National Anthem, please stand and face the sound of the music. If driving during Morning or Evening Colors, persons in vehicles within sight or hearing of the ceremony should halt the vehicle at the sound of the National Anthem, ladies should stand, face the flag, and place their right hand over their heart until the last note of the National Anthem. All present should remain standing until the last note of the National Anthem is played.

The Commanding Officer of Recruit Training Regiment

The Community Officer of Recruit Training Regiment

Marine Corps Recruit Depot

A fire smoke after establishing Camp Horseshoe on North Island in San Diego, Col. Joseph Pendleton, on September 6, 1914, was the guest speaker at the U.S. Grant Hotel in downtown San Diego. The subject of his speech was "San Diego," and the state of San Diego was presented as the USMC’s best race horse. The drive behind his lecture was to influence the conditions and the less than convenient West Coast conditions the 7th Marine Regiment faced when it landed in San Diego in 1919 through 1920. On December 21, Pendleton brought a new, planned it commision into the Marine. Advanced expansion at Camp Howard and the soon-to-be-come lands were used, and in 1921, the Marine Recruit Depot at San Diego was created.

Pendleton Hall, McDougall Hall, and Day Hall. Today, the depot has 388 acres and twenty-five buildings built in San Diego's Balboa Park for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition. Building plans were developed by renowned architect, Bertram Goodhue, who also designed the current conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The depot has the responsibility to train all male recruits. Five new recruit barracks, a new dining hall, new bowling alley, and the current conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

On behalf of Brigadier General Regis H. Poteat, commanding general, Marine Corps Recruit Depot and Western Recruiting Region, and the Marines, Sailors and civilians Marine Recruit Training Regiments, welcome you to the morning greetings and ceremony. Your presence here today is greatly appreciated. As we recognize your young men’s significant accomplishment, enjoy this special day in San Diego.

Marine Corps recruit training is the most difficult recruit training in the Nation and a tough undertaking for all who accept the challenge. The primary goal of recruit training is the production of a Marine. Before you think it is the only company of young men who have succeeded in this challenge. We are here to celebrate with you their ability to make the transition and physically and emotionally and mentally in a time–tested process whereby he has been transformed from civilian to Marine. Many are responsible for this significant transformation to include the families, loved ones and teachers who provided the basic values and character as a foundation and the Marine Recruiter who saw the potential and desire to excel. But the person most responsible for the changes is the Marine Corps Drill Instructor. He has been blessed intensely for the past three months, personally encouraging each in the process, to ensure every Marine initiated its birthright, character and values necessary and on the right path. The motto of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, and the Marine Corps has never been the same. The Marine is determined to achieve a high standard of excellence in recruit training and to make tough decisions under stress.

Core Values, which form the bedrock of their character. Core Values give Marines meaning to the title United States Marine. These men and women live by a set of values, carry them through the challenges of combat and helps them overcome fear. Courage is the mental, moral and physical strength ingrained in Marines. It is the ingredient that enables 24-hour a day dedication to Corps and country. It leads to the highest order of discipline for individuals and units. It inspires the unrelenting determination to achieve a high standard of excellence in every endeavor. It is the quality of maturity, dedication, trust and dependability that compels Marines to act responsibly; to hold themselves and other accountable for their actions; and to fulfill their obligation.

Today the Recruit Depot provides its nation’s Corps with basically trained Marines to fight in the current conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Commitment

Honor guides Marines to eschew the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior; to never lies, cheat, or steal; to abide by an encompassing code of ethics; and to respect human dignity. It is the quality of maturity, dedication, trust and dependability that compels Marines to act responsibly; to hold themselves and other accountable for their actions; and to fulfill their obligation.

COURAGE

Courage is the mental, physical and spiritual strength ingrained in Marines. It carries them through the challenges of combat and helps them overcome fear. Marines, it is the inner strength that enables a Marine to do what is right, to adhere to a higher standard of personal conduct; and to make tough decisions under stress and pressure.

Commitment

Commitment is the spirit of selflessness determination and dedication found in Marines. It leads to the highest order of discipline for individuals and units. It is the ingredient that enables 24-hour a day dedication to Corps and country. It inspires the unrelenting determination to achieve a high standard of excellence in every endeavor.

Why We Succeed

Generation after generation of American men and women have given special meaning to the title United States Marine. These men and women live by a set of Core Values, which forms the bedrock of their character. Core Values give Marines strength and regulate their behavior; they bind the Corps into a total force that can meet any challenge... and succeed.

Honor

Honor guides Marines to eschew the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior; to never lies, cheat, or steal; to abide by an encompassing code of ethics; and to respect human dignity.

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Sergeant Major Terrence Whitcomb

United States Marine Corps

Sergeant Major Whitcomb began Marine Corps Recruit Training on 14 September 1993 at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. He was assigned to 1st Recruit Training Battalion as a Personnel Clerk. He was promoted to Lance Corporal on 1 June 1994. In May 1995, Private First Class Whitcomb reported to 3d Combat Engineer Battalion, 3d Marine Division, Okinawa, Japan, to perform duties as a Personnel Clerk. He was promoted to Lance Corporal on 1 June 1995. In May 1996, Private First Class Whitcomb reported to Recruit Training Battalion, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California to attend Drill Instructor School, Class 4-96. In August 1996, Private First Class Whitcomb reported to Inspector-Instructor Staff, Inspector Program Trainer, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, California to attend the Officer Candidate School. Upon graduation, Private First Class Whitcomb was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in November 1997.

In May 1998, Private First Class Whitcomb reported to 3d Engineer Battalion, 3d Marine Division, Okinawa, Japan to perform duties as a Personnel Clerk. He was promoted to Lance Corporal on 1 June 1998. In May 1999, Lance Corporal Whitcomb reported to Lance Corporal Support Group 17, 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Corps Air Station, Camp Pendleton, California to attend the Major Series Basic School. Upon graduation, Lance Corporal Whitcomb was assigned to 1st Recruit Training Battalion as a Personnel Clerk. In April 2000, he was promoted to Lance Corporal on 1 June 2000. In May 2001, Lance Corporal Whitcomb reported to Recruit Training Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. From 1 May 2001 to 15 June 2001, Lance Corporal Whitcomb served as Lance Corporal Support Group 17, 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Corps Air Station, Camp Pendleton, California. From 1 June 2001 to 15 June 2001, Lance Corporal Whitcomb was assigned to Recruit Training Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. From 18 July 2001 to 15 May 2003, Lance Corporal Whitcomb served as Sergeant Major 1st Recruit Training Battalion, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, California. During this period, Sergeant Major Whitcomb deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

President of the Marine Corps Training Mission - United Arab Emirates.

Sergeant Major Whitcomb served as Battalion Sergeant Major, 2d Recruit Training Battalion, 3d Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, California from 9 May 2005 to 1 May 2006. In May 2006, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to Inspector-Instructor Staff, Inspector Program Trainer, Marine Wing Support Group 39, Consolidated Personnel Administration Center. In June 2006, Sergeant Major Whitcomb was selected to attend United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Quantico, Virginia. Upon graduation, Sergeant Major Whitcomb served as Battalion Sergeant Major, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. Sergeant Major Whitcomb’s personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (gold star in lieu of third award), Navy and Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, and Marine Corps Letter of Commendation.

On 1 May 2006, Gunnery Sergeant Whitcomb reported to Marine Aircraft Group 39, 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Corps Air Station, Camp Pendleton, California to attend the Resident Navy Senior Enlisted Academy, Class 157, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. He completed the Total Enlisted Force Course, United States Army Infantry Center, Fort Benning, Georgia. Sergeant Major Whitcomb’s professional affiliations include the Marine Corps Recruit Depot/ Western Recruiting Region. His hobbies include running, swimming, and spending time with his family.

On 1 May 2008, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to United States Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, Quantico, Virginia as the “Gung Ho” recipient.

On 1 May 2009, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to Recruiting Command, Marine CorpsRecruit Depot/ Western Recruiting Region, Camp Pendleton, California to perform duties as the Recruiting Command Inspector-Instructor Staff Sergeant. During this period, Sergeant Major Whitcomb deployed with the Recruiting Command in support of Operation Unified Assistance.

On 1 May 2010, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to Inspector-Instructor Staff, Inspector Program Trainer, Marine Wing Support Group 39, Consolidated Personnel Administration Center. In June 2010, Sergeant Major Whitcomb was selected to attend United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Quantico, Virginia. Upon graduation, Sergeant Major Whitcomb served as Battalion Sergeant Major, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. Sergeant Major Whitcomb’s personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (gold star in lieu of third award), Navy and Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, and Marine Corps Letter of Commendation.

On 1 May 2011, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to United States Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, Quantico, Virginia as the “Gung Ho” recipient.

On 1 May 2012, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to Recruiting Command, Marine CorpsRecruit Depot/ Western Recruiting Region, Camp Pendleton, California to perform duties as the Recruiting Command Inspector-Instructor Staff Sergeant. During this period, Sergeant Major Whitcomb deployed with the Recruiting Command in support of Operation Unified Assistance.

On 1 May 2013, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to Inspector-Instructor Staff, Inspector Program Trainer, Marine Wing Support Group 39, Consolidated Personnel Administration Center. In June 2013, Sergeant Major Whitcomb was selected to attend United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Quantico, Virginia. Upon graduation, Sergeant Major Whitcomb served as Battalion Sergeant Major, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. Sergeant Major Whitcomb’s personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (gold star in lieu of third award), Navy and Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, and Marine Corps Letter of Commendation.

On 1 May 2014, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to United States Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, Quantico, Virginia as the “Gung Ho” recipient.

On 1 May 2015, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to Recruiting Command, Marine CorpsRecruit Depot/ Western Recruiting Region, Camp Pendleton, California to perform duties as the Recruiting Command Inspector-Instructor Staff Sergeant. During this period, Sergeant Major Whitcomb deployed with the Recruiting Command in support of Operation Unified Assistance.

On 1 May 2016, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to Inspector-Instructor Staff, Inspector Program Trainer, Marine Wing Support Group 39, Consolidated Personnel Administration Center. In June 2016, Sergeant Major Whitcomb was selected to attend United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Quantico, Virginia. Upon graduation, Sergeant Major Whitcomb served as Battalion Sergeant Major, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. Sergeant Major Whitcomb’s personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (gold star in lieu of third award), Navy and Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, and Marine Corps Letter of Commendation.

On 1 May 2017, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to United States Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, Quantico, Virginia as the “Gung Ho” recipient.

On 1 May 2018, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to Recruiting Command, Marine CorpsRecruit Depot/ Western Recruiting Region, Camp Pendleton, California to perform duties as the Recruiting Command Inspector-Instructor Staff Sergeant. During this period, Sergeant Major Whitcomb deployed with the Recruiting Command in support of Operation Unified Assistance.

On 1 May 2019, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to Inspector-Instructor Staff, Inspector Program Trainer, Marine Wing Support Group 39, Consolidated Personnel Administration Center. In June 2019, Sergeant Major Whitcomb was selected to attend United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Quantico, Virginia. Upon graduation, Sergeant Major Whitcomb served as Battalion Sergeant Major, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. Sergeant Major Whitcomb’s personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (gold star in lieu of third award), Navy and Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, and Marine Corps Letter of Commendation.

On 1 May 2020, Sergeant Major Whitcomb reported to United States Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, Quantico, Virginia as the “Gung Ho” recipient.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platoon High Shooter</th>
<th>Platoon Honor Award</th>
<th>Recruit</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>PLATOON HONOR MAN</td>
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<td>M. A. STRIPLING</td>
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**Note:** The table represents the recipients of the Meritorious Promotion award, with their respective ranks and names. The format is consistent across all entries, showing the rank (PVT, PFC, etc.), the name, and the date of the award.
Phase II - Recruit Training

We have enhanced recruit training by amplifying Core Values instruction and introducing The Crucible. A key element to the recent changes in recruit training is more time for the drill instructors to focus on character development with an emphasis on selflessness and teamwork.

There are 28 hours of programmed instruction on Core values; however, the most powerful values exchange may very well come from the increased one-on-one time with the drill instructors who teach and demonstrate values such as selflessness, determination, loyalty and integrity.

The Crucible, in part, is the manifestation of the intangible values training that has taken place earlier in recruit training. The Crucible is a 54-hour event that is the climax of recruit training. Each warrior station is named after a Marine Corps hero whose actions epitomize the values we want all Marines to internalize. As a touchstone, this crucible provides a path of character development, there is no stopping. We are always developing the selflessness, teamwork and Core Values concepts deep into each recruit. The Crucible is a 54-hour event that is designed to test a recruit’s mind, body, and spirit. It is a series of eight Events revolving around obstacles, warrior game, movement concepts and reaction problems tackled over a grueling 40-mile course. Sleep and food deprivation add to the rigor of the course which is primarily designed to develop teamwork and camaraderie through shared hardship. Each recruit is named after a Marine Corps hero whose actions epitomize the values we want all Marines to internalize. As a touchstone, this crucible provides a path of character development, there is no stopping. We are always developing the selflessness, teamwork and Core Values concepts deep into each recruit.

The Transformed Marine

The Corps has a long established pattern of Marines who have left the active duty ranks to become strong leaders in their communities and for the nation and we will continue to send bold men and women of strong character and values back to society. Those Marines will carry the legacy of high character, like those Marines who are presently doing great things for our nation. We have received countless letters from influential public leaders who are former active duty Marines. They give testimony to the direct connection between the character traits they forged in the Corps and their success and fulfillment in life. End Result: We will continue to provide society with people of great character, whether they do four or forty years in the Marine Corps.

Phase III - MOS Schools

After graduating from recruit training and completing a well deserved ten days of leave, the new Marines report into the School of Infantry (SoI). Soil and combat follow school graduation and they must apply the experience they need to excel in the Marine Corps Basic School (BM), the School of Infantry (SoI) and the Fleet Marine Force (FMF).

Phase IV - Sustaining the Transformation

All muscles atrophy without exercise; so too with character. Once started on the path of character development, there is no stopping. We are always developing our character until the day we die. The sustainment process continues Core Values training within units and is included in all that we do as Marines, providing a renewed emphasis on warfighting, combat leadership, and the concepts of responsibility and accountability.
Why The Transformation?

The most important things the Marine Corps does for our nation are to make Marines and win battles. The Corps is a versatile, force-in-readiness prepared to handle a variety of missions. We continue to be a force rich in history and traditions, ingrained with the highest values of honor, courage and commitment.

At the very time when a host of factors is tending to undermine individual character development in society, Marines are facing an operational environment which requires stronger character and moral virtue. We live and operate in a world that is proving to be increasingly complex and interconnected. As a result, the Corps is in the midst of an evolution of the uses of force that are not quite war, not quite peace, not quite conventional peace, not quite conventional military operations, and not quite operations, and not quite civil police duties.

The nation is committing Marines to a wide range of scenarios, from peacekeeping operations in Somalia to non-combatant evacuation operations in Liberia, to more conventional conflicts like Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq. Operations such as these involve independent units confronted by situations that have operational and strategic implications. The battlefield is becoming so technologically advanced that weapon systems will be able to kill by smell, sight or sound. In order to ensure success in these situations, we have looked to the Marines of the past to see what made them successful in battles like Belleau Wood, Iwo Jima and the Chosin Reservoir.

The answer was strong character and a fighting spirit that overcame all obstacles. This is what will allow us to dominate the high tech and diverse battlefields of the future. This will allow us to win America’s military battles and to send transformed Americans home to strengthen the very fabric of our society.

Quite simply, we are continuing to focus on and to enhance the root source of a Marine’s indomitable fighting spirit: his determination to overcome any obstacle that stands in his way, fueled by unshakeable honor, courage, and commitment.

How We Are Doing It.

We believe that new Marines need to be forged in a furnace of shared hardship, mutual commitment, and teamwork. This common, intense experience creates bonds of comradeship and cohesion so strong that Marines will refuse to let each other down. This forging of character, discipline, and fitness will continue to be the basis upon which we make Marines. Holding onto the high character of the Marines of the past, we look for ways to inculcate the strong values that have become synonymous with the Marine Corps. We are attacking the character development challenge in four phases: Recruiting, Recruit Training, MOS Schools, and Sustainment.

Phase I - Recruiting

Inculcating these character traits starts in the recruiting process. Recruiting duty is a vital assignment in the Marine Corps. Marine recruiters take it seriously and feel a great responsibility to fulfill the job to the best of their ability. Many Marines say that recruiting duty is among the most rewarding assignments they have had as a Marine, because they are helping to ensure the high standards and future of our Corps.

Most Marine recruiters have earned the rank of sergeant or above, which means they have had four or more years of experience in the Marine Corps serving in one of several hundred Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). They know what it means to serve as a Marine. Meeting a Marine recruiter gives you personal access to someone who has lived and served in the Marine Corps. No matter where you are in the decision-making process, talking to a recruiter can give you more information. You are under no obligation when speaking to a Marine Corps Recruiter, as he or she knows the importance of the decision, and will help determine if you are right for the Marine Corps—and if the Marine Corps is right for you.

First, we recruit young men and women who have demonstrated potential and commitment. Then we prepare them through physical fitness and ready them for the intense forging they will experience in recruit training. Most enlistees spend up to 12 months in the Delayed Entry Program preparing to undergo recruit training and become Marines.

Their preparation includes physical conditioning, study guides, introduction to Marine Corps history and tradition and, most importantly, introduction to Core Values. The bottom line is we are paying more attention to a prospective Marine's character and fitness during screening.

Phase I - Why the Transformation?

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