

## Importance of Close Combat Taught during Recruit Training

During boot camp recruits are taught the importance of close combat and its role in a combat situation.

Close combat skills are reiterated throughout the training cycle by implementing the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program and bayonet training.

The bayonet – a knife that can be affixed to a rifle – is introduced to recruits during the first phase of boot camp, where they receive and are tested on their knowledge of the bayonet by completing the bayonet assault course.

"Bayonets have been around as long as rifles have been around," said Staff Sgt. Mario A. Castaneda, senior drill instructor, Platoon 1021, Company B. He said it is important to teach recruits how to use them because bayonets can be used as effective tools in close combats situations.

Castaneda, a Chicago native, said that though the rifle is a long-range weapon, on the modern battlefield of Iraq, Marines sometimes find themselves in close combat situations as they clear houses. Having the knowledge of how to defend themselves is imperative, said Castaneda.

"I feel with the training I received here, I will be able to better to defend myself in combat," said Pfc. Joshua Q. Evans, Platoon 1021, Company B.

Evans, a Galveston, Texas native, enlisted in the Marine Corps to serve as an infantryman. He feels that having an instructor who was knowledgeable about the material he taught made Evans confident in knowing he could manipulate the bayonet in his favor.

As long as Marines have been Marines they have used bayonets. From the revolutionary war to the current conflict in Iraq, close combat has proved inevitable.

Although bayonet training is only one aspect of close combat, it is a very important one. Marines must learn to use what is available to them, and in the end it all comes down to "one mind, any weapon."

Marines take many learned tools with them when they graduate from recruit training. The more proficient they are with the weapons they have, the easier it will be to accomplish the missions they are tasked with.

