

MCMAP making Fox faster, stronger

Two Marines stood facing each other. The first Marine reached in and grabbed the other's wrist, putting his back into his opponent's stomach and quickly throwing him over his hip and onto the ground. The downed Marine looked up at his adversary, who had already returned to his basic warrior stance, a protective stance that allows them to be ready for the next foe.

Marines with Weapons Platoon, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines Regiment, 2nd Marine Division worked vigorously for 12 hours each day for seven days to complete their grey belt training in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program here March 6.

MCMAP is a program that teaches close-quarters combat techniques coupled with lessons on Marine Corps values. Marines are awarded different color belts as they reach new levels of proficiency.

"MCMAP teaches us what we can do," said Lance Cpl. Stephen Cote, a machine gunner with the company. "Our staff sergeant pushes us so hard that, at the end of the day, we know how far we can push ourselves."

The platoon worked through every move in the grey and tan belt syllabi. Every person took a turn performing the moves and practicing. They critiqued each other on every move to improve their skills. Some of the moves performed were the arm-bar takedown, the hip throw and handcuffing techniques.

"The program involves combat skills and soft skills," said Staff Sgt. Vedel Poindexter, a black-belt instructor trainer teaching the course. "There are some very distinct soft skills that are incredibly important to Marines as people and war fighters."

He taught the Marines techniques and soft skills, life lessons, which corresponded to each move. While teaching knife techniques he also taught them when it is appropriate to use a knife during real-life situation.

The Marines capacity to use their MCMAP skills is put to the test at the end of each training day. They are put through a landing-zone drill, an exercise comprised of several stations which the Marines cycle through. Every station has a different MCMAP technique.

"The drills force us to perform each move when we're exhausted," said Lance Cpl. Trevor Remington, a machine gunner with the company. "It lets me know that I can do the moves under any condition."

MCMAP is not just tough training it teaches skills that Marines use in combat.

"When you have to detain someone, a lot of the time they don't want to go easily," said Lance Cpl. Jesus Sanchez, a machine gunner with the company.

Sanchez explained how he used some of the moves at an (entry control point). He said a man needed to be detained and he had to use an arm-bar takedown in order to get the man to comply.

Every instructor changes the course to fit their unit's specific needs.

"I have Marines in my platoon who have never been in a fight," said Poindexter.

Poindexter put these Marines into a situation where they would grapple each other. He said he expects his men to give

him the same effort on the MCMAP field that they would give him on the battlefield.

The Marines in Weapons platoon, Fox Company finished the day's events thirsty, tired and hungry for more training.

"We know that we will be doing this all again tomorrow," said Lance Cpl. Kyle Gottshall, a machine gunner with the company. "It'll be worth it because, once we get our belts, we will be ahead of our peers."

The MCMAP curriculum has been designed to improve the Marines not only as war fighters but as human beings. Marines continue to apply these lessons at home and in combat environments.