

Earning the Eagle, Globe and Anchor

It is often asked, "what sets a Marine apart from the rest of society." Though it is known they undertake the hardest recruit training in the United States, not many know what makes up that training criteria.

"In other branches of service, they receive the title when they sign up. In the Marines, it doesn't come easily. We dangle the title in front of their face and make them chase it," said 1st Sgt. Julia L. Vetos, the company first sergeant for Papa Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion. "Marines do stand apart,"

To earn the title "Marine," one must first become a recruit and face the rigors of the 13-week recruit training process.

While in training, recruits are cut off from everything they know. No phone calls, no laughing and no jokes. In their strenuous training, recruits are rapidly instructed on how to adapt to the Marine Corps lifestyle and are taught a new way to live.

Recruit training consists of more than physical training and learning to obey orders. They must also learn to live by the Core Values of honor, courage, and commitment. These Core Values are tested all throughout recruit training and throughout their Marine Corps career.

"We teach recruits to do everything without question. It's called instant obedience to orders" said Vetos from Golden, Colo. "This is crucial in the success in bringing our Marines home alive. We can't afford for one to hesitate and ask questions."

Recruit training consists of three basic phases, each lasting around four weeks. In first phase, also known as the forming phase, recruits are instructed through academics, drill, martial arts and physical training. Martial arts and physical training stay constant throughout all three phases.

"The first few weeks of recruit training are very crucial," said Staff Sgt. Peter Stephens, the senior drill instructor for Platoon 1060, Delta Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion.

"This phase increases their ability to follow basic orders. It is also a drastic change from what they have always done."

During second phase, recruits experience the rifle range, team week, working parties and numerous inspections. Recruits then move on to third phase where they undergo basic warrior training, final drill, a final physical fitness test and get the opportunity to receive the title "Marine."

Recruits are accompanied by drill instructors the entire time they are in training. The drill instructors constantly apply stress to teach recruits how to work under pressure and how to react in a hostile environment.

"Recruits have to be able to adapt to different situations," said Stephens, from Lawrence, Kan. "Although we put them in this situation, we still think safety. Our goal is to make Marines, not to inflict pain on anyone."

"Everything is done for a reason," Vetos said. "For example: while at chow, recruits are taught to carry their tray with their elbows in and their backs straight. This is the same technique they are taught while carrying their rifle in port arms."

"While earning the title 'Marine' one should have an open mindset, ready to learn new ways of doing things," Stephens said. "Expect consequences for your actions, and know that everything is done for a reason."

Recruit training is a life-changing experience that brings out the good qualities in all people, he added.