

PTI

The official newsletter of MCRD Parris Island





Practicing Drill

U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Reece Frye, a drill instructor with Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, leads drill instructors during unit leader evaluation on Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., Jan. 8, 2026. Drill instructors are evaluated on appearance, cadence, and execution of movements. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Jordy Morales)

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Rct. Roycy Louissaint, a recruit with Mike Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, sets security during the Crucible on Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. The Crucible is the culmination of the knowledge and skills recruits learn throughout recruit training. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Jordy Morales)



April 2026

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COVER PHOTO

A recruit with Mike Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, receives his Eagle, Globe, and Anchor from his drill instructor during the EGA ceremony on Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., December 23, 2025. Following a culminating 15k hike to Peatross Parade Deck, recruits are given their EGA and officially become United States Marines. (U.S. Marine Corps Photo by Staff Sgt. Brendan Custer)



Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island
Communication Strategy and Operations

Commanding General: Brig. Gen. Ahmed Williamson
 Sergeant Major: Sgt. Major Paul Forde
 Director: Capt. John Hardin
 Deputy Director: Mr. Mike Kaneshige
 Visual Information Officer: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Bobby Yarbrough

COMMANDER'S CORNER



Marines,

As we move further into the year, I want to take a moment to recognize the continued dedication and professionalism demonstrated by the Marines, Sailors, and civilians of Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island. Your efforts over this past quarter have ensured that our mission remains strong, disciplined, and focused.

In a time marked by ongoing military operations across the globe, the importance of what we do here cannot be overstated. The responsibility to recruit, train, and transform civilians into United States Marines carries added weight. The young men and women earning the title today may be called upon to serve in conflict tomorrow. That reality demands our very best—every day, in every evolution, and in every interaction with those entrusted to our care.

Looking ahead, we are approaching the summer training surge, when our graduating companies will grow significantly in size and the operational tempo across the depot will increase. This is a predictable challenge, but one that requires preparation, focus, and resilience. I encourage each of you to take the time now to recharge, reset, and prepare yourselves—mentally and physically—for the demanding months ahead.

Our success depends not only on how we perform under pressure, but also on how well we prepare for it. By investing in ourselves and each other now, we ensure that we are ready to meet the heightened demands of the season while maintaining the high standards expected of this depot.

Thank you for your continued commitment to excellence and to the mission of Making Marines. I remain confident in this team and in our collective ability to meet every challenge that comes our way.

Semper Fidelis,
Ahmed T. Williamson
Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island

AROUND THE DEPOT

Headquarters and Service Battalion



Mrs. Carolyn Culberson, the human resources specialist with the Recruit Admin Branch at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island S.C, celebrated her retirement on Jan 7, 2026.

Beginning her career in 1987, Mrs. Culberson retired after dedicating nearly 40 years of her life to the process of making Marines.

Recruit Training Regiment



The Recruit Training Regiment meritoriously promoted eleven Marines to their next rank on the Peatross Parade Field, Jan. 6, 2026.

The drill instructors were meritoriously promoted based on their individual performance while serving on the special duty assignment.

Weapons and Field Training Battalion



Weapons and Field Training Battalion, in concert effort with Expeditionary Operations Training Group, held a fast roping the Static Rope Suspension Course on Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., Feb 26, 2026.

The course instructs Marines on how to properly and safely conduct knot tying, belaying, fast roping, and descending for the rappel tower. It focuses on readying Marines to safely train recruits to descend the tower.

DMCS VISITS MCRDPI TO UNDERSTAND THE MISSION OF MAKING MARINES

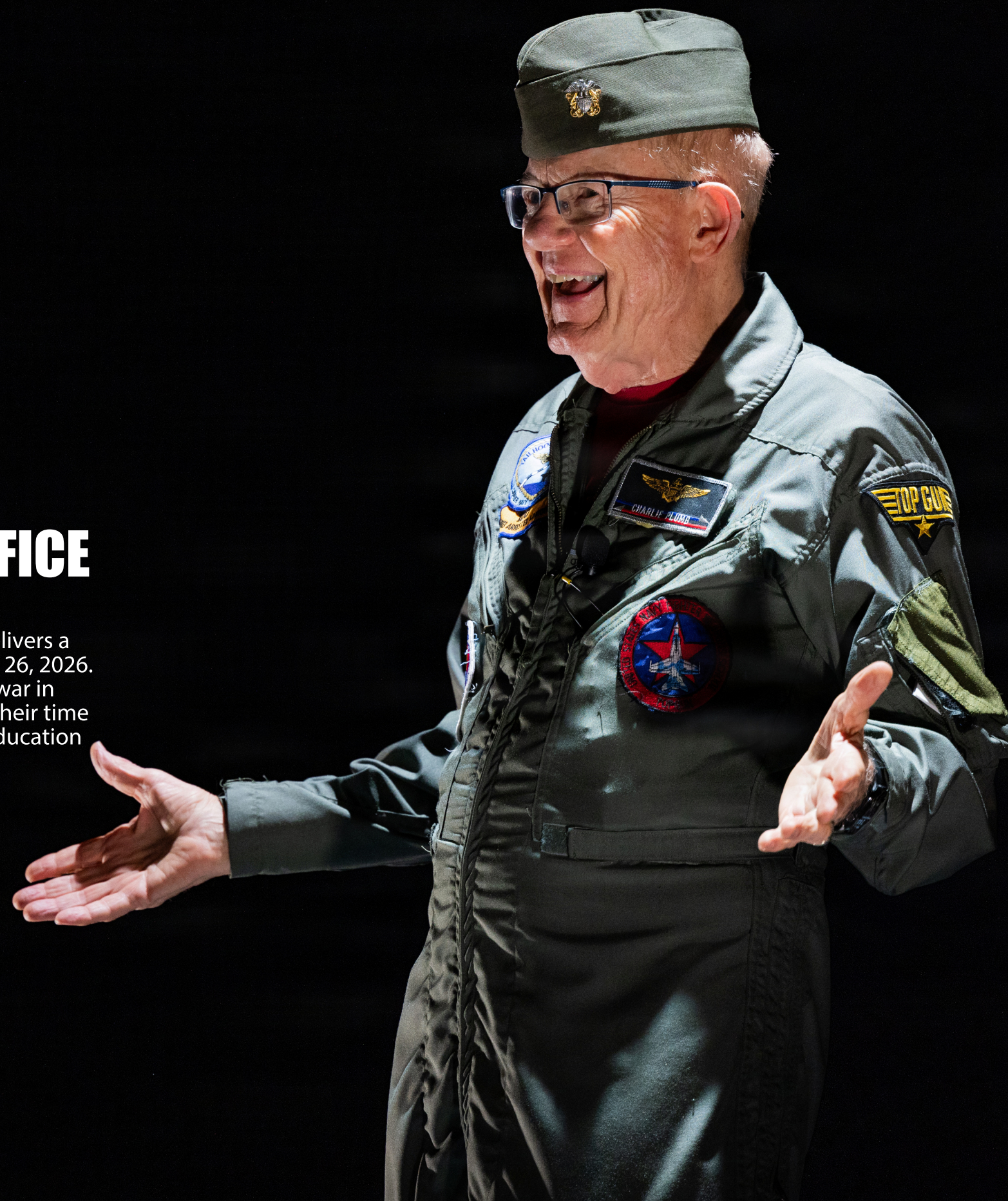
by Cpl. Jacob Richardson

U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Paul J. Rock Jr., Director, Marine Corps Staff, Headquarters Marine Corps, shakes hands with a drill instructor on Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., Jan. 8, 2026. Rock spent the afternoon touring the depot with its commanding general, Brig. Gen. Ahmed T. Williamson, and other leaders.

VIETNAM PRISONER OF WAR TALKS TO MARINES ABOUT RESILENCY, SACRIFICE

by LCpl. Ayden Cassano

U.S. Navy Captain Charlie Plumb, a retired F-4 Pilot who served in the Vietnam War, delivers a speech to U.S. Marines aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. on March 26, 2026. During the presentation, Captain Plumb told the story of his six years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, and the ways in which him and other prisoners communicated throughout their time there. The presentation was part of the commanding general's Professional Military Education (PME) series.





**PARRIS ISLAND DRILL INSTRUCTOR WINS
DRILL INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR**

by Cpl. Jordy Morales



Gunnery Sgt. Jensen Runion didn't join the Marine Corps with a lifelong plan. He joined to prove a point.

"It was something my friends were doing," he said. "A lot of people said I couldn't do it, so I did it. At first, it was about proving them wrong—but then I realized I was doing it for me."

He shipped to recruit training alongside friends, quickly facing the chaos and intensity that defines the experience. Runion said it was a surreal experience and earning the title Marine gave him purpose and a standard he still measures himself against.

Once quiet and reserved, Runion credits the Marine Corps with pushing him beyond his limits and into leadership.

"It got me out of my shell," he said. "I wanted more responsibility. I wanted to lead Marines."

At a career crossroads, he chose one of the Corps' most demanding paths: drill instructor duty. Runion said he knew it was going to be hard because boot camp isn't easy for recruits so he knew it wasn't going to be easy for him either. After 13 weeks at Drill Instructor School, he earned the campaign cover, but the reality of the role didn't hit until he faced his first platoon.

"Standing in front of those recruits, I realized it's not about me anymore," he said. "It's about changing their lives. Giving a recruit the Eagle, Globe and Anchor it's unreal. Knowing you had that impact stays with you."

Each cycle tested his endurance and leadership. By his third cycle, he was mentoring junior drill instructors while continuing to shape recruits. That impact—and his performance—led to selection as a senior drill instructor, and eventually, a new challenge: competing for Drill Instructor of the Year.

"I asked to be put on the list," Runion said. "I knew who I'd be up against. The doubt was there but I wasn't going to get outworked."

He prepared relentlessly, refining every detail and studying every order. Runion said he told himself, win or lose, he would give it everything he had. When he stepped into the boardroom, the pressure peaked, but moments later, he was selected to represent his depot at the Marine Corps level.

"I couldn't believe it," he said. "I walked out thinking I didn't get it."

After days of uncertainty and preparation, the final announcement came: Runion was named Marine Corps Drill Instructor of the Year. The recognition came with a meritorious promotion to gunnery sergeant just nine years into his career, marking a transformation from a hesitant recruit to a leader of Marines.

For Runion, however, the title isn't the reward. The Marines are.

"When my old recruits reach out, that's the best part," he said. "Knowing you're part of their story—that means everything."



ACTIVE SHOOTER DRILL

Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island conducted an active shooter exercise aboard the installation on March 17, 2026, reinforcing its commitment to the safety and readiness of Marines, civilians, and the surrounding community. The exercise, titled the Active Shooter Integrated Response Workshop, simulated a real-world threat scenario inside the Marine Corps Exchange, challenging participants to respond directly and effectively under pressure.

The training brought together installation personnel and local emergency response agencies, enabling them to evaluate coordination, communication, and response times during a critical incident. Participants rehearsed established emergency procedures, identified areas for improvement, and strengthened partnerships essential to crisis response.

Exercises like this ensure that Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island remains prepared to respond decisively to emergencies, safeguarding all who live, work, and train aboard the depot.

THE FIGHT WITHIN

Marines participated in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Instructor (MAI) Course at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina, Feb. 12, 2026.

The MAI Course is designed to enhance Marines' proficiency in combat conditioning, leadership, and martial arts techniques rooted in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP). Upon completion, graduates are certified to instruct and evaluate fellow Marines, enabling them to lead structured training and facilitate belt advancement within their units.

The course reinforces discipline, mental resilience, and the warrior ethos essential to mission readiness across the force.





RS Fort Lauderdale hosts annual poolee field meet with SMMC

Recruiting Station Fort Lauderdale hosted its annual poolee field meet in San Juan, Puerto Rico, bringing together future Marines, recruiters, families, and senior Marine Corps leadership for a day of competition and camaraderie.

As temperatures climbed and anticipation built, poolees gathered to face a series of physical and mental challenges designed to prepare them for recruit training. This year's event proved especially memorable with the visit of the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Carlos A. Ruiz. Addressing the poolees, he emphasized discipline, resilience, and the commitment required to earn the title Marine.

Following a warmup run led by Ruiz, poolees trained alongside drill instructors from Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, experiencing the intensity of recruit training firsthand. They competed in events including pull-ups, relays, team challenges, and a final tug-of-war for the Spartan Warrior Challenge trophies—symbols of teamwork and determination.

Ruiz highlighted the importance of unity and shared purpose, noting that events like these strengthen camaraderie and prepare future Marines for the challenges ahead.

As the competition concluded, poolees—tired but motivated—celebrated their efforts and growth. Reflecting on the event, commanding officer Greg Mateo emphasized the impact of Ruiz's leadership and the pride in developing some of the nation's most motivated future Marines.

Through events like the Puerto Rico field meet, Recruiting Station Fort Lauderdale continues to prepare poolees—mentally and physically—for the transformation required to earn the title Marine.



RS Lansing poolee chooses the Marine Corps to pursue his American Dream

The meaning of the “American Dream” varies, but at its core is the belief that the United States offers an opportunity for a better future. For many, turning that belief into reality is challenging—but not for Umair Ahmed.

Ahmed immigrated from Islamabad, Pakistan, to Kalamazoo, Michigan, at 19 to pursue a college education. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he lost financial support, paused his studies, and worked at a local credit union to support himself and his wife. Although his job offered tuition assistance, he felt unfulfilled and began searching for a deeper sense of purpose.

At 25, Ahmed enlisted in the Marine Corps, seeing it as both a path to complete his education and a way to serve with meaning. Coming from a family with a strong military legacy in Pakistan, his decision surprised relatives who hoped he would serve back home. However, Ahmed viewed the Marine Corps as the best choice, an opportunity to train in what he considers the world's finest fighting force.

Over time, his American Dream evolved. It was no longer just about finishing college, but about earning the title of Marine and building a legacy of his own. He takes pride in serving a country he chose, calling the experience both humbling and meaningful.

Ahmed encourages other immigrants seeking purpose and belonging in the United States to consider military service. He began recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Parris Island on January 13, 2026, and is set to graduate on April 10, 2026, marking the next step in achieving his American Dream.

EDUCATOR'S WORKSHOP RESUMES ON PARRIS ISLAND



The United States Marine Corps Educators Workshop at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island has officially resumed for the year, offering teachers, counselors, and school leaders a unique, behind-the-scenes look at Marine Corps recruit training. Designed to build stronger connections between educators and the military, the program immerses participants in the same environment where recruits are transformed into Marines.

Throughout the workshop, educators take part in hands-on activities that mirror elements of recruit training, including physical challenges, leadership exercises, and classroom-style instruction on Marine Corps values such as honor, courage, and commitment. This firsthand experience allows participants to better understand the discipline, resilience, and character development required to earn the title "Marine."

Beyond the physical and instructional components, the workshop also fosters meaningful dialogue between educators and Marines. Participants gain insight into the opportunities, structure, and support systems available within the Marine Corps, enabling them to more effectively guide students who may be considering military service as a future path.

By stepping into the shoes of a recruit, even briefly, educators leave with a deeper appreciation for the transformation process and a renewed perspective they can bring back to their classrooms—helping shape and inform the next generation of leaders.



UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL

April 8 | Spiritual Fitness 5k Walk/Run

April 14 | Commanding General's Cup Ultimate Frisbee

April 21 | Weapons Battalion Relief and Appointment

April 21 | Youth Golf Clinic

MAY

May 2 | Fishing Derby with SMP

May 14 | Boots to Business Entrepreneur Workshop

May 19 | Commanding General Change of Command

May 30 | Renegade Paws Volunteer Opportunity

JUNE

June 2 | Weapons Battalion Change of Command

June 5 | First Friday

June 12 | Tri-Command Graduation Recognition Ceremony

June 12 | Headquarters and Service Battalion Change of Command

June 30 | MCRD Troop Appreciation



