

THE PARRIS ISLAND BOOT



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RECRUITERS PREPARE
FEMALE POOLEES FOR
FITNESS TEST CHANGE

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NEWS BRIEFS

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Silent Drill, Commandant's Own tour cut short

The Marine Corps Battle Colors Detachment, which features the Silent Drill Platoon and the red-clad Commandant's Own marching band, were forced to cancel its East Coast tour of Marine Corps bases – including Parris Island on March 20 – due to military budget cuts.

With ongoing budget woes forcing the Marine Corps to cut nonessential operations, as well as a Secretary of Defense directive limiting all musical and ceremonial units from traveling outside their local area, the detachment was ordered back to its home at the Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C.

Troops offered free seats, food at PGA golf event

Active-duty service members and their families can attend a PGA golf tournament for free beginning 11 a.m. April 18-21 at the Harbour Town Golf Links on Hilton Head Island.

By presenting a military identification card, troops are also provided exclusive access to a covered skybox off the 16th green to watch the RBC Heritage event. Complimentary food and nonalcoholic beverages will be provided. Retirees are also allowed free access to the tournament; however, skybox access is permitted if space is available.

For more information contact Jack Wilson at 843-342-7840.



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Photo by Lance Cpl. Caitlin Maluda

Sgt. Jesse Santacruz, a drill instructor for Platoon 1034, Delta Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, yells commands to his platoon March 2 on Parris Island. The recruits of Platoon 1034 had just been told Santacruz, 31, from Palm Springs, Calif., would be one of the drill instructors. Delta Company is scheduled to graduate May 24.

Marines no longer able to use tuition assistance

Lance Cpl. MaryAnn Hill

Staff Writer

Budget shortfalls have forced the Marine Corps to suspend the tuition assistance program enrollments for the remainder of fiscal year 2013.

The decision, announced March 2, will save the Marine Corps \$47 million to keep operating forces running.

"I'm taking money out of our education during this fiscal year to ensure that we are ready to deploy at a moment's notice," said Gen. James Amos, commandant of the Marine Corps, in a video he released to all Marines concerning the sequestration act.

In fiscal year 2012, 29,507 Marines used tuition as-

sistance. Of that number, 25,167 were enlisted Marines using the program for undergraduate courses, and 680 Marines and sailors were from Parris Island.

"I was five months away from earning my associate degree when I heard about the TA cut," said Lance Cpl. Moise Barbier, a 21-year-old Miami native stationed here and student at the University of Phoenix. "I was thinking 'what am I going to do now?' I even had a graduation date set."

The Army, Air Force and Coast Guard have also suspended tuition assistance, and the Navy is still considering it.

Approximately 75 service members took classes at the University of South Carolina, a local school,

within the last year, according to Les Brediger, director of military programs at Parris Island, S.C., and Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort.

All service members who were enrolled in classes using the program prior to March 4 will not be affected by the suspension, according to Shawn Conlon, head of the personal and professional development branch at Headquarters Marine Corps.

The TA program became funded by the National Defense Authorization Act of 1972, offering all service members the chance to pursue their education.

"We have had a lot of Marines and sailors come into the education office and ask where they are

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All Parris Island mess halls to accept credit cards

Lance Cpl. MaryAnn Hill

Staff Writer

All Parris Island mess halls will allow customers to use credit cards to pay for meals by April 1.

All major credit cards such as Visa, Mastercard and Discover will be accepted to give payment options to Marines; however, patrons will not be able to enter debit card PINs or receive cash back.

"In today's world, not many people carry cash, but most everyone carries a credit or debit card. This allows Marines to subsist when they do not have cash on them," said Barbara Humphrey, general manager of the Headquarters and Service Battalion mess hall.

The H&S Bn. mess hall started accepting credit cards March 11 to test the program before it is expanded into the rest of the mess halls.

"I'm glad Sodexo is implementing this program. It will give the Marines flexibility," said Humphrey, a 47-year-old native of Greenwood, Ind. "I've been here since 2007, and I've wanted this program to come out since then."

Sodexo is a private civilian company that operates

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Photo by Lance Cpl. MaryAnn Hill

An employee swipes a credit card at the Headquarters and Service Battalion mess hall March 14 on Parris Island. The credit card program initiated Feb. 18, and will be released in all the other mess halls on Parris Island and Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort on April 1, providing a convenient service to Marines and sailors.

BOOT NEWSPAPER TO STOP PRESSES

Gunnery Sgt. Bill Lisbon

Public Affairs Chief

The base newspaper, the Parris Island Boot, will publish its last edition April 12.

As one of the first Marine Corps bases to voluntarily close its newspaper, Parris Island sees the decision as the necessary step toward expanding to more effective, strategic and modern communication methods.

The Boot is published by the Parris Island's public affairs staff, whose primary audience is the general public. Reaching that audience is faster and quantifiable via content on digital platforms like Facebook, where more than 86,000 users follow Parris Island's page, compared to a weekly print publication of only several thousand copies

SEE NEWSPAPER PAGE 4





Photo by Cpl. Tyler J. Bolken

Marine Corps poolees from Phoenix perform pullups during the recruiting station's annual pool function March 2. Recruiters and officer selection officers have been provided training equipment and new programs in order to increase the upper-body strength of female poolees and officer candidates to prepare for changes to the physical fitness test going into effect Jan. 1, 2014. Female Marines, recruits and officer candidates will perform dead-hang pullups instead of the current flexed-arm hang on the annual test.

Recruiters armed with pullup workouts for female poolees

Cpl. David Flynn
Marine Corps Recruiting Command

Marine Corps Recruiting Command recently delivered guidance to recruiters aiming to improve the upper-body strength of female poolees and officer candidates before 2014 when the physical fitness test will require women to do pullups.

Starting on Jan. 1, 2014, female Marines, recruits and officer candidates will no longer perform a flexed-arm hang during the annual test. Instead, they will be required to perform dead-hang pullups as male Marines and applicants do now.

The guidance, released in February, provides a physical fitness program and reporting guidelines for recruiters to train and monitor the progress of their pool.

"We are looking forward to gathering data to see how effective upper-body strength development training is for females in our pool," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey C. Smitherman, assistant chief of staff for operations at MCRC. "The sooner females in the pool start training, the sooner they can start to succeed."

To give females a start in their training, MCRC provided recruiters a three-day-a-week, six-week training program.

"The canvassing recruiter plays the key role in all

aspects of preparing the poolee for recruit training," said Smitherman. "Recruiters play the role of mentor, leader and example of what a Marine should be for their pool."

According to one recruiter who has started the program with her pool, the new training plan will set female poolees up for success.

"It will prepare them to meet and exceed the new physical fitness standards once they are in effect. By starting training now, we are being proactive versus reactive," said Staff Sgt. Geronima Cruz, a recruiter in Duluth, Ga.

While helping women prepare for the new PFT, upper-body strength training will also aid them in completing recruit training or Officer Candidates School on schedule.

"Developing upper-body strength will give female recruits and officer candidates a boost in confidence and is critical to success during their initial training," said Smitherman. "The stronger an individual is, whether they are improving their upper-body strength, core strength or stamina, the more resilient they become to injuries or other setbacks."

Workouts in the program are specifically designed to be completed with limited resources. Keeping in mind that not every poolee or officer candidate has regular access to gym facilities, recruiters are being

issued flex bands to assist women doing pullups.

Flex bands are large, elastic rubber bands that are attached to a pullup bar and the person mounting it. The bands, which are color coded to indicate the level of resistance provided, allow poolees and officer candidates to progressively decrease the level of assistance they receive until they reach the point of doing unassisted, dead-hang pullups.

"The Marine Corps is migrating toward a more uniform physical fitness standard and that is a good thing," said Capt. Mark E. Weingram, an officer selection officer in Frederick, Md. "My female applicants have embraced the challenge and are excited to get started with the new program."

Rising to the challenge and displaying the discipline and commitment to stick to the program will be essential for female applicants moving forward.

"Recruiter involvement, like mentorship and physical training, is important for a poolee's future success," said Cruz. "Poolees, however, need to put forth their best effort to get ready for the new physical fitness standards. If they put in the effort they will see the results."

To learn more about the Female Poolee PFT Preparation Program or get a copy, visit: <http://fitness.usmc.mil/FPFT>.

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all the mess halls here.

Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort will also begin using this program April 1, and their staff will be trained by Humphrey.

The program was not looked into by the Marine Corps and Sodexo until recently, said Humphrey. The West Coast has offered it for a while, and it was decided that it was a good idea to implement on the East Coast as well.

"There has been a steady increase in number of credit card transactions versus cash," said Humphrey.

There are five mess halls on Parris Island, and one on the air station.

Before this program came out, cash and checks were accepted to pay for meals as well as meal cards, which are issued to most Marines and sailors that live in the barracks here.

Humphrey said she does not foresee any major problems arising the week

they begin using the program. The biggest issue would be making sure the employees were documenting everything right, and no one was being mischarged.

"I think education and training for our staff is the key to making this a flawless transition," said Humphrey.

The meal rates at the mess halls are not projected to change.

The Marines who use the H&S Bn. mess hall should be very pleased with how easy this new system will be, said Humphrey.

"I was so excited to see this finally happen," said Seaman Christopher Ward, a corpsman who attends the mess hall frequently. "It is so much more convenient. I don't ever have cash on me, so I used to have to go to the bank before I could come here, but not anymore."



Photo by Pfc. John-Paul Imbody

Sgt. Darrel Rich, enhanced marketing vehicle chief for 6th Marine Corps District and native of Tifton, Ga., motivates a student from Ouachita Parish High School attempting to do pullups in Monroe, La., during a recent high school visit to the school on March 14. Students of the Ouachita Parish High School were able to test how many pullups they could do as well as view the new Marine Corps recruiting trailer.

THE PARRIS ISLAND
BOOT
Brig. Gen. Lori Reynolds
Commanding General
MCRD Parris Island
Eastern Recruiting Region

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Photo by Lance Cpl. Caitlin Maluda

Drill instructors from Mike Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, help trim back foliage and clear the trails of debris at Hunting Island State Park on Feb. 27. The 14 participating drill instructors cleared three miles of trails.

Parris Island drill instructors devote time to help community

Lance Cpl. Caitlin Maluda
Staff Writer

Drill instructors of Mike Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, volunteered their time to help clean up the nature trails at Hunting Island State Park on Feb. 27. The 14 participating drill instructors preferred to stay active even on their break from relentlessly training recruits. They decided to spend their time giving back to the community by clearing three miles of trails on the park, approximately 24 miles from Parris Island. With all the storms that attack the coast, keeping the park clean is an ongoing process, said Daniel Gambrell, park manager. The trails the drill instructors cleared in approximately three hours would have normally taken several days. Keeping the trails visible and maintained for visitors is very important, said Gambrell, 36, from Easley, S.C. The park hosts events such as kayaking, beach explorations and biathlons. The Marines were equipped with the proper tools and sent out to clear the trails of debris and trim back the foliage that overhung the paths.

“It’s productive work,” said Staff Sgt. Brice Rogers, a Mike Company chief drill instructor. “We don’t have a whole lot to do when we don’t have recruits. ... So we went out and did something fun ... gave back to the community a little bit. ... It’s good work and it was beneficial to the island. That was the important piece.” The Marines said they enjoyed their time hacking at unruly undergrowth and flinging pinecones from the path. With a new group of recruits to train arriving March 11 they knew this would be their last opportunity to help the community for a while. “We would love to be able to work with them more on a regular basis. We really appreciate the work they did and always look to work with other volunteer groups to keep the park clean,” said Gambrell. “With the help of volunteers we get things accomplished we wouldn’t get done before.” The trails were ready for the enjoyment of the daily park visitors thanks to the help of the drill instructors. Rogers, 33, from Frankfort, Ind., said he hopes Marines continue to get involved in the community.

Drone pilot medal on hold pending review

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – In light of recent concerns that a new combat medal outranked awards earned under direct fire, the secretary of defense ordered a review of the medal recognizing troops who directly affect combat while not on the battlefield, the Pentagon announced March 12. The Distinguished Warfare Medal was created to recognize service members who controlled technology such as unmanned aerial vehicles, unmanned underwater vehicles and missile defense systems. In the order of precedence, the new medal is below the Distinguished Flying Cross, but above the Bronze Star Medal

and the Purple Heart. Opponents of the so-called “drone pilot medal” question the hierarchy of technology-driven warfare as the operators may not be anywhere near a combat zone. “Production of the medal has stopped,” Pentagon Press Secretary George Little said, adding that there are so far no nominations for it, allowing time to make a final decision. New Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has a long history of involvement and membership with veteran service organizations, including a stint as head of the USO, said Little. “He’s heard their concerns, he’s heard the concerns of others, and he believes that it’s prudent to take into account those concerns and conduct this review,” Little

said. “His style as a leader is to be [decisive] and also to be a ready listener.” The medal’s creation was announced Feb. 13 by former secretary of defense Leon E. Panetta. “I’ve always felt – having seen the great work that they do, day in and day out – that those who performed in an outstanding manner should be recognized. Unfortunately, medals that they otherwise might be eligible for simply did not recognize that kind of contribution,” Panetta said. “The medal provides distinct, departmentwide recognition for the extraordinary achievements that directly impact on combat operations, but that do not involve acts of valor or physical risk that combat entails.”

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supposed to go from here,” said Christine Harris, an education specialist at Parris Island’s education office. “We are giving them all kinds of different options and advice, and just making sure they know that they can still go to school.”

Military personnel may use their Montgomery GI Bill, which is available to individuals who entered active duty on or after July 1, 1985. This bill pays for the class out of a fund, which the total amount is calculated every year based on the cost of living in the U.S.

Another option is the Post 9/11 GI Bill, which is only available to service members who served active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001. This program pays for the desired classes on a monthly rate, available for up to 36 months. If service members use this bill after they are no longer active duty, they also are given a housing allowance as long as they are considered full-time students.

Federal financial aid is one option the education office is stressing to the Marines asking for help. The Subsidized Stafford Loan offers up to \$5,500 that the student will have to pay back

with interest. The Pell Grant is a free part of financial aid, which any person could receive up to \$5,350, depending on their income.

Scholarships are also available for service members; most are easy to apply for by going to different websites and filling out the forms, said Harris, a 40-year-old native of Omaha, Ark.

Local schools realize their enrollment rates for military members will fall during the second spring semesters, summer semesters and the fall semesters as long as this program is suspended.

“USC is mindful of the sacrifices our service men and women endure on a daily basis and as such offer classes to military students and family members at the in-state tuition rate,” said Brediger, a 61-year-old native of Canton, Ohio.

The school also reduces the price per class for military members by approximately \$100, which is something all other students do not receive, said Brediger.

“We are just stressing to the Marines that this is just another bump in the road, and we will help them get through it,” said Harris.



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that is only available at specific places for a limited amount of time.

Public affairs Marines will still produce content, such as feature stories and photographs, which will be available on Facebook, Marines.mil, the Defense Visual Information Distribution System website and a remodeled base website currently in development.

The closure isn’t the result of sequestration; the price of publishing the Boot is virtually free for the Marine Corps because advertisements sold by the civilian publisher defer the costs.

The Boot’s sister newspaper at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, the Jet Stream, will continue weekly publication and be distributed at select locations on Parris Island.

In October 1995, the staffs of the Boot and Jet Stream combined efforts to publish the Tri-Command Tribune, which also included coverage of the Naval Hospital Beaufort. The paper folded in December 2000 but continued to be published and distributed together under the former titles.

The Boot was launched on Christmas Day in 1943. A photo of the first edition is displayed in the Parris Island Museum’s rotunda.

For most future content, follow Parris Island’s official Facebook page at: <http://facebook.com/ParrisIsland>.

Furlough to affect Thrift Savings Plan contributions

Claudette Roulo
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Federal civilian employees could see their Thrift Savings Plan contributions reduced if furloughs take effect.

The Thrift Savings Plan is a retirement savings and investment plan for federal employees and members of the uniformed services.

“Employees who have selected their TSP contribution to be a percentage of their pay will see smaller contributions during the furlough period due to their reduced pay,” said Navy Cmdr. Leslie Hull-Ryde, a Defense Department spokeswoman.

For example, an employee who earns \$1,000 of basic pay every two-week pay period and contributes 10 percent of it to the TSP would make a \$100 TSP contribution during a normal pay period. However, if the employee is furloughed for two days per pay period, his or her basic pay would decrease to \$800. As a result, the TSP contribution would be \$80 per pay period.

Employees who contribute a set dollar amount won’t see that amount change with a reduction in pay, Hull-Ryde said. For this reason, now is a good time to review TSP contribu-

tion amounts to see if they are appropriate.

Basic pay reductions also will affect the matching funds contributed by the Defense Department and other agencies. According to a TSP news release, any reduction in pay will proportionally decrease the matching funds contribution, regardless of whether employees contribute a percentage of their pay or a set dollar amount.

The furloughs may cause financial hardship for some employees, and in those cases they may consider making a hardship withdrawal from their TSP fund. Such withdrawals have several restrictions:

- If you take a hardship withdrawal, you will not be able to make any TSP contributions for six months after having received your funds.
- You may withdraw only your contributions and the earnings associated with them, and the total amount cannot exceed your financial hardship.
- You must pay income tax on the taxable portion of any withdrawal, and you may also be subject to a 10 percent early withdrawal penalty tax.
- If you are a Federal Employees Retirement System participant, you will not receive agency matching contributions.

– A hardship withdrawal cannot be repaid, so your TSP account is permanently reduced by the amount of your withdrawal.

A better option may be taking a loan against your TSP, officials said. Loans can be repaid – plus interest – but the account continues to accrue earnings even as the loan is paid back.

TSP officials recommend that employees think carefully before decreasing or stopping their traditional TSP contributions. Those contributions are subtracted from pre-tax income, and terminating the contributions could increase income tax liability. Roth TSP contributions are subtracted from employees’ after-tax income, and changes will not affect tax liability.

“One of the great things about your TSP contributions, no matter how small, is that the earnings compound over time. If you stop your contributions, even for a short time, you’ll miss this opportunity altogether,” stated the news release.

Federal Employees Retirement System participants would, in effect, be losing free money by stopping their contributions, because matching contributions also would stop, officials said.

Delta Company drill instructors meet their recruits



Photos by Lance Cpl. Caitlin Maluda

Staff Sgt. Marshall Thompson, senior drill instructor for Platoon 1036, Delta Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, speaks with his platoon for the first time during the drill instructors' introduction to recruits March 2 on Parris Island. Thompson, 32, from Brunswick, Ga., told his recruits what would be expected of them during their journey to become Marines, and also what to expect from the Marines who would train them. Delta Company is scheduled to graduate May 24.

Sgt. James Willet, a drill instructor for Platoon 1033, Delta Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, catches sight of a recruit moving without being told March 2 on Parris Island. Discipline is a key trait of every Marine, and drill instructors like Willet, 29, from Pomfret, Md., are tasked with instilling ideal traits into recruits.



Recruits of Delta Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, meet their drill instructors for the first time March 2 on Parris Island. This was their first view of the drill instructors who would be responsible for transforming them into Marines.



