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Marine Corps Swim Qualification Guidelines

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A Marine Corps Instructor of Water Survival teaches the recruits of Company E how to tread water for five minutes as part of the Marine Corps Water Survival Training Program at the depot pool April 18. Image 1 of 2 DOWNLOAD HI-RES PHOTOSHARE PHOTO DETAILS 04182011-M-BJ232-030.JPG Recruits from Company E step into the water as part of the Marine Corps Water Survival Training Program April 18. Co. E is the second company to qualify under the new requirements. Now there are only three different levels of qualification; basic, intermediate and advanced. The changes implemented effective April 15 focus on making swim qualification more realistic. Marines are now required to wear the full camouflage uniform, including boots.

Image 2 of 2 DOWNLOAD HI-RES PHOTOSHARE PHOTO DETAILS MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT, San Diego -- As of April 15, the swim qualification requirements have been modified to better prepare Marines for aquatic combat situations. According to Marine Administrative Message 212/11, the Marine Corps Water Survival Training Program will implement changes outlined in MARADMIN 653/10 published in November 2010. The Marine Corps Water Survival Training Program, or MCWSTP, now consists of three levels. Marines will now qualify as either basic, intermediate, or advanced swimmers. However, there are still Marine Corps Instructor of Water Survival and Marine Corps Instructor Trainer of Water Survival. “The new swim qual has been modified to the modern day Marine,” said Staff Sgt. Brian L. Fisher, MCRD pool operations chief. The full camouflage uniform, including boots, is now required for every level of swim qualification. “When they revamped the new swim qual, they really took into consideration the combat side of being a Marine,” said Fisher. “For example, why would you have a swim qual where you don’t have boots on, because when it comes down to it, if you’re in a humvee and it flips over your going to have boots on,” he added. The MCWSTP employs water survival skills of increasing levels of ability. It is designed to reduce fear, raise self-confidence, and develop Marines with the ability to survive in water. Bergeron expressed that weak swimmers could get by before, but now that boots are required it can create a mental barrier. Bergeron hopes this new program puts more emphasis on water qualifications. “If you know you’re not a strong swimmer you should be

attacking the pool on your off time, just like for a physical fitness test," said Bergeron. For Marines who need to fulfill annual training requirements, MCRD swim instructors hold water survival qualifications every Friday at 7:30 a.m. Marines who are current with their swim qualification are good until it expires.

As you saw in the training schedule, they get four days to qualify at the most basic level (CWS-4). Assuming they qualify CWS-4 on day 1, they then come back on each successive day and attempt to upgrade.

However, if they fail to upgrade on any given day, they are done with upgrades. The pool only tests each level (successively) on one given day. If you don't get CWS-3 on Tuesday, you don't get another chance (at Parris Island).

As for what happens should you not get the level you need for your MOS, that sort of depends. It is entirely possible that you will be given another chance at MCT, possibly even at MOS school, and occassionally beyond.

Theoretically, a Marine can stay in his MOS without meeting the swim qual requirement. The command will, however, put a great deal of pressure on that Marine (to include withholding promotions) to learn the requisite skills to successfully upgrade.

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Small explanation - you must do CWS-4, before you fo CWS-3, must pass those levels before you can go on to CWS-2, and pass levels 4,3 & 2 before you go on to CWS-1.

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Combat Water Survival, Fourth Class (CWS4)

Emphasis is on personal survival without combat gear. CWS4 training will include instruction on the Beginner's Swimmer Stroke (front and back), drown-proofing, and treading water. Minimum skill level for all enlisted Marines (unless assigned MOS dictates otherwise). Re-qualification will occur every year.

(1) Uniform for qualifying is utilities only (no boots).

(2) Enter shallow water (minimum 1m depth).

(3) Swim 25m in shallow water using either the beginner swimmer stroke (front or back), or demonstrating a basic knowledge of a survival stroke, or any combination thereof.

(4) Using the ease-in entry method while wearing utilities, enter deep water and perform personal water survival skills using one, or a combination of, water survival techniques (i.e., drown-proofing, treading water, and/or trouser or blouse inflation) for a total of four minutes. Touching the bottom or the side of the pool before the four minutes elapses will disqualify the Marine.

(5) Without exiting the water, from the side of the pool, swim 25m using either the beginner's swimming stroke (back or front) or demonstrate working ability of any survival stroke or

combination thereof.

Combat Water Survival, Third Class (CWS3) Marine must have completed CWS4. Emphasis is on personal survival under combat situations and while on
maneuvers in full combat gear. Re-qualification will occur every two years.
(1) From minimum height of eight feet (maximum of 15 feet), using the abandon ship technique and wearing utilities and boots only, enter deep water and travel 25m using either a beginner swimming stroke (on front or back) or demonstrating a basic knowledge of any survival stroke or combination thereof.
(2) Enter shallow water (minimum 1m depth) with rubberized training rifle at port arms and wearing full combat gear.
(3) Walk 20m in shallow water (minimum 1m depth/waist deep) with weapon at port arms and wearing full combat gear.
(4) Walk 20m in chest high water wearing full combat gear with weapon slung around neck, muzzle down.
(5) Travel for 20m in chest deep water wearing full combat gear with weapon slung around neck, muzzle down, using a modified breast stroke arm movement and modified combat stroke leg movement (bicycle kick).
(6) Travel for 40m in deep water (over the head) wearing full combat gear with a weapon slung around their neck, muzzle down, using a modified breast stroke arm movement and modified combat travel stroke leg movement (bicycle kick).
(7) From a height of five feet, using the abandon ship technique, enter the water with full combat gear and weapon (weapon inverted at sling arms),
travel 10m, remove their pack and travel 15m transporting both pack and weapon.

Combat Water Survival, Second Class (CWS2) Marine must have completed CWS3. Emphasis is on the ability to assist an exhausted/wounded Marine to safety wearing full combat gear. CWS2 is the minimum requirement for all naval aviation aircrew with a written waiver from their commanding officer. It is the minimum skill level required of all officers, MOS 0313 (LAV Crewman), 0481 (Landing Support Specialist), 1371 (Combat Engineer), 1833 (Assault Amphibian
Vehicle Crewman), and all 7212 assigned to LAV-AD platoons. It is also the minimum skill level required for Marines assigned to "Boat/Raid Companies."
Re-qualification will occur every three years.
(1) Wearing full combat gear minus pack, using one or a combination of survival strokes, travel 50m in deep water, with weapon slung across back (muzzle down).
(2) Wearing full combat gear, perform 25m collar-tow on wounded "victim", dressed identically, while simultaneously towing two packs. Weapons will be slung across the back (muzzle down). Victim will hold on to the two packs and will not assist in propulsion.

Combat Water Survival, First Class (CWS1)
recruits are no longer allowed to attempt this level of qualification at boot camp, but can attempt it when in the Fleet Marine Force
Marine must have completed CWS2. Emphasis is on developing the ability to rescue oneself, assisting a victim/distressed swimmer to safety, and surviving under adverse conditions. This is the minimum skill level required for MOS 0303 (Light Armored Vehicle Officer), 1803 (Assault Amphibian Vehicle Officer) and 0321 Basic Reconnaissance Man.
Additionally, CWS1 is the prerequisite for a Marine attending Basic Reconnaissance Course.
Re-qualification will occur every four years.
(1) Survival Strokes. Demonstrate an efficient ability to perform the following rescue strokes for a distance of 25m. Uniform is utilities only (no boots):

- (a) Breaststroke.
- (b) Sidestroke.
- (c) Elementary backstroke.

(2) Rescues. Dry land drill, water demonstration, and student practice time of all three rescues (wrist tow, cross-chest carry, and collar tow). Students must properly demonstrate each rescue for qualification, utilizing an appropriate entry technique with a victim 20 meters away. Rescuers must return the victim to the rescuer's point of origin. Victims (either other students or instructors) are passive during the carry or tow process. The following are steps to perform each rescue:

(a) Rescuer, using a stride-jump entry,enters the water, performs a breaststroke approach stroke and assumes a ready position six to eight feet from the victim. Victim puts rescuer in a front head hold; rescuer performs a front head hold escape. Rescuer performs front surface approach and a wrist tow.

(b) Rescuer, using a stride-jump entry, enters the water, performs a breaststroke approach stroke and assumes a ready position six to eight feet from the victim. Victim puts rescuer in a rear head-hold; rescuer performs rear head-hold escape. With the victim passive, and back to rescuer, rescuer performs rear approach, double armpit level off. With victim passive, rescuer performs a double-armpit tow and then transitions to a cross-chest carry.
(c) Rescuer, using a stride-jump entry, enters the water, performs a breaststroke approach stroke and assumes a ready position six to eight feet from the victim. Victim puts rescuer in a double wrist grip; rescuer performs a double wrist grip escape. With the victim passive, rescuer performs a single armpit level off. With victim passive, rescuer performs a single armpit tow without breaking contact and transition to the collar tow.

Splash Recovery Technique

Complete the following (below) while simulating a burning oil spill:
Note: This must be completed successfully while wearing both the combat BDU

- Demonstrate the abandon ship technique, enter water from a height greater than eight feet and less than 15 feet
- Without surfacing, travel 10m underwater
- Using proper splash technique, surface
- While remaining above the water's surface, and using modified breaststroke splashing technique, travel 40m for a total of 50m

Swim 250 meters using any survival strokes while wearing utilities & boots.

There are higher levels of qualification, but not that a recruit at Parris Island can attain.
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Military Myths

Military Myth 1

There is no gold at Fort Knox The United States Bullion Depository (known as Fort Knox even though the name technically refers to the Army base where it’s located), contains 4,582 metric tons of gold with a current value of about $180 billion. “Allegedly.” Although the Treasury Department and the US Mint inspect the facility every year, conspiracy theories abound that the only thing they’re “inspecting” is an empty vault. There’s no question the Depository stored the Federal Reserve’s gold coins and bars when it was built in 1938, but when it comes to explaining how someone managed to smuggle that much gold through an active Army base, this particular myth easily crumbles.

Military Myth 2

Area 51 contains proof of alien life Ever since a US Air Force surveillance balloon crashed at a ranch near Roswell, New Mexico in 1947, extraterrestrial enthusiasts have claimed it was actually a spacecraft that was then absconded up to the USAF's Groom Lake facility in Nevada (also known as Area 51) for research. The secretive nature of the facility added fuel to the conspiracy fire, and not even the military admitting to topsecret aircraft and weapon programs at Areas 51 (without details, of course) could dampen the myth of dissected alien bodies and repurposed alien technology.

Military Myth 3

Base flagpoles contain tools to destroy the flag with honor Although it's generally bad form to destroy the American flag, there are a few exceptions where a flag can be disposed of "with honor"—including, according to myth fans, when a military base is overrun by enemy forces. As the story goes, every flagpole on every base contains a kit with a razor or match to prevent the flag from falling into enemy hands. This myth should come off as highly absurd to anyone with common sense. In the event of an actual base invasion, service members would have much more important things to protect (like weapons, classified documents, and personnel).

Military Myth 4

The Army has more aircrafts than the Air Force and more boats than the Navy We're not sure who started this myth or why (it may be nothing more than a boastful Army recruit at happy hour), but somehow it's still passed around through Army circles. It's also 100% false. The Army does have an impressive aircraft inventory that comes within spitting distance of the Air Force (5,117 vs. 5,199, according to a 2015 DoD report), but second place is second place. As for how the Army measures up at sea, it did have the largest seagoing fleet in World War II, but the branch has streamlined its fleet down to 118 watercraft in the decades since. The Navy, meanwhile, boasts 364 watercraft in its Naval Expeditionary Combat Command, plus 700 craft in the Naval Special Warfare division.

Military Myth 5

US troops in Vietnam used M16s made by Mattel Barbies, Hot Wheels…and semiautomatic rifles? While some people still insist their uncle's best friend's cousin used an M16 in Vietnam that had the Mattel logo stamped on the handgrips, it's just another strange myth. "You Can Tell It's Mattel…It's Swell!" was the popular toymaker's tagline in the 1960s, and apparently the troops' joke of choice to complain about the plastic, problemplagued early version of their rifles. The M16 was created by Armalite and licensed out to Colt in 1962. Both companies, as well as Mattel, deny involvement in a toy version of the firearm.

Military Myth 6

Every military base and ship has a selfdestruct button We blame Hollywood for this one. While some US weapons and unmanned vehicles have remote selfdestruct mechanisms, the military has other ways of protecting sensitive information: computers can be "zeroized" to eliminate top secrets, and if any military vehicle or infrastructure needed to be quickly

destroyed for any reason, grenades or an assist from the Air Force above will do the job just as quickly as Bond villainish selfdestruct button.

Military Myth 7

It’s against the law to accurately portray military uniforms in movies We’re going to go ahead and blame Hollywood for this myth as well. The truth is, the law against civilians fraudulently wearing military uniforms (also known as Stolen Valor) includes exceptions for artistic performances. This means movie studios are free to outfit their actors in whichever military uniform they want, whether the details are accurate or not. They’re also free to consult military advisors, but the military isn’t holding its breath.