

Halfway There! (Continued)

Another aspect of 100th week was writing our cadre sections' command philosophies. Each cadre section: AIM, CGAS, *Eagle*, Swab Summer, and waterfront, wrote their own philosophy. Our command philosophy outlines the goals and expectations (from command and from trainees) for the summer. We spent three nights incorporating everyone's input into the command philosophies.

Thursday and Friday were spent at Stone's Ranch, which is a National Guard training center. There were three events: the leadership response course (LRC), surface rescue challenge (SRC), and the confidence course. On Thursday, I did the LRC and SRC. The LRC challenged us to work as a team to overcome challenges that required some mental and physical elements. Basically, these challenges simulated tactical missions that we had to figure out how to solve. To give an idea of what we did, one challenge was escaping a POW prison. My group had to use a small wooden ladder to cross over a moat, and then we all had to climb over the prison wall to escape, and everyone had to make it out to be successful. The LRC taught me the value of incorporating every team member's suggestions when completing a mission and that the leader does not always have the right answer.

The SRC was difficult, but rewarding. Our challenge was that there was a simulated helicopter crash and my team had to trek out into the woods to find a body and return it to base camp within an hour. There is an hour limit because the first hour after an accident is called the golden hour, which means that if a victim receives medical attention within the first hour of an accident, they have the greatest chance at survival. Each team had to find their own victim, which were all at different distances from the base camp. My group departed base camp with four 2x4 planks of wood and rope that would make up an improvised stretcher for the victim. Walking and running, it took my group 28 minutes to reach our victim, which was almost two miles from base camp. We provided initial first aid by splinting the dummy's leg. Then, we made the stretcher and loaded the victim on it. The dummy weighed 110 pounds, and we also had to carry a fifty pound medical kit back to base camp. By the time we were headed back, we had 26 minutes to return to base camp, with the extra weight of the dummy and medical kit weighing us down. However, my team ran almost the entire two miles back to camp. Despite the heat, the weight of the dummy, the distance, and exhaustion no one complained once. We drove ourselves to the limit, and we made it to base camp with 15 seconds left. It was awesome! I felt a huge sense of pride because saving lives is a mission of the Coast Guard that we don't get to practice, and my group succeed and accomplished the mission.

On Friday, I got to do the confidence course, which is basically a huge obstacle course. It was relatively easy for me, but it was rewarding. I was proud to see my classmates overcoming the obstacles, and I was happy to see all my classmates supporting one another.

After the confidence course, I enjoyed a cookout with my classmates to celebrate a long week. We then thanked the Cape May CCs and we returned to the Academy. Friday night, we had our recommitment ceremony. The recommitment ceremony reaffirms our oath to uphold and defend the Constitution, which we first made on R-Day 100 weeks ago. Also, we were officially recognized as second class cadets. Being a second class is great! We get to wear civilian clothes on liberty and we get to stay out overnight every weekend!

Overall, 100th week was great! I learned a lot, and I feel much more confident to be cadre this summer.

If you have any questions about summer training or 100th week or any of my other blogs, please feel free to email me at Hunter.D.Stowes@uscga.edu .