

# Marine Obstacle Course opens

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When retired Marine Maj. Gerald F. Boos Jr. took command of Marine Aviation Training Support Squadron One (MATSS-1) in the summer of 2004, he immediately recognized there was something missing from the daily lifestyle of the students.

Boos said the command seemed like “an intermediate stop” where Marines were held on their way to the Fleet Marine Forces (FMF).

“I had a different perspective,” Boos said. “I wanted it to be something more than that.”

Seven years later, Boos’ vision to improve the morale and impact on Marines during their time at MATSS-1 became a reality as the command christened its new obstacle course June 30 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The event was held at the existing site of the course located next to the NAS Meridian Administration building.

The ceremony began with MATSS-1 Commanding Officer Maj. A.J. Brooks giving a brief overview of the obstacle course and how it was created and funded. Instead of a traditional cutting of the ribbon to signify the opening of the course, MATSS-1 instructors and students conducted the first run through of the course with Staff Sgt. Anthony Walker being the first to complete the course and break through the red ribbon.

Brooks said the course, which takes an average of a minute

and a half to run, is a blessing for the command.

“This course is built to Marine Corps standards and serves as a great opportunity for our students to use their whole body for physical fitness and not just running,” Brooks said.

The \$100,000 MATSS-1 Obstacle Course was planned and developed by NAS Meridian Public Works and funded through Training and Education Command in Quantico, Va.

Features for the 100-yard long course include an up-and-over bar, eight low rollover/jump over obstacles, a balance log, a set of hand-over-hand pipes, log walks, high roll over log, a log wall, a set of four log vaults, double pull over bar, and ends with a 20-foot rope climb.

Pfc. Carlita Hyche was part of the first group to complete the initial run. She said the course is a major addition to the command’s fitness program.

“When you’re running all the time, it takes a toll on your legs,” Hyche said. “This is a fun alternative to running and it’s also tough, builds a lot of confidence, and gives you a competitive feeling as you run through the course.”

Boos came up with the idea for the course after he attended a Marine Corps Training and Education Command (TECOM) Commander’s Conference in 2007 and later when he had a conversation with then-NAS Meridian Commanding Officer Capt. Russell Knight.

“I was just trying to do the best thing for the Marines,” said Boos, who now works as a training officer for Naval Training Technical Center on board NAS Meridian.