

To Chad: 2nd Installment - Pearl Harbor to VJ Day.

For John Adams this breaks into 3 very different phases: I Marine Corps officer training.

II Service with 130th Infantry Division.

III Combat Military Police work in France + Germany.

After being in the Marine Reserve for a little over a month, I received travel orders to report for active duty with Candidate Class Class, Marine Corps Schools.

I left Whitesburg at 0446, 10 Aug, 42 on a regular passenger train. With my orders I had received a train ticket and meal vouchers.

When I arrived in Quantico at 1100 that day there was a marine non-commissioned officer waiting on the platform to take charge of me and some other young men from all over the United States.

Our first stop was at the Marine Barber Shop for a Boot haircut. Then he marched us to the Parade grounds in front of the Barracks area. I was assigned to Company C, 11th Candidate Class, Marine Barracks E. There was a cluster of nice looking two story Red Brick Barracks with well kept lawns, almost like a College campus. It would be several hours before we saw what they looked like on the inside.

The Captain who was our Company Commander told the 1st Sgt. of how the company. It took a while for the non-coms to get us situated so that we looked good enough to be presented to Colonel M. J. Bateheller, USMC commanding Candidate Class to give us a welcome. The Colonel was a fine looking officer with a good voice and a commanding presence. He started his talk with a review of the history and tradition of the Marine Corps. He told us marines had served as artillerymen in Washington's army, landed on beaches against Barbary pirates in the 1800's on the shores of Tripoli. He explained that only NCO's and commissioned officers wear a blood red stripe on the blue dress uniform pant leg, because it was the officers and NCO's that died

the bleeding at Chapultepec in 1847 fighting to the shores of Montezuma, He talked a lot about the 175 years of tradition and esprit de corps. Then he high lighted actions of Marines in World War I, mostly to the present he stressed how bad we were needed now with the Japs fighting on Guadalcanal and that just this week the Japs had started the invasion of the Solomon Islands.

He Colonel expained that we were starting a very intense continuous ten weeks course which would lead to some of us being commissioned as 2nd Lt. and given 10 more weeks at Quantico in officer training before we were assigned to a unit.

He noted that some of the candidates were in Marine uniforms and that some were already non-commissioned officers. He said he was glad to see men being advanced off from the ranks for that was where some of their best officers came from. However for the candidates class that they would get the same boot camp treatment as the rest of us. That it would be yes, sir and no, sir and that every order of any drill instructor must be obeyed with out question. He stressed that the culling process would start immediately. That any drop outs who were already non-commissioned would go back to a regular duty status and that any drop outs or ones culled by the staff would be given honorable discharges which would allow them to enlist in any branch of military service including the marines.

In his closing remarks he tried to make each of us feel proud that we had been selected as worthy of officer training. He hoped that most of us would pass the course and be commissioned as 2nd Lt. in the Marine Corps and enter another 10 week course of officer training at Quantico before assignment to a unit. He told us we were badly needed! Welcome aboard and give it your best effort! He did not ask for question but turned us back to our company officers. That's when

The fun began. An inspection was held and I was one of the men pulled out as needing a haircut. We were placed under a corporal and sent back to the same barber shop where we had just received a haircut. This was just the first step in a process to convince us that if the Drill Instructor said we needed a haircut — then we needed a haircut & if he told us our rifle was dirty then — our rifle was filthy! There was an under current of malice, and sardonic in the harsh discipline imposed by the drill instructors. The lower rank they had the worse it was.

On our return from the 2nd trip to the Barber shop the Cpl. took us to the quartermaster to get our clothing issue and gear. The others were ahead of us and we were rushed to catch up. It was mid-afternoon of a hot August day. I could hardly carry what I was issued.

Doing from memory — I remember my rifle and Bayonet, two pairs of boots, eight pairs of socks, two belts and buckles, a canvas sea bag, six drawers and T-shirts, three pairs of green dungarees, two dungaree hats, two Kaki hats, Poncho, Steel Helmet, water container and Cartridge belt with a first aid kit. About 3 weeks later we were issued a dress ^(Green wool) uniform and a Kaki ^(Cotton) one with a gith Helmet.

Next we were taken to our barracks and shown where each item would go. Then a demonstration on how to make up our bunk. We made up ours and was told we would do that each morning with frequent inspections. By the second week we were expected to make it up in the prescribed manner in 90 seconds. You can't do it but you try, "again" comes the order. It had to be tight enough to bounce a coin off it!

Marines use Navy lingo. The floor is the deck, a room is a bay, the toilet is the head, etc. They were allowed to yell at us and make us do extra physical drill for punishment of any infraction of rules — engaged or otherwise.

Then came the chow call. They marched us to the mess Hall. The food was good — plenty of it — and you could go back for seconds. All the ice cream you can eat. They even gave us adequate time to eat!

After the night meal a class in rudiments of leadership, military tactics, first aid, communications, etc. We were very regimented. A set time for lights out.

First call in the morning comes early (Half past 0400) then minutes later reveille sounds. You dress and turn out for physical training, then make up your bunk and march to chow. All the meals are good. We worked so hard even X rations were good on forced marches. We started our marches at the rate of 3 miles per hour and were given a 15 minute break about 1/2 hour after the start. on all day marches we took a hour off at noon for dinner. at first we marched 6 to 8 miles per day. Before long we covered 10 to 12 miles in a days time. The marches were easy for me and we didn't have too many of them. Our time could be spent better attending a hour of close order ^{drill} with an hour in the class / room, etc.

One thing we learned the first day — If a man passes out during a formation or on a march you ignore him. That is not your responsibility. A football player from the West Coast fainted in one of our first company formations standing still ~~at~~ in the hot sun. It embarrassed him so he asked for his discharge that night.

Marines are fanatics on military courtesy close order drill, parade etc. That was one thing we got some time for every day ~~place~~ physical training. We didn't see much of our officers except as they taught classes. Some classes were taught by Dumrey Sgts. which were very good. They are the equivalent of a 1st Sgt. or Platoon Sgt. in the Infantry. They are the backbone of the service.

Most of our close order drills at first were at the squad level. We might have one drill a week at platoon strength and one of company level. Just as you did we learned that the commands were

given in two parts: (1) The preparatory which tells you the movement that is to be executed like FORWARD and (2) The command of execution which tells you when to do it MARCH. At first we drilled without our rifles.

At the time I was in the Marines our primary weapon was the M-1 rifle (Garand). We started in the class room learning the nomenclature and function of each part. Thank goodness it was simple in construction and operation. Before long I could field strip and put it back together blindfolded. We had to learn out to take care of it and how to carry it. Marines stress the use of the sling in all shooting positions for every shot fired. We practiced trigger squeeze and controlling our shots even in dry firing or snapping in. We learned about windage and zeroed our rifles in. Finally we spent a lot of time in practice on the firing range usually at 200 yds, 300 yds, and 500 yds. When the day finally came to fire for record I qualified as Expert Rifleman. I only remember one time when I got in trouble about my rifle. There is a command to stack rifles where 3 are arranged to support each other with stocks on the ground. On my turn I let them fall. I was told to sleep with my rifle that night. I did and they checked on me. For once they laughed and said in Boot Camp if you dropped your rifle you were required to sleep on sight so I got off light.

Our Bayonet Training was under a Major who was very good. We spent many hours with different maneuvers and commands such as Right parry, Left parry, Thrust, job and ~~stock~~ stock fended by a vertical butt stroke. Then we got to run the bayonet course with actual targets to stick under observation. At the end of the course you got a thumbs down if you failed and had to run it again or an X sign if you passed. This major was so confident that he would throw a rifle with a nocked bayonet to a candidate and tell him to try to stick him while he defended himself with his bare hands. The candidate got a hard throw to the ground.

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When it came my turn I made him walk for control. When we were on our break he came over to me and admitted that I almost stuck him. I answered - "Sir, that was what I was trying to do. He said I was good at it and he'd like more time to teach me ~~some~~ ^{some} of his tricks."

I had the best score in my class on firing the 30th Caliber - light machine gun. Our targets had a V shaped design with blades going right and left and from top to bottom. You were supposed to squeeze off a short burst of three then elevate 2 clicks and traverse left 2 clicks, ^{on the right and} and then another burst and etc. I did the right side according to instructions but I thought I was taking too long with my adjustments and I worked up the left side with short bursts from hand or tilting like you would a slot machine. I never saw that kind of target again. In the army before my basic training was over I was made a cpl. in charge of a section of two light machine guns. We drilled most on how to move the machine guns and set up for action. Each gun was carried in 2 pieces. The tripod by one man and the gun by another with 2 more men with ammunition boxes for each gun. I had field glasses and when our guns were called for I went up first and then gave the command mount no. 1 gun here and pointed to a place on the ground. Mount no. 2 gun here some thing. They would feed in a belt of cartridges and await my command to fire.

I did not do well with the officers basic side arm, the Colli 45 Caliber automatic. It had too many small parts. We had to name each part and be able to field strip it and assemble it again with a time clock running. On the range I jerked my shots too much. I qualified as Marksmen and was lucky to get ~~that~~ that.

We had to have classes and some firing time with the Browning automatic rifle and the Thompson submachine gun but were not tested on either weapon. We had some work on rifle grenades and watched experts firing them so we could appreciate what they could do.

We got to pull the pins and throw a live hand grenade under close supervision. We should have had more practice on this but you can't cover all that needed in 10 weeks.

Marines like to have a lot of inspections. There is a prescribed order for display of equipment on the bank, another for display of clothing on your bank. When they set a time for a "till Day" we spent a lot of extra time giving our barracks, the grounds, and our clothing an extra cleaning. If we didn't pass it would mean no week end pass for anyone in that barracks. The system was set to play us against each other. Few friends were made. I don't remember anyone who lives in my class.

As far as I know Marines are the only ones who use "Heavy marching order packs" I never saw or heard of one in the Army and I'm quite sure you didn't in the Air Force. They are trouble to assemble, trouble to carry, and trouble to go over the side of the ship or cargo ropes and land in a landing craft. You start with a pack carrier and a coversack which is loaded with Poncho, Toilet articles, 1 pair of shoes & legging braces, shaving kit, towel, pair of socks and ration. The roll pack has shelter half tent, tie and guy ropes, 1 pair of trousers, 1 drawer, 1 shirt and under shirt, another pair of socks. Put 3 shelter tent pins in right shoe + 2 in left on your blanket. Place ~~them~~ right knee on bottom of blanket and start to roll. All this was demonstrated and we were given time to roll ours. One of the candidates suggested to me that it looked easier for two to work together. We got his rolled and had just started on mine when they called time. Then the inspection and I failed. They took one look at mine and told me to take it off. The cpl. tossed it to the ground and it broke open and contents spilled out. I got a good verbal going over and on what was supposed to be free time. On the week end I got to roll socks. Some then tested and roll them again. I hated it.

I did well on the obstacle course. So I won't waste time describing it.

We had a good instructor for "Scouting and Patrolling" I liked it and did well. Reading and drawing maps using basic military symbols and using a compass. Drawing sketches and overlays and writing messages. The things I learned in this course were very useful to me in combat.

About the third week our drop out rate slowed down. We had lost about 1/3 of the men we started with.

Sunday afternoon of the 4th week, I had my first and only visitor during the course. I was dressed in my Grade 4 uniform and in the barracks when the intercom called my name with orders to report to the front desk for visitors. It was Peggy Moore who graduated from my class at Boca. She was working in Washington D.C. close by. She shared an apartment with another girl in our class but I've forgotten who it was. Her friend was dating a marine who was in about the 7th week of another combat class, they came in together. Peggy was the first girl I dated at Boca. We walked around the camp like we used to walk around the lounge and visited the PX for refreshments. She invited me to supper the next Sat. night and gave me her address and phone number. She said I could get on a train there in Quantico and told me where to exit in Washington then get a taxi to the apartment. She fixed a good meal for the four of us but that was the only part I asked for.

The 5th week a company which had the contract for making the official marine uniforms sent tailors to Quantico to take measurements for a dress uniform to be ready before graduation time.

I don't remember the exact date but some time soon after the middle of the course I got sick in the night. I could not sleep. I would chill until my teeth chattered and then I would be burning up. The next night morning I went on sick call for the first time. They checked my Temp. and sent me to the Marine Hospital with what they called "lot fever" I don't know what that is. I spent 5 days in the Hospital and was weak when I went back to duty. There was no "tanper in" period.

I was released from the hospital one afternoon and back to full duty the next morning. We were doing close order drill in the Battalion Motor pool parking lot and I did something wrong. My DI was a cpl Swankin who had been hard on me since the first day. Instead of the usual 25-50 push ups for punishment he ordered me to double-time 2 laps around the motor pool with my 9 lb. rifle over my head. I made one and quit. I leaned my rifle up against a utility pole and waited until they marched back to me. The cpl. halted the squad and gave them at ease. Then he proceeded to work me over verbally. He put his hand on my shoulder and threaten to run a boot up my ass. I sniggered! I hit him with an undercut to his chin that struck him out on the ground. I was placed on house arrest and sent to the Barracks. Later a runner came for me to take me to the Company CP for a conference with my platoon leader. He told me that it was pretty serious but he wanted to hear my side of the story. I told him what I could of it. I admitted making a mistake and was given two lap double time around the motor pool with my rifle over my head. I told him I did well to complete 1 lap since I had just returned from the hospital. That when the cpl. put his hand on me I lost control and I could not say what happened but it was watched by the squad. He told me they had all been interviewed and the cpl had been removed from the Training cadre. The problem was what to do with me. He reviewed my folder and mentioned the areas I had scored high in, and some not to high. He asked me if I still wanted to be a marine officer. I told him I did. He informed me that the Company Commander had agreed to put me on probation until the last week of the course and decided then whether to commission me or what? I'm surprised they did not send me home then or that I didn't ask for my discharge. It made the rest of the course go by ever slower.

Time came for the final decision. I had a conference with the Company commander and my platoon leader. They did not want to lose me but were not ready to commission me. They offered me a place in the next candidates' class with a corporal's rating. I had not expected that and I told them I'd rather take my discharge than go through another 10 weeks. I went on to thank them for their consideration and the good training which I had received. I received an Honorably Discharged certificate dated 31st of Oct, 1942, Train tickets and meal vouchers to take me back to Wheeling, Ky. My army record shows 4 months previous service in the Marines.

I'm not proud of the way this turned out. I like to say I gave up on the Marines before they gave up on me.

There is a book "Goodbye Darkness" by William Manchester that I would like for you to read. He had a lot of situations similar to mine. He joined the Regular Marines in the Spring of 1942. Like me he flunked the weight test and they suggested he go out, eat all the bonbons and drink all the milk he could hold. It made him sick but he passed and went to Boot Camp at Parris Island. He was selected for leadership training after boot camp. He of course writes much better than I do. Here is a quote from his book "I had already been measured for my officer's uniform when I came to grief at Quantico, on the last Saturday before commissioning most candidates had arranged weekends in Washington, showing parents and girls to meet them in Union Station. The last event before the noon dismissal was a rifle inspection. It was an absurd ritual, the mascot of our barracks was equipped with steam hoses protruding innoculate bores, ~~and~~ a Platoon Instructor went down our ranks, prying at our M-I's. The company congratulated me on mine.

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He then departed for his own weekend. But we weren't dismissed. A Corporal-instructor ~~advised~~ ^{advised} our rifles, told us a third of them were filthy and cancelled our weekend liberty. Instead of enjoying the Nation's Capital we would clean our rifles properly and roll up our sleeves for a two day field day. Catholics would not be permitted to go to confession or attend Mass. Phone calls were forbidden, which meant that girls and parents would mill around Union Station in confusion and anxiety.

Something snapped within me. I considered the Corporal's order an atrocity. I decided to make what I called a non-violent protest. The Cpl. found me on my bunk, childishly pouting, staring at nothing, my rifle across my knees. "Why aren't you cleaning your weapon?" He asked. "Because it's already clean." I said. "Sergeants" said he, "The St. said I." The fact that this was true did not diminish my insubordination. The subsequent proceedings could only end in my dismissal. I knew that but when Jerry begged me to go through the motions of obedience for my own sake, I refused.

Thus I was hauled before a hastily assembled Court-martial Monday morning. I still wouldn't budge. I told the kindly St. Colonel who presided over the court that I had joined the noises to fight, not his assessor. We made through the very kind of chicken shit that we were supposed to be worrying against. I was warranted ~~to~~ as a Corporal to be jumped to Sgt. when I reached my new post in Tent City, New River, North Carolina where Potlaches were forming for immediate transport overseas.

Kind of quote Mr. Rochester went on to be wounded the first time July 2, 1945 on Okinawa. Like me he rejoined his regiment after his gun shot wound and was badly wounded the 2nd time on Saipan.

This is too long but I wanted you to know I wasn't the only one who got in trouble at Quantico.