



# LISTEN UP!

Central Bucks Detachment  
P.O. Box 1372  
Doylestown, PA 18901

Meets 7:30 P.M. 2nd Wednesday of Month  
American Legion Post 210  
315 North Street  
Doylestown, Pa.

"ONCE A MARINE - ALWAYS A MARINE"

COMMANDANT - BUDD PEARCE

EDITOR - BOB SCHAFFER

VOL. 9 NO. 1

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 1996

## MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER DETACHMENT MEETING

The scheduled meeting of the Central Bucks Detachment was held on December 13, 1995 (1930) at the American Legion Home, in Doylestown, Pa.

There were eighteen (18) members present including all officers except the Judge Advocate.

Past Commandants Don Parzanese and Bill Plant were recognized along with the State Public Relations Officer, Don Gee.

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

Two applications for membership were presented. A motion was made to waive the rule which requires the applicant to be present since William Rodriguez is an officer with the Bux-Mont Young Marines and their meeting night is the same as the Detachments and Ed Hoth is a transfer from another Detachment. Motion was approved as well as the applications. The two new members are:

William Rodriguez  
423 Ruscomb Street  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19120  
(Associate member)

Edward W. Hoth  
Box 41  
Dublin, Pa. 18923-0041  
(Regular member)

Minutes of the November meeting were accepted as written in the December newsletter, and the paymaster's report was approved as presented.

### SICK BAY

Bill Rosenberger's father, who is a Detachment member was in the hospital for treatment.

Herb Krout's wife Sarah is scheduled to have a knee operation on December 14th.

Walt Roach, Detachment member and Commandant of the Bux-Mont Young Marine Detachment, was in the hospital being checked for a tumor on his colon. He is expected to be home in a few days.

Paul Caprio's wife expects to have surgery on her arm and she and Paul recently became grandparents.

Cliff Tice needs to acquire a wheelchair. If anyone can provide information that could help this situation, please contact Cliff at 257-6162 or Budd Pearce at 343-5609.

### CORRESPONDENCE

A letter was received from Judy Hopkins referring to the purchase of individual bricks to be used in the proposed Veterans Memorial. If anyone is interested please contact Budd Pearce and he will give you further information.



A check for \$108.98 was received from Genuardi's Market as payment for cash register receipts that were turned in by the Detachment members. This certainly is one of the easiest ways to make money so collect all the receipts you can from family and friends and bring or send them to the Detachment meeting or mail them in to Box 1372, Doylestown, PA 18901.

### **SR. VICE - Bill Rosenberger**

As of this meeting the Detachment has a total of sixty members; 39 regular, 14 life, 7 associate, and 10 delinquent.

The Department Rifle Match at Indiantown Gap was completely rained out and canceled for this year. This gives everyone an extra year of practice to get ready for the next match, possibly in September.

### **JR. VICE - Mike Waldron**

The annual Marine Corps. Birthday Ball was once again a successful venture and everyone who participated had a great time. A well deserved thank you was given to Don Gee and all the others who helped with the preparations prior to the ball.

The raffle tickets for the annual Department Car Raffle are being distributed to all members. Remember, the Detachment gets to keep forty cents from each ticket sold, so by selling the tickets you are helping raise money for our own group.

Regrettable, Mike has submitted his resignation as Jr. Vice, effective as of January 1, 1996. As always, he performed his duties in a "top notch" fashion and we can only hope that down the road apiece he will be able to find the time, in his busy schedule, to run for office again. Thanks again Mike, for all that you have done.

### **ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY**

The next cleanup for our stretch of roadway is set for January 13, 1996, weather permitting. The walk thru will start at 9 a.m., but if you want to chow down before, then 9 a.m. is the time at a restaurant that will be determined at the January meeting.

### **SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Rifle match patches were presented to : Ernie Ortiz, Paul Caprio, Bob Randle, Budd Pearce, Joe Hazen and Bill Rosenberger.

Practice for the Pistol Team will start in April for the State competition in June This will be the Detachment's third year on the range and anyone interested in joining the team should contact Bill Rosenberger (348-7275) or Budd Pearce (343-5609).

Any toys that are left over from the Detachment members donations will be taken to a collection point for the Marine Corps Toys For Tots program.

### **POW/MIA**

Bill Plant reported on several issues concerning prisoners and also the report of dog tags that had been returned to our area

Bob Randle reported that the Willow Grove American Legion is requesting donations of bracelets with POW/MIA names on them to include in a memorial that they are planning.

### **FUND RAISERS**

Paymaster Bob Cody informed the Detachment that the fund raiser at the State Liquor Store netted \$400.00 and the Parking for "A" Day brought in \$70.00.

It was noted that a new sign is needed for future fund raisers and also more volunteers would be most appreciated.



### NEW BUSINESS

Bill Plant suggested that the Detachment make a \$25.00 donation to the Intelligencer Xmas Fund. A motion was made and passed.

Bill Haas will contact the Sgt.Major at MAG 49 Willow Grove NAS for names of needy families that could use a Xmas food basket.

Commandant Pearce plans to talk to the new Sgt.Major of MAG 49 so he can become familiar with the things that our Detachment tries to do for them.

Bill Plant discussed the value of the various veterans groups working together and in particular the American Legion. Commandant Pearce stated that there is good communication between the American Legion and the Detachment and knows for a fact that they are aware that our MCL group will always pitch-in and help when needed.

### GOOD OF THE LEAGUE

Budd Pearce presented the Detachment with a new gavel for the meetings and retired the old Bux-Mont Detachment gavel that had been passed on to us at time of our original charter.

Leadership School will be held May 3,4, 1996 in Carlisle, Pa. Anyone who plans to run for office in the Detachment, or higher, should consider this training. It has been an invaluable asset to those who have taken this schooling.

The Second Quarter Department meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn, in Grantville, Pa., on Jan 13/14, 1996.

The Department of Penna. annual convention will be in King of Prussia, Pa., in June.

**THE NEXT REGULAR DETACHMENT MEETING WILL BE 10 JANUARY 96 (1930) AT THE AMERICAN LEGION HOME, ON NORTH STREET, IN DOYLESTOWN, PA.**

## MARINE CORPS TRIVIA QUIZ



1. Where did Smedley Butler win his second Medal of Honor?
2. Where was the first Marine Corps officers course established?
3. Which Marine Commandant founded the Staff Noncommissioned Officers Academy?  
How many Marines served in France during World War I?
5. Who was the first black Marine Corps aviator?

**Answers in Next Month's Newsletter**

### ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S QUIZ

1. The nickname given WWII Marine parachutists was "Paramarines."
2. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing flew the most sorties in Korea.
3. The Vietnam War was the biggest and longest war in Marine Corps history.
4. The first female Marine Brigadier General was Margaret A. Brewer.
5. The Marines Hymn is the oldest of the official of the U. S. Armed Forces.





From The Desk **COMMANDANT - BUDD PEARCE**  
Central Bucks Detachment, Marine Corps League

Marines,

I hope that each and every one of you had a very happy holiday season. I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year! Now that the new year has begun, it is time for the infamous New Year Resolutions to begin. This year let's all make a resolution that we can stick to. That should be a resolution to make as many of the Detachment's functions, events and activities as possible. Another good resolution would be to try to bring in at least one (1) new member each this year. If we could do only half that good we would have a Detachment that nears 100 in number. With all that our Detachment has been doing, it would be good to have some new faces. The Detachment has been growing in terms of its commitment to the community and its Marines, now it is time to grow in size so that we can better handle our responsibilities. If you do not already have a couple of membership applications in your wallet, make sure to pick up a couple at our next meeting.

Speaking of our next meeting, it is time to appoint a nominating committee for the upcoming elections. If you, or someone that you know, wants to become an officer in the Detachment, please let a member of this committee know about it. I am sure that there are a few people in the Detachment that have thought about being an officer but they are not sure what is involved. If you want to know more about the responsibilities of an office, there are plenty of people that you can get information from. Ask anyone that has been, or is currently, an officer, they will be more than happy to share their knowledge with you. Another excellent way to learn about the workings of the League, from the Detachment to the National level, is to sign up for the Department of Pennsylvania Leadership School. This school will be held in the spring in Carlisle. It is a weekend that is indispensable if you wish to know as much about your Marine Corps League as you can. An announcement about the school, along with the dates, will be made at the January meeting. As you know if you were at the December meeting, our Jr. Vice Mike Waldron has resigned his position and we need a stand in until the elections. This is a good way to learn the ropes, but it would still be advisable for you to think about the leadership school. Come to the January meeting and find out more about this exciting opportunity.

The Detachment has a highway clean-up scheduled for this month, the date of which escapes me at this moment, it is either the 13th or the 20th, you will find the exact date elsewhere in this newsletter. There is a quarterly meeting in Grantville this month also. The date for that is the 13th. The pistol awards will be given out at the banquet that is held on the evening of the 13th. The cost of the dinner is \$20 and is not sold out just yet, so if you are planning to be there it would be wise to get your reservations in now. There is seldom an extra seat for this dinner. If you do plan to go to the quarterly meeting, be careful driving as it gets a little icy out that way in January. More information will be available at our January meeting.

This is my first letter done on my new computer, so I hope it comes out ok. The family got our first computer for Christmas and I know diddly about working on one. Any suggestions from some of you computer literate Marines out there would be gratefully accepted. That's all for now...see you on 10 January.

Semper Fi,  
*Budd Pearce*  
Commandant



# Separation Anxiety: Life in the 'New' Marine Corps

## 'New' Marines Illustrate Growing Gap Between Military and Society

### Corps Instills 'Family Values' And Beavis Finds Himself Critical of Civilian Culture

### A 'Disgusting' Trip Home

By THOMAS E. RICKS

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

PARRIS ISLAND, S.C.—After just eight weeks at boot camp, Andrew Lee has come to love the Marines and despise civilians. "People outside military life are repulsive," says Recruit Lee, the top member of Platoon 3086, as he cleans his M-16 rifle. "I think America could use a lot more military discipline."

Parris Island routinely transforms the Beavis and Butt-heads of America into United States Marines. After 11 weeks here, recruits emerge self-disciplined, with a serious bearing. They are drug-free, physically fit and courteous to their elders. They have overcome deep differences of class and race and learned to live and work as a team.

But they do all that by becoming members of a military service that is pervaded with disdain for the society it protects. Like Recruit Lee, many of the young men in Platoon 3086 will leave Parris Island with a patriotism at odds with much of American culture. At home on post-graduation leave, they will feel estranged from old friends and society at large.

#### Yawning Gap

Parris Island proclaims itself to be "Where the Difference Begins." There always has been some distance between the Marines and American society, but it has grown wider since the 1970s. Back then, the U.S. military hit what may have been its all-time low point. Riven by military defeat, racial tension, drug abuse and widespread insubordination, the Marines came close to being a broken family.

Then the military rebounded. Unlike American society, it confronted its race and drug problems in effective ways. While there were 1,096 violent racial incidents in the Marines in 1970, today a whiff of racism will end a career. Drug use also has been minimized by a policy of "zero tolerance." In 1980, 37% of all Marines

were estimated to be occasionally using illegal drugs; last year, the estimated rate was 2% to 3%. In 1975, 18,396 Marines deserted; 634 deserted last year.

Society, meanwhile, has been going in a different direction: drug use, crime, violence, racial tension, illiteracy, fatherless families—all remain widespread. This at a time when the clamor for individual rights has never been greater, and when the influence of institutions that taught personal responsibility and civility—church, nuclear family, school—has been declining.

Retired Marine Lt. Gen. Bernard Trainor recalls how times were different when he was a recruit on Parris Island 49 years ago: "When I got out of boot camp in 1946, society was different. It was more disciplined and most Americans trusted the government. Most males had some military experience. It was an entirely different society, one that thought more about its responsibilities than its rights."

These days, drill instructors say they are contending with the children of the 1970s, a passive generation raised by baby sitters and day-care centers and one unaccustomed to accountability. "The broken-family kids are one of the bigger problems we have," says First Sgt. Charles Tucker. "A lot of them, if they come from a single-parent household and their mothers work, have had pretty much free rein." As he speaks, a recruit walks behind him and says, "By your leave, sir." Sgt. Tucker nods approvingly.

#### Social Insecurity

Of all the U.S. military services, the Marines cultivate the most formal culture. Recruits, for example, must say "Good day, sir" each time they pass a superior. Such formality is waning in contemporary civilian society.

The Army, Navy and Air Force are becoming more Marine-like as they, too, become smaller, insular, expeditionary and all-volunteer. No one contends this gap will lead to a coup d'etat led by a disenfranchised military; there will be no American junta. And the horrific example of the Oklahoma City bombing aside—the first pictures flashed around the world of accused bomber Timothy McVeigh were from his U.S. Army days—no one suggests that the military is becoming a factory for political extremism.

Yet this growing gap between society and the military does put the U.S. in historically unexplored territory. And it may explain, in part, the widespread disdain for President Clinton—seen as emblematic of wishy-washy society—that pervades today's military. For all that, the Marines are comfortable with keeping

their distance from society. Talking about the young Marine of today, Lt. Col. Thomas Linn says, "If he is in conflict with the degraded aspects of society, if he is a beacon against a darkened sky, I see that as very good."

\* \* \*

For Platoon 3086, the separation begins at 1:50 a.m. on the chilly, overcast night of March 2, when their bus crosses Archer Creek. Most have already been awake for 18 hours; they won't sleep for another 18.

Thirty-six dazed young males (female recruits train separately) stand silently on

rows of yellow footprints—an assembly point painted in the street in front of the receiving station. Among them are an accountant fired by Ernst & Young because he flunked his CPA exam; a self-professed gang member from Washington, D. C.; a Dutch-American who considers himself pacifist; and a former white-supremacist skinhead from Mobile, Ala.

Marine basic training is more a matter of cultural indoctrination than of teaching soldiering, which comes later. Staff Sgt. Gregory Biehl, the receiving sergeant, says in a private moment, "The Corps is like a family, and we teach family values."

Over the next 11 weeks, the recruits will learn the Marine way of talking, walking and thinking. Every waking moment will remind them they have left a culture of self-gratification and entered a culture of self-discipline. Here, pleasure is suspect and sacrifice is good. The recruits will be denied all the basic diversions of the typical American youth—television, cigarettes, cars, candy, soft drinks, video games, music, alcohol, drugs and sex.

Sgt. Biehl immediately immerses them in the Marines' peculiarly nautical language, in which doors are "hatches" and hats "covers." Then he orders them to use Magic Markers to write "3086" on their left hands. That number is now more important than their own names.

Buzzcuts begin at 3:30 a.m. and take 25 seconds per recruit.

The next step in stripping away their identities is a ban on using the first person. Coming from a society that elevates the individual, they are now in a world where the group is supreme—and in which "I" is banished. Later in the day, a bleary-eyed Jonathan Prish, the self-declared Mobile skinhead, will try seven times before formulating a simple request in proper Marine style: "Sir, Recruit Prish requests permission to make a head call, sir."

The sun rises on a group shorn of its past. "Everything is taken away—hair, clothes, food and friends," says Navy Lt. James Osendorf, a Catholic chaplain here. "It's a total cutoff from previous life."

Within a few hours, one member of the platoon will whisper to a sergeant that he feels suicidal. It is the fastest way to get on a bus home, and that is exactly what happens.



The bleary-eyed group marches under Spanish moss to the Third Battalion's mess hall for their first meal as "recruits"—they won't be called "Marines" until they graduate. In ragged formation outside the mess, some bite their lips. On the chins of others, baby fat quivers. Of 59 members of the platoon, 14 will be classified as overweight.

Opposite 3086 stands a seasoned platoon a day away from graduation. It is lean, cocky and rock-bard loud as it stands at crisp attention, chanting: "Three-zero-five-six/We don't need no stinkin' chicks!"

Breakfast is over in 11 minutes—easy since the recruits are forbidden to speak at meals.

The next major hurdle is "the moment of truth" at which recruits are given a last chance to confess to drug use or criminal activity. (Convicted felons are supposed to be screened out by recruiters; confession to minor criminal activity isn't necessarily grounds for expulsion.) For the members of 3086, marijuana use has been routine. Some tell the interrogating sergeant they have dabbled in cocaine, LSD and PCP. Each recruit is required to state that he understands the Marine Corps doesn't tolerate drug use.

At 2:50 the next morning, the Corps proves it is serious about drugs. The dozing recruits are aroused by the shouts of Ansil Lewis, a black sergeant—an unusual experience for many of the whites among the platoon—who orders them immediately to chug a full canteen and then provide urine sample.

## THE FORMING

"I will not accept substandard performance from you," shouts Sgt. Darren Carey in a roar that echoes off the barracks' cement wall. After two days on Parris Island, 3086 is considered ready to meet its drill instructors. They march to their new home on the third deck, Building 420, for "the forming."

Sgt. Carey strides into the barracks and stands between two pillars. Stencilled on each in black and red is the statement: "Core Values: Honor/Courage/Commitment." The barracks is free of decorations except for informative signs; a list of four ways to treat a sucking-chest wound. There is no TV, radio, telephone or other connection to the outside world. Sgt. Carey is the "heavy" at the lead disciplinary among the platoon's three drill instructors. He will dominate the recruits' lives for the next 11 weeks.

Sgt. Carey's body tells the story of his 11 years in the Corps. A mako shark tattooed on his leg commemorates his time as a combat scuba diver and parachutist in elite reconnaissance units. Three short, curling scars above his left ear mark the time a speedboat in the Mediterranean ran him over and broke his jaw, fractured his skull and knocked out his front teeth. A few months later he returned to duty off Beirut. "He's an awesome Marine," says Staff Sgt. Matthew Balenda, the Third Battalion's drillmaster.

Sgt. Carey brings a combat-like intensity to recruit training. In a check of brass belt buckles, Recruit Robert Shelton nervously blurts, "I don't have one."

Sgt. Carey's neck cords bulge. "I?" His scars burn red. "I?" His face just inches from the recruit's, he screams, "I is gone!"

Spittle flies across the recruit's handsome brown face. Recruit Shelton flinches. He later confesses he came close to slugging the sergeant—an act that probably would have gotten him tossed out of the Corps.

Awed by Sgt. Carey's ability to maintain that level of intensity for an entire day, the recruits come to idolize him. Walking sentry duty in the woods one night, Recruit Paul Bourassa, the former Ernst & Young accountant, says, "When you're wiped out after going 16 hours, and you see him motoring, you say to yourself, 'I've got to tap into whatever he has.'"

What drives Sgt. Carey is a love of the Corps and a fear that inferior recruits will drag it back into the muck of a lazy, selfish society. One day, after a three-mile run in combat gear, he is forced by regulations to give Recruit Gary Moore Jr. another chance to complete the run. The leniency is against his grain. "It almost degrades me," he says.

Staff Sgt. Ronny Rowland is the platoon's senior drill instructor, more of a father figure than Sgt. Carey. Later, in an introductory talk, he lectures recruits on the virtues of teamwork and anonymity—the antithesis of celebrity-driven American culture. "Before we leave my island, we will be thinking and breathing exactly alike," he says. "Nobody's an individual, understand?"

During the talk, Recruit Moore rolls his eyes in dismay. Sgt. Rowland pulls him out of formation. "I can't handle this Marine life," says the sobbing 18-year-old high-school dropout from Shubuta,

Miss. "This ain't for me." Sgt. Rowland assures him he can make it; in the end, he does.

The sergeants use rest periods between drill practice to teach basic Marine "knowledge." There is nothing elegant about this: 19th-century rote methods, usually shouted at full blast.

"Knowledge is what?" begins Sgt. Carey.

"Power, sir," responds the platoon, squatting on the cement.

"And power is what?"

This puzzles the platoon. "Money?" ventures one recruit.

"I swear, I'm dealing with aliens," says Sgt. Carey, dumbfounded by that civilian attitude persisting in his platoon after three days on the island. "No!" he shouts. "Power is victory!"

Unlike many in American society, Sgt. Carey and his fellow drill instructors aren't in it for the money. He works as long as 17 hours a day, 6½ days a week. He is paid \$1,775 a month—a figure that works out to about the minimum wage.

## TRAINING

Several recruits in 3086 crumble in the first three weeks, a difficult phase when they are cut off from their old lives but don't yet feel like Marines. About 11% of all Marine recruits wash out during boot camp.

John Bayless emerges one day from the barracks bathroom shouting and slapping the wall. When Sgt. Carey investigates, the unnerved recruit swings and swats off the DI's "Smokey Bear" hat. Recruit Bayless is sent packing.

In another incident, Bart Poyner is accused of stealing crackers from the mess hall. He begins crying, then drops to his knees and repeatedly bangs his forehead with his rifle. He doesn't hurt himself—but he, too, is sent back to civilian life.

Even the best recruits are stressed by the non-stop 17-hour days, an exhausting contrast to the sleepy pace that most knew in American high schools. A typical training day, March 20, begins with close-order drill before dawn, while a quarter moon still shines on the slick tidal mud flats ringing the island. The morning brings two hours of fighting with pugil sticks—four-foot-long sticks with heavy pads on either end—then two hours of training in hand-to-hand combat.

In the pugil pits, where the Marines try to exorcise the passivity of the Nintendo generation Mark Beggs, a quiet recruit from Pittsburgh, becomes a star. Weighing just 140 pounds, he pounds four larger opponents—all wearing protective gear to prevent injury—into the sawdust. "That little one has the barbarian in him," Gunnery Sgt. Marrero says with deep approval.

Next, at close-order drill, Recruit Travis Gay swipes at the sand flies biting his chin, causing him to miss a movement in the presentation of his rifle. Sgt. Carey lunges at him. "You missed it because you care more about the bug on your face. You're selfish."

Warming to his subject, the sergeant yells at Recruit Gay: "You're just going through the freaking motions, aren't you?"

The sergeant bellows upward into the hot blue sky. "La-zy! American youth is la-zy!"

Sexual euphemisms such as "freaking" and "frigging" are about as profane as Sgt. Carey ever becomes. Once notoriously foul-mouthed, Parris Island's drill instructors today are forbidden to use obscenities. At the same time, their recruits arrive steeped in casual vulgarity from pop music, cable TV and everyday conversation. So it is all the more unnerving to face a DI who appears to be insanely angry—but who never swears.

Indeed, physical abuses of the past have resulted in limits on corporal punishment that DIs can mete out; now they lean heavily toward cultural indoctrination. "You can't physically stress them out, so you get to them mentally," says Staff Sgt. Marvin Frasier. "You get the esprit de corps inside them and then whatever you tell them, they'll believe."

After hours more of drill, they break for an hour of exercise, followed by a three-mile run. Sgt. Carey congratulates a recruit who finishes the run—then promptly vomits into the grass nearby. "That's the effort we're looking for," he says.

More drill follows a break for evening chow. Recruit Daniel Armstrong's rifle sling is twisted. "Why?" Sgt. Carey asks. By now the whole platoon knows there is only one permissible answer to that question: "No excuse, sir."

In a light moment, Sgt. Rowland barks an order: "Pick your nose." Simultaneously, 59 index fingers shoot into nostrils. Then the platoon cleans its rifles and sweeps the barracks with hand brushes.

At 9 p.m., as the lights are switched off, the recruits lie in bed at attention for the "Protestant prayer" ("Lord God, help us to become United States Marines . . .") and a nearly identical "Catholic prayer." (The platoon has no Jewish members.)

Recruit Gay dreams at attention and loudly sounds off in his sleep: "Yes, sir. No, sir. Aye sir." Recruit Nathan Manczka performs a drill in his sleep, holding his pillow above him and at an angle for rifle inspection.

After three weeks on the island, 3086 looks like a platoon of Marines to an outsider. But their drill instructors consider them ragged and uneven, still more civilian than Marine. "The concept is there they see it and breathe it every day, but it's not embedded in them," Sgt. Rowland says.

The next day, Sgt. Carey, preparing the platoon for its first major inspection, pulls a hanging thread from the starched camouflage uniform of Tony Wells. "You accept substandard performance," he shouts. "That's why America will fall one day, just like the Roman Empire fell. Do you me, understand? But not me!"

But they are changing. Recruit Manczka is rewarded for high marksmanship by being allowed to call home to Edinboro, Pa.

"Hi, Mom," he says in a voice hoarsened from shouting responses to orders 17 hours a day.

"Who is this?" she asks.



## ★ WARRIOR WEEK

By Week 8, when the recruits march into the woods for infantry training, they are more Marine than civilian. All the "overweights" have reached their weight goals. The platoon is tanned, muscular and a bit cocky. Ordered to jump backward off a 47-foot-high rappelling platform, they do it with ease.

They no longer think about quitting. As they march along a causeway through a marsh, the platoon mocks its dropouts with its own "casualty cadence":

*"Hope you like the sights you see/Parris Island casualty*

*As for you it's still a dream/On May 19 we are Marines."*

They are growing comfortable with the Marines' culture of controlled violence. "An M-16 can blow someone's head off at 500 meters," Sgt. Paul Norman relates. "That's beautiful, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir," shout the 173 voices of 3086 and its two companion platoons.

Over the sergeant's head, a passenger aircraft descends into nearby Hilton Head, famous for golf and Bill Clinton's 11 years of introspective Renaissance Weekends. Sgt. Norman clearly prefers the spartan digs and culture of Parris Island. "Being a Marine," he muses, "is the greatest thing in the whole frigging world."

The platoon bivouacs in the woods along an abandoned World War II airstrip. Port-a-Potty graffiti reflect Marine culture; no names or profanity, just platoon numbers and a few plaintive scribbles such as "21 days more."

Earnest Winston, the self-professed gang member from Washington, is assigned to share a pup tent with Recruit Prish, the former Mobile skinhead. "It was weird," Recruit Prish says later. But they happily find

Earnest Winston, the self-professed gang member from Washington, is assigned to share a pup tent with Recruit Prish, the former Mobile skinhead. "It was weird," Recruit Prish says later. But they happily find common ground in anti-Semitism. "We both agreed that the Jews owned the first slave ships," he reports.

The platoon forms for dinner on the old runway, metal trays held in the prescribed manner, with arms flush at the sides, bent 90 degrees at the elbow. They eat silently in rank-and-file formation, the only sounds the wind in the pines and the collective munching on chicken.

And they are almost all happy.

Most of the recruits have addressed their shortcomings in fitness, marksmanship, drilling and knowledge. But in each platoon, three or four lag, and are hammered for their faults by DIs and recruits alike. In Parris Island's manifestly unfair system, the group suffers for the individual: Every time a slow recruit messes up, the entire platoon is punished with additional exercise.

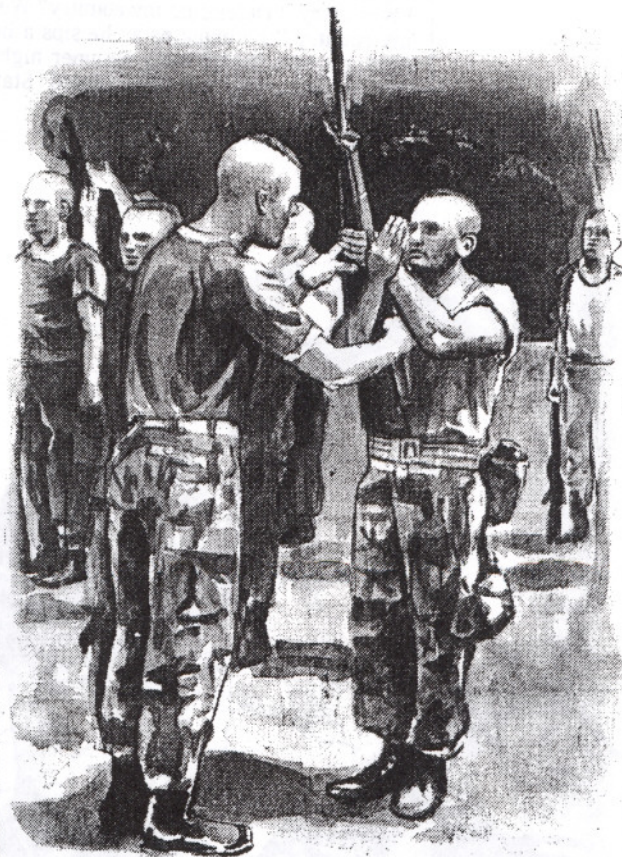
The weakest recruit in 3086 is its youngest member, 17-year-old Paul Adriaan Buijs, who lived in the Netherlands before enlisting. He is always the last to finish everything. "This recruit used to be part of the alternative lifestyle," he says.

Sgt. Carey works on Recruit Buijs while the rest of the platoon trains on the grenade range. "You just want the uniform," the sergeant says. *Bang!* An M-67 fragmentation grenade explodes a few yards away, beyond an earthen berm. "You don't want to earn it."

Another grenade explodes, shaking leaves on nearby oaks and kicking up a 50-foot-high column of dust. "You want everything on a silver platter." *Bang!*

"This recruit is often classified as a screw-up, sir," Recruit Buijs later observes. But he is sticking to his pacifistic guns. "I still don't believe in killing, really," he says during a quiet moment in the woods. Some 3086 members, in fact, suggest Recruit Buijs be given a secret "blanket party"—wrapped in a blanket and beaten—to knock him into line. But cooler heads prevail.

At the "night combat movement" course, Sgt. Carey stands in the pitch-dark woods as recruits try to crawl toward him along booby-trapped paths. Illumination flares rocket overhead and then swing down on parachutes.



There is a flash and a firecracker bang as Recruit Edward Linsky trips the first trap. "Dear Mr. and Mrs. Linsky," Sgt. Carey begins dictating in the flare-crossed night. "We regret to inform you that your son was killed because he was *stupid*."

When recruit Robert Warren trips another booby trap, the sergeant sounds almost bitter. "Why are you giving me excuses, Warren? What excuse am I going to give your parents when you're dead?"

At 11 p.m., Miceal Perkins emerges from the woods sweating but smiling. He is unscathed, and feeling very much like a Marine. "It was intense," he says, adopting Sgt. Carey's vocabulary. "Intense" and "motivated" are the highest praise. Their opposites are "nasty," "undisciplined" and "civilian." For example, Sgt. Carey denounces a recruit's package of homemade brownies as "nasty civilian food."

Civilian society now seems remote to the platoon. When recruits are given a questionnaire, drafted by this reporter about their views of civilian life, they use the language of drill instructors. Eric Didier, who came here from the posh Washington suburb of Potomac, Md., criticizes civilian life as "lazy and unstructured." Another four recruits call it "nasty." And 19 term it "undisciplined."

"Some of it has its benefits," writes Benjamin Read of Charlotte, N.C., the platoon's top marks man. "But for the most part I believe America's teenagers and city life are disgusting."

Almost all believe American society needs Marine Corps discipline. "Hell, yes," answers Donald Campas, who came here from working in a Tacc Bell in Pittsburgh. "Society needs to be straightened out."

With the Corps in charge, America "could be almost a utopia," writes Charles Lees. Even Recruit Buijs concludes that with a dose of Marine discipline, "many things would run more efficiently."

The black and Hispanic recruits, about one fourth of the platoon, also think a bit of Parris Island would ease racial tensions "because Marine Corps discipline is also about brotherhood," Lui Polancomedina, a New Jersey recruit, says.

## ★ GRADUATION

As the emblem ceremony—a prelude to graduation—approaches, Recruit Buijs concedes that his views have shifted a bit. "If there's good reason then killing is justified," he says. Then he marches outside and pins on the Corps's globe and anchor.

Fueled by Sgt. Rowland's supercharged 120 hups-to-the-minute cadence, the platoon marches across Parris Island to see their families for the first time in 11 weeks. A crowd of 200 greets the 5 graduating members of 3086.

Elizabeth Lees walks right past her brother who since enlisting has shed 76 pounds. "My God you're so thin," she says later, patting his flat stomach. The mother of Recruit Buijs and the parents of Recruits Patrick Bayton and James Andersen also fail to recognize their sons.

Recruit Lee is the platoon's honor graduate one of five members who will be meritoriously promoted to private first class the next day. His mother, Nancy Lee, a Boston social worker, says she was "devastated" by his enlistment, and still considers herself "antimilitary." Her anticivilian son looks miserable, genuinely sorry that he is leaving Parris Island.

After a parade and a prayer, at 9:45 on May 19 Col. Humberto Rodriguez addresses the 421 assembled recruits: "I am privileged to be the first to formally address you as Marines. You are—and you will always be—a United States Marine."

Pvt. Prish, the former white supremacist, hugs Pvt. Winston, his Black Muslim tentmate.

If these new Marines find the world a different place than it was 20 years ago, society is also seeing a different kind of soldier. For the first time in its history, worries former Navy Secretary John Lehman, the United States may be developing a kind of separate military caste. Indeed, several members of Platoon 3086 come from military families.

U.S. military officers today "talk about themselves as 'we,' separate from society," worries Richard Kohn, a former chief of Air Force history who now teaches at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "They see themselves as different, morally and culturally."



Depot Sgt. Maj. James Moore, the top sergeant on Parris Island, has monitored the attitudes of recruits since 1969. He thinks re-entry into society is more difficult than ever. "When I came up, I think there was more teaching of patriotism," says Sgt. Maj. Moore. "We prayed in school. In the Marines, we still put an emphasis on patriotism, on being unselfish, on trying to serve society." These days, he adds, far too many recruits come in with little moral foundation. "It is a fact of life," he adds, "that there isn't a lot of teaching in society about the importance of honor, courage, commitment. It's difficult to go back into a society of 'what's in it for me?'"

## ★ BACK IN THE WORLD

Sgt. Maj. Moore proves prophetic: Platoon members find home leave, between boot camp and their next assignment, disorienting.

For Pvt. Craig Hoover, the shock comes on the Amtrak ride home to Kensington, Md. "It was horrible—the train was filled with smoke, people were drinking and their kids were running around aimlessly," he says a few days later. "You felt like smacking around some people, telling them to straighten up."

The recruits find that they feel distant from their friends and repelled by crowds. Pvt. Prish goes to a Mobile bar called "The Culture Shock." True to its name, he is put off by his old friends: "We played pool and drank. It seemed like everyone there was losers. All they want to do is get smashed."

In Pittsburgh, Pvt. Bayton goes to a Saturday night party and also calls two old friends "losers." Over a beer he says, "Everything feels different. I can't stand half my friends no more."

Back in suburban Potomac, Pfc. Didier finds himself avoiding some old buddies. He says: "I look at what my friends are doing, and it seems dumber to me than it did before."

In Summit, N.J., Pvt. Daniel Keane, the son of a Merrill Lynch bond trader, asks two friends to postpone smoking marijuana for a few minutes until he is away from them. They say they can't wait and light up. "I was pretty disappointed in them," he says later as he sits in front of his parents' baby grand. "It made me want to be at SOI." That's the Marines' school of infantry.

Like many members of the platoon, the soft-spoken Pvt. Keane feels as if he has joined a new society or religion. "People don't understand, and I'm not going to waste my breath trying to explain, when the only thing that impresses them is how much beer you can chug down in 30 seconds."

At McDonald's, in amusement parks and bars, each returning Marine seems to experience a moment of private loathing for public America. For Pvt. Frank DeMarco, it occurs at a street fair in Bayonne, N.J. "It was crowded. Trash everywhere. People were drinking, getting into fights. No politeness whatsoever." But, says the stocky, ever-smiling private, "I didn't let it get to me. I just said, 'This is the way civilian life is.'"

His Bayonne buddy, Pvt. John Hall, half-jokingly calls civilians "a bunch of freaks." Turning serious, he says, yes, he does feel contemptuous of American society.

Pvt. Hall's mother, startled by that comment, asks, "Do you really feel like that?"

He considers, and then says, "Yeah, I do."

Many of the platoon's black Marines have always felt alienated from mainstream American society. And now even their old neighborhoods feel strange. Sitting under a framed "Wake-Up Call" by Minister Louis Farrakhan on the wall of his mother's living room, Pvt. Winston says that being back home in southeast Washington is more stressful than Parris Island. "Here, you've got to watch your back, walk the side streets, because there's too many drive-by shootings," he says. In his old civilian life, he claims to have fired a few shots himself. And he still expects America will one day erupt in a race war.

For now, he is a Marine. Like other members of 3086, he finds he has internalized Sgt. Carey. "It's funny—I thought about him yesterday when my guys were out there smoking [marijuana]," he says. "He was the Truth. He could make it out here, even though he's white."

In Adelphi, Md., Pvt. Christopher Anderson, another "dark green" (Marine slang for blacks), says he feels more allegiance to the Corps than to his country. "Defending my country? Well, it's not my country," he explains as he sips a beer in the darkness of a humid early summer night. "I may live in America, but the United States is so screwed up." ♦





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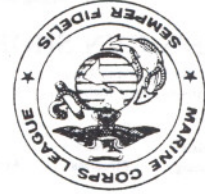
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