

Cadet Travis Thomas

September 8, 2011

This summer I went to Recruit Training Command New England at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. The training was 9 days long, spanning from 21 July until 30 July. I was assigned to Bravo Company. On the first day during indoctrination there was a lot of yelling as expected. It was this way up until about the fifth day, and then things started to get calmer but didn't lose a bit of "boot campness." Every day we woke up at 0530 hours and then "got on the line" which was a taped line 12 inches from the bulkhead on both sides of the passageway and when they yelled "Bravo Company on the line!" that meant you better drop what you are doing and go at that exact moment!

After we were told to go back into our "cubes" which were our rooms, we then changed into BDUs, NWUs, or utilities, whichever the recruits had and instead of boots we had to wear PT shoes because we were going out to do morning PT. Morning PT was mostly comprised of stretches and calisthenics. Leg lifts, butterfly stretches, hamstring stretches, etc. Then after PT we went back into the barracks or the "house" as we called it, and changed into boots. Then we went to morning chow. We had to get our food, stand by our chairs, and wait until the CC or one of the ACCs called "Bravo Company, take seats." Then a chorus of about 40 recruits answered "Take Seats. Aye Aye Petty Officer!" We had to sit 6 inches from the back of our chairs, back straight, sitting straight up, looking ahead, completely silent. We were allowed no deserts.

For the first two days, it was "black flag" as we called it. Which meant it was so hot no one was allowed outside besides too quickly

march to chow. It was unfortunate because the building Bravo and our sister company, Alfa, had no AC. And the fan in our room was broke. It was so hot it was hard to concentrate. After morning chow, we would come back to the barracks and clean. We would make our racks, (which had to be perfect with hospital corners that were at a perfect 90 degree angle) we would sweep, mop, and dust. That is what we did for most of the day. And then when it started cooling down from the third day on, we would do more outside activities. We did the O-course, which stands for obstacle course. We did the DC Olympics, which stands for Damage Control. And we did Company Competitions, which included guide on, marching, and color guard.

We marched for nearly 3 hours every day continuously on what was called "the grinder." Which was really just a parking lot. We also had classes. We had five classes. One on Navy ships, one on Navy equipment, one on Sexual Harassment and Fraternization, one on Navy Morals, and one on the Medal Of Honor. At the end of RT we took a test on the material we learned in class. Bravo Co. got the guide on ribbon for academics. Also, we had three inspections of our barracks and our uniforms. Bravo Co. ended up getting the ribbon for barracks inspection as well. We called ourselves the "Smart Maids."

The PT was pretty difficult for some, but not for me. I prepared by running, swimming, and doing other exercises in the months leading up to RT. The CC of Charlie would always make us do leg lifts for what seemed forever. But it really brought the company closer and we encouraged our shipmates. The O-Course also turned Bravo into a family. Teamwork was required for 95% of RT and the O-Course helped us build that. But the other 5% was all mental. The CCs and ACCs were pushing to break us. They could and they would. You really have to talk

and rely on your shipmates to get you through. I wouldn't have made it through without them. That is for sure.

Before I left, everyone was saying I would hate it while I was there but would miss it when I left. And that is the 100% truth. I miss my shipmates. I miss the camaraderie and brotherhood. But I know I will always have those shipmates to rely on. 9 days seems like an eternity when you are in such an intense environment 24/7 and it really brings you close to the people in your company. I met some really amazing people at RT that I still talk to through text or Facebook.

Recruit training was a great experience. It taught me things I wouldn't learn anywhere else and I also met extraordinary people I wouldn't have met anywhere else. I highly recommend Fort Devens RTC NE to any recruit looking for a recruit training. I would like to personally thank Chief Moon for giving me the opportunity to have an experience such as this.

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