

Great Lakes in the spring means standing around in the rain a lot. This is one of the outstanding feature of the recruit training that I seem to feature. I didn't keep a diary of any kind at the time. There is a great deal of fuss about uniform of the day and window dress at the center. With changeable weather this left us awful cold and wet the majority of the time. The recruits broken into a dozen companies of eighty or ninety men, had to be fed. The first mornings meant our company had to stand out in forty degree rain in leaky raincoats, before more than a day passed we sounded like a pack of barking beagles. The guys from down south became ill almost immediately. The barking never ended. The first days would recall nursery school to practically any one. It consisted of stenciling your clothing and other gear. This was done one the floor with a laundry marker and punched out stencils of uniform manner. Stencils had to be in exactly the right places, or punishments insued. "Dive and give me thirty." was the order of the day. Sets of thirty push ups a few times a day along with the usual calisthenics and marching proved to be quite a load. While I was there the load got a few of the men. I believe I knew of two or three heart attacks, evidenced by ambulances speeding around the camp, verified by word of mouth. A atmosphere of terror was created. I had a great deal of trouble physically myself although I thought I was in good shape for a thirty year old male. Any way people kept disappearing from the company for one reason or another. I guess some just wanted to fail, and other just broke.

I had my first taste of discipline in boot camp. I was caught for the hienious crime of not removing a label from my underwear. My defense was that I forgot. Well, that's nice, but tough luck. The idea was to learn to follow orders exact and don't miss a detail. I was awarded a bout with the Military Training Unit. This punishment seems highly unfair for the crime committed at the time, but you really get careful from that time on. MTU (Military Training Unit) removes you from the process of indoctrination in the morning. You go through a set of exercises once an hour. There are four exercises, jumping jacks with a rifle, four count or six count push ups, regular jumping jacks, and high knee lift running in place. The rifle manuevear is truly tortuous. The fifteen pound rifle is moved overhead back to shoulder height then straight out arm length and back and over again and again. The rifle must not drop or you come back the next day after completing the drill. Torturous? One youngster just fell asleep during pushups, stalled out, the Petty Officer in Charge sent him to the dispensary. The guys generally cried and complained. Grunts were acceptablr to the POIC, who watched carefully at all times, but questions could be posed to him in a formal manner only. These questions always asked for some lack. I failed my first try, and I came back and did it again right the second time. I also came back a third time for a minor offense of asking clemency for taking two steps in a training run although I had the time limit beat for the mile and a half run. I made up the run, and did the MTU tour for a third time. I began to understand the importance of carrying out a task assigned to me very well. Half way through the boot camp I became very efficient and alert. Not being caught at something seemed to be a real award. I could stand at attention, General Quarter, better than anyone else. I was terrorized in to not even twitch an eyelid. The robot paralysis set in perfectly. I learned