

A SEE BEE WRITES HOME FROM PEARY

"Hello Mates -- having a gruesome time; wish I were there. Boy, this is the life-- they tell you at the recruiting office. I'm what is generally known in the Navy as a 'boot. And are we generally known! We stand out like a Ubangi's fever blister. 'Boot'--that is an un-successful draft dodger with out hair. About the first thing they did to decivilianize us when we passed through the camp gates--that's the official station for abandoning all hope, was to cut our hair: I should say head. The barbers here are blind machinist's mates with St. Vitus dance. You are gently hurled into a chair; the operator lays the clippers on your dome, gags you and asks questions. Whether you nod 'yes' or 'no' the effect is the same. Your once proud pate looks like a desert oasis. Then you wipe the blood off and leave. No Charge. The whole procedure is financed by a local hair tonic company. When the guys are all in the barracks it looks like a table of unracked billard balls.

The town here is divided into three parts. One side is the camp, the other two are a mortuary and an insane asylum. You get a thorough examination coming in and you go to one of the 3 areas. We're all Seabees, you know C.B --he's the only man who can walk up to a marine, look him squarely in the eye and say, 'What kept you, Bud, 'They can always find something for us to do The naval dictionary has no such word as 'leisure.' But it's nice in the mornings. The CPO--that's a Sing Sing Warden who's been discharged for cruelty stamps in and gently screams, 'Fall out you guys.' Then we regain consciousness, dress, wash, brush our teeth, & lock for our hair. Then we go out and take a generous portion of calisthenics then go to chow--called chow because it tastes like Poodle or Great Dane.

We drill every day. Everything went well until the lieutenant (or something snapped up to me and barked, 'inspection, arms!' I responded instantly, carefully rolling up both sleeves in cadence and showed him my new vaccination, adding very smartly. 'it didn't take, sir.' He didn't say anything just stood trembling, red in the face I guess he was jealous of an A/S being so smart. Well, as a reward he at once appointed me 'captain of the head.' There I was. In one week I had advanced from seaman (jr. Gr.) to court martial to captain of the head. The head is what the Tivoli calls the gentlemen's lounge. Out on the drill field you always stand at attention. Attention----that's suspended rigor mortis. The only way you can get out of drill is to go to sick bay--that's where you report you're ill and have to die to prove it

Lunch is fun. Not eating so much as guessing what it is For supper the officers let you stand at the chow windows and drool. There was a fellow here who didn't respond so well to all this nice treatment. He developed a madness & spent hours raving and selling peanuts and popcorn at lectures. The CO couldn't decide whether to put him in a straight jacket or make him an ensign. The first man who interviews us is a psychologist who puts you in the right frame of mind right off. You walk into his office. He breaks into a fiendish sneer as you enter and throws a knife through your hat. If you do not faint you pass the I.Q. That's fun being unconscious. The only difference between 'boots' and prisoners is that the latter can be pardoned.

Every barracks here has a master of arms. That's a stool pigeon with a gun. When he puts you on report you get either K.P.--that's a torture chamber with French fried potatoes -- or a change in title to John Doe DF. (dishonorably discharged) That means you can't hold public office for the rest of your life. It's awful, like being a Republican. I'm just kidding fellows, it's a wonderful place here. (I will continue writing as soon as the Ensign quits twisting my arms.) (Submitted by Bruce Alford)



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