

Transformation of Boys

There I was just a kid from a small town in Indiana in which no one thought I would do anything. My mother and sister had done everything they could to do raise me right and on November 2, 2008, I left home to start a journey to become something more than myself.. I got up early that next morning in Indianapolis and was taken to the airport en route to Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. That evening I arrived at San Diego International Airport and was taken to MCRD via a bus with another 30 some odd guys who were about to go through hell with me.

Once the bus stopped at the depot, I got my first sight of a Drill Instructor and that was the point my mind said, “what the hell are you doing?” The Drill Instructor started to yell and all of a sudden it was real. We all start to run off that bus as fast we could. All I can remember was people always talking about yellow footprints on the ground, so when I saw them I thought that was probably where I should be running too. I mean this guy was yelling so loud and so fast I couldn’t understand him at all. We were all taken to a room where we had to take everything we had brought and put in on a table where other Drill Instructors would go through it and make sure we didn’t have anything we shouldn’t have. Then we were led down another hallway to get all of our hair shaved off. Then to a room where we all sat down on the floor going over our medical records and stuff. Then we were lead to a room where we were issued all of gear we would need throughout boot camp. I now got to put on my first set of camis and since we didn’t rate anything we had to wear tennis shoes and keep the very top button on the blouse buttoned. That was not a very good look for anyone. We all looked like we were in some serious need of fashion help. Finally we were taken to our first barracks in which we were going to sleep for the first time in over 30 hrs.

Now for the first few weeks I would learn the basics of everything: marching, physical training, drill, and even making my bed the same every time. It seemed like everything the Drill Instructors had me and everyone else do was to make us miserable. As we got better at everything we did we would get rewarded as in letting us unbutton that top button on our blouse or even blouse our boots. Every day I could look around and see everyone is growing not only into a Marine but also into a better man. I would count my days not by days but by chow time. All I could think of at times was just make it to the next chow time and I would be fine. As weeks went by, it seemed like I had become someone so different than before. I now cared more about others more than myself at times because I had become a squad leader from day one. They had instilled into me to worry about the ones under me more than myself because they looked up to me for guidance that was passed down daily.

Finally, we were heading to finish our final test; which was called The Crucible. It was something I didn't talk about very often because I had no idea what was in store for me personally but also for the Marines I would be leading. The Crucible was a true test of everyone's colors and it was nothing but physical pain. We would march from obstacle to obstacle, and I would look at certain individuals and I knew he would need that extra push to get it done. Now we didn't get to sleep very much, maybe four hours during that 72-hour test. The last part was called the reaper. It was this huge mountain that when I looked at it I didn't know how I was going to get up it. When my Senior Drill Instructor looked at me and ask "are you going to beat me up this hill," and all I could think about was he knew I could do it, or at least give him a run for his money up the hill. So when the Company First Sergeant said, "attack the hill," and I just started to run. I had my pack that weighed probably close to 80lbs and my rifle. This so-called hill was so steep that when bending over to walk my hands could touch the

ground. I could feel my legs just wanted to give out from not eating and being awake so much in the past three days. But I knew I would get to rest once I got to the top, so I kept moving. When I looked to my side there was only one person next to me and that was my Senior Drill Instructor. It felt like it took hours to get up this mountain, but it was maybe a half hour or so to finish it.

When I did get to the top and turned around I could see the mountain being attacked by hundreds of men, who all shared the same physical pain as I did. I could see the sweat and agony on their faces. They all would be reaching the goal of becoming a United States Marine. There was only one person at this point with me at the top of the hill and that was my Senior Drill Instructor, who looked like he barely broke a sweat, and I think he was caught up in the same sight I was seeing. At this point I had realized I would be receiving my Eagle, Globe, and Anchor in just a few hours. That was also the point I had realized I had become more than a Marine but such a better human being from the lessons I had learned during this journey. Once everyone got to the top we were finally given a chance to sit down, but all I could think about was making sure my fellow Marines had the things they needed. I made sure they all had water and that none of them were hurt. Most of all I made sure I had all the guys I started that attack with.

These were things I would have never done the first day I met all of them. I didn't worry about others, I worried about number one and that was I. I had then realized that all of these little things that I thought were stupid throughout boot camp were slowly teaching me different lessons to make me better. This was a foundation that would be instilled in me on top of everything my mother and sister had taught me. I knew the things I learned during this 13-week journey would be the beginning of a better person from that point on.