



Company 62-185
U.S. Navy Recruit Training Center
San Diego, CA
March 1962 - June 1962





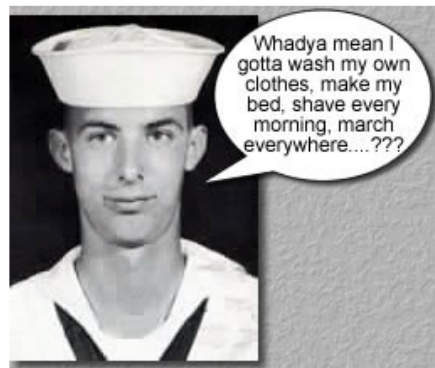
To view a short flash movie that I made on what recruit training was like at RTC San Diego around 1962, click on the below graphic.





Welcome to the U.S. Navy. . . .

Everything was going pretty well, until we arrived inside the U.S. Navy Recruit Depot in San Diego, CA. I was in the front seat on the old Navy bus (after all I was placed in charge of the group), kicked back, with my feet up on the chrome railing. When the bus stopped and the doors opened, I heard someone screaming, cussing and hollering at all of us (calling us lower than life human excrement and other expletives) to get off the bus pronto! Being the wise ass, that I was at the time, I had to stick my head out the door and say "are you talking to me?" Well, as you might guess, the situation went downhill rapidly after that point. This hand reached in the bus and yanked me over the railing and I landed in a heap on the ground. Man, I

didn't know someone could cuss and yell that much, and so close to one's face! Well for that, I got to sleep on a hard wood stencil bench that first night. Welcome to the U.S. Navy!



© 2011  *Would You Go Back To School If You Qualified For A Grant? See If You Qualify!* 

Click Your Age

Under 18 19-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 66-75 Over 75

Boot Camp only 9-weeks long?

We were stripped of our civilian clothes (donating them to charity), issued uniforms (which reeked from moth balls), stripped of all our hair (in a 20-30 second haircut that if you failed to warn the barber of any moles, you lost them), and given so many shots that I thought no disease known to man would affect me. Then, we moved and settled into our new barracks across the slough at Camp Nimitz. When signing up, I was initially told that boot camp was only 9 weeks in duration, but they neglected to tell me that your time in Camp Nimitz doesn't count towards the 9 weeks. And, we spent 4-1/2 weeks in Camp Nimitz!

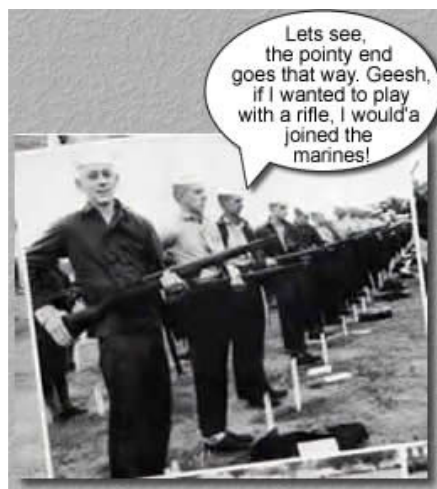


Stuff we learned

We learned how to scrub our uniforms by hand outside on concrete wash tables (then watch the seagulls crap on them after we hung them on the line), how to march in deep sand (since we couldn't do anything right), how to fold clothes and make a bunk up (over and over again), how to properly shave and shower, how to get up at 3 am in the morning, and how to sleep standing up (while in formation waiting for chow). We learned the 9-count/16-count manual, or one of those damn numbers, with our pieces (rifle) until we could do it in unison in our sleep. We were bussed out to Camp Elliot for fire-arm training, which I did well in - I had done a lot of deer hunting before enlisting. After undergoing 4-1/2 weeks of this conditioning, we finally moved across the channel to Camp Decatur. Now, we could start counting the days until the 9-weeks were up.

Minor discipline problems

I did have a few minor discipline problems. I thought I could smoke when I wanted and for that I got to smoke a whole pack of cigarettes, all at once, with a trash can over my head! Then, once I thought I could lean against the clothes line post while on watch (who in the hell was going to steal them anyway?). I got to do jumping jacks until I passed out, for that lack of discretion. Then, one night standing barracks watch, being about half asleep, I got the begeebies scared out of me when this booming voice said "what does it take to get you moving, a stick of dynamite up your ass!" I got lots of watch standing practice after that.

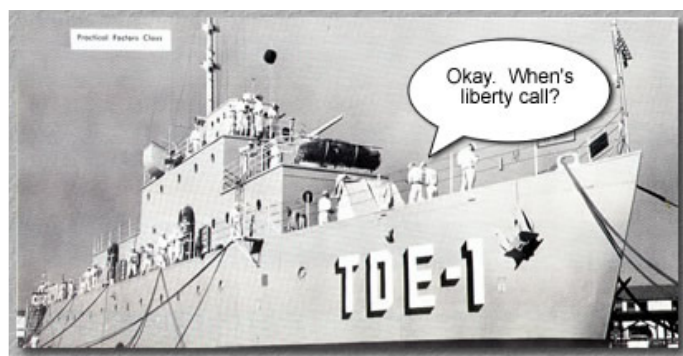


Mess cooking

On the week our company was scheduled for galley duties, I came down with a bad cold. Therefore, I couldn't be around food. I ended up being assigned to cleaning one of the senior officer's office, during that week (a somewhat easier job, although it wasn't any fun performing the task with a bad cold). Later on in my career, I once again missed mess-cooking duties (made 3rd Class Petty Officer just before I was scheduled to go). Fortunately, I never did have to mess-cook through-out my career.

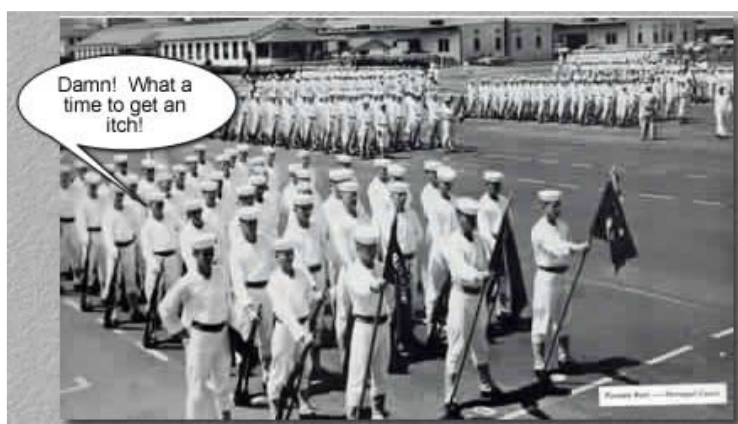
They say Boot Camp wasn't bad

Throughout my 22-year career, many of my shipmates recalled their boot camp days and said "they weren't that bad." Well, I'm here to tell you that I hated just about every minute of it. Being the wise-ass kid that I was at the time and if it wasn't for the fact that I would have to face my old man later, I believe that I could have scaled that fence in a heartbeat. Our company commander was one mean S.O.B., and if I saw him today in a cross walk, I could be tempted still to make a hood ornament out of him! That man could stand flat-footed and kick you right upside the head! Having said all that, bootcamp did take some of the cockiness out of me and taught me some humility and discipline - something today's youth could use. Not to mention, I also left bootcamp in the best physical condition of my life. Later, a couple old crusty Boatswain Mates (at my first duty station) took more of the cockiness out of me - put some knots on my head on a few occasions. Eventually, I got the message.



The best Company

Our company turned out to be the best company, in our brigade. Our company commander had a reputation for always having the number one company. We won all the flags, except one, the academic flag (which we lost by a nose and missed an opportunity to win the overall Meatball Flag). We won all the weekly competition flags, and for this we were rewarded with time off and picnics at the Mission Gorge Navy Recreation facility.



I signed up for sea duty

I did well on all my basic battery tests. I had originally wanted to be an Aviation Machinist mate or Machinery Repairman. Well, they said all those quotas were full. So instead of offering me some other school, they said I could make up my mind later on (yea right) and shipped me out. I wanted to get on a ship and see the world, but instead I got shore duty at the Pacific Reserve Fleet in Stockton, CA. I thought this was a sea-going navy, what the hell was the Navy doing in-land in Stockton, CA!

[5 Day PMP Boot Camp](#) Intense PMP Training Course - 20% more prep, same price PMP guarantee IntenseSchool.com/PMP-guarantee

[Vietnam Records](#) Largest Online US Military Records Collection. Discover Family Heroes. www.ancestry.com

[Army Training](#) Train For a Civilian Career w/ Army Benefits. 100% TA for Active Duty! www.Education4Military.com/Army

AdChoices



Navy publicity arrival photo. This sure is not the way I arrived!



Discarding our old civies. Most of us were suckered into donating them to charity.



Our new mailing address. Sheesh, will you look at that zip code!



Filling our seabag - with our first set of mothball smelling uniforms.



Inventorying our new seabag. Now, don't those new hats fit good?!



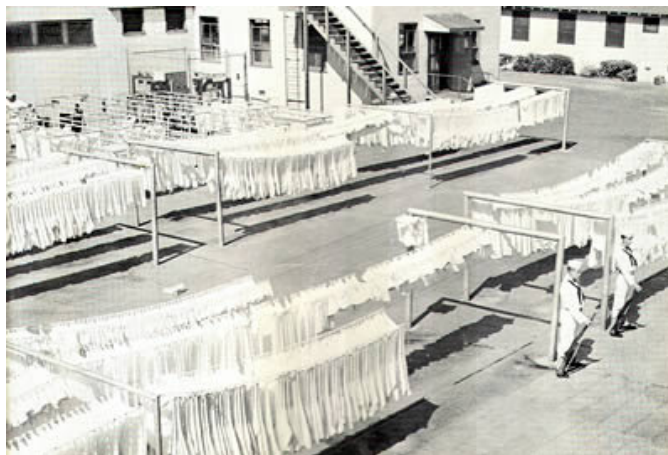
Taking our basic battery tests - early in the morning, on very little sleep, I might add.



Camp Nimitz, our home for the first 4-1/2 weeks. And, this 4-1/2 weeks didn't count towards the "recruiter promised" 9-week duration! The arrow indicates my barracks.



Evening routine - washing our uniforms with scrub brushes with bristles so stiff that our uniforms were almost worn out before we got out of Boot Camp!



Guarding our wash. Okay, from what?



Morning physical fitness exercises - I still get tired just looking at this photo!



Entering the gas chamber with gas masks on. While inside, they had us remove our masks, with the chamber full of tear gas. Now I understand why the bad guys give up after experiencing that stuff! It's nasty!



Boat drills - learning teamwork and seamanship.



Learning fire fighting - not to mention, getting all sooty.



Qualifying at the Camp Elliott Firing Range. Now, this day was fun!



Chow time! Uuummmm! Mystery meat, 20-yr old canned yams, suck-all-the-mosture-outta-your-mouth lima beans, and huh? Only one pat of butter for two slices of bread? Can I have another helping, please? What's for dessert?



Bag inspection for company 62-185.



Company 62-185 drilling - what else is new!



Company 62-185 marching, and marching, and marching, . . .



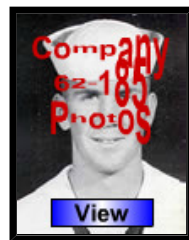
Company 62-185 Petty Officers - note that I wasn't one of them. You're not going to label me no rate grabber!



Company 62-185 passing in review. The good thing about this is that it means that boot camp is almost over!!



Departure for leave & next duty station. What the hell is that expression on my face all about? I should be grinning, after all I was leaving the place!



Ranks Attained:



Seaman Recruit



Seaman Apprentice



History Of Recruit Training Center San Diego, CA

The Naval Training Center, San Diego, began construction on 135 acres of highland and 142 acres of tideland, donated by the City of San Diego, in 1921. On 1 June 1923, the U.S. Naval Training Station, San Diego, was placed in commission under the command of Captain (later Rear Admiral) David F. Sellers, U.S. Navy.

At the time of its commissioning in 1923 the station bore little resemblance to its size or arrangement during my training period in 1962. At that time Camp Paul Jones housed the entire population of the station and the maximum recruit strength was 1,500. The period of recruit training was then sixteen weeks. The shore line of San Diego Bay extended considerably further inland than at present, and the land now occupied by Preble Field, the North Athletic Area and Camp Farragut was entirely underwater. The recruit parade ground was located on the present site of the Public Works garage. During the 1920's the Recruit Receiving and Outgoing Units were housed in the Detention Unit, known as Camp Ingram, which consisted of a group of walled tents adjacent to the south boundary of Camp Paul Jones. Until Camp Lawrence was completed in 1936, recruits spent their first three weeks of training under canvas in this Detention Unit.

In 1939 a construction program was commenced which within three years was to increase the capacity of the station four-fold. This expansion went hand in glove with a large scale program of harbor improvements by means of which the channel and anchorages in San Diego bay were deepened and 130 acres of filled land were added to the eastern boundaries of the station. By 1941 Camp Luce had been completed, and the construction of Camps Mahan, Decatur, and Farragut was already well under way when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Virtually all this construction work was completed by September, 1942, when the capacity of the station had reached its wartime peak of 33,000 men, 25,000 of whom were recruits. The period of recruit training during World War II varied between three weeks and seven weeks.

[Vietnam Veterans](http://www.military.com) www.military.com

Over 20 Million Records. Free Locator - Reconnect Now!

[Divorce Records Search](http://Divorce.Archives.com) Divorce.Archives.com

1) Search Online Records for Free 2) Find Divorce Records Instantly!

[WarFighters MC](http://warfightersmc.com) warfightersmc.com

Veterans Motorcycle Club Hangaround and you'll know

AdChoices 



NTC San Diego, Ca - Photo Courtesy of Donald Artherhults

In April, 1944, the Secretary of the Navy changed the status of the Training Station to that of a group command and redesignated it the U.S. Naval Training Center, San Diego. Under the Center Commander were established three subordinate commands: The Recruit Training Command, The Service School Command, and the Administrative Command.

The years immediately following World War II saw a considerable reduction in population of the Training Center despite a post-war expansion of the Service Schools, and by the end of 1949 the population of the Center had dropped to a twenty year low of 5,800 men. Six months later, when the Communists invaded the Republic of Korea, an immediate expansion of all Naval training activities took place and by September of 1950 the Center was again operating at nearly full capacity.

During the early months of the Korean conflict it became apparent that the demand for trained personnel in the rapidly growing Pacific Fleet would require further expansion of this training center. Accordingly steps were taken by the Navy Department to reactivate Camp Elliott, formerly a World War II Marine Corps training camp which is located ten miles north of San Diego on Kearny Mesa. On 15 January 1951 Camp Elliott was placed in commission as Elliott Annex of the Naval Training Center for the purpose of conducting the primary phases of recruit training. In March 1953, in line with the planned reduction in size of the Navy, training at Elliott Annex was discontinued and it was placed in an inactive status. During its two years of operation, over 150,000 recruits received training there.

Late in 1952 projects were approved to convert some recruit barracks into classrooms and to extend training facilities by construction of a permanent recruit camp on the undeveloped Training Center land lying to the south and east of the estuary. The six converted barracks went into service as recruit classrooms in April, 1953, and construction work on the new camp was completed in 1955. With the completion of this project the Naval Training Center filled out to its present boundaries of 435 acres.

The largest of the three commands at the Training Center is the Recruit Training Command. Here the recruit undergoes his transition from civilian to military life; learns the history, traditions, customs and regulations of his chosen service; and receives instruction in naval skills and subjects

which will be basic information throughout his period of naval service. Most of the facilities of the Recruit Training Command are centered on Bainbridge Court and occupy the western half of the Training Center. Here are concentrated the barracks and headquarters of the recruit brigade, and nearby are located the mess halls, classrooms, athletic fields and recreation buildings used by the recruits.



USS Recruit TDE-1

It was the first of its kind -- not quite 'building, not quite a ship. USS Recruit (TDE-1 and TFFG-1) the Navy's first non-ship, was originally a commissioned vessel and observed traditional Naval shipboard procedures like all other vessels. Any Sailor who ever served duty on board this haze gray ship awash in concrete, fondly remembers his first 'request permission to come aboard.

Affectionately known as USS Neversail, the Recruit was a two-thirds scale mock-up and served as a Sea Daddy to new recruits. When completed in 1949, it was 225 long, had a 24-foot, four inch beam and a 41-foot mast.

During construction, Sailors in NTC's seamanship division supervised the rigging with standard Navy fittings obtained from salvage and mothballed ships. The Recruit was commissioned Rear Adm. Wilder D. Baker, commandant, Eleventh Naval District, on July 27, 1949. A commission pennant was broken and the ensign and Union Jack was hoisted.

It served as a school for all recruits going through basic seamanship indoctrination. The ship's deck was an exact replica of what a Sailor could expect in the fleet. The Recruit had cleats, chocks and mooring lines and operated as any standard Navy ship. Sailors learned rigging, seamanship, ground tackle operation, cargo booms, deck fittings, lift boat handling and signal equipment.

Besides the regular classrooms, a company of recruits would stay on board from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. each night to polish watchstanding skills.



Please Sign My Guest Book

