

The Daisy Chain

I went to boot camp at MCRD San Diego in 1980. Some things I hope to never experience again such as wearing another man's underwear. Hold your shorts reader, we will get their soon enough.

MCRD San Diego has a lot of sand, in fact it seems like there was sand wherever there was not concrete or asphalt. However the sand was filled with crushed sea shells that seemed to poke right through your trousers or PT shorts cutting into the skin of the buttocks. Always there would be small bloody abrasions. We didn't have laundry services back then, every Sunday we would use liquid Whisk detergent and a stiff bristle brush used for cleaning floors and scrub our clothes on the concrete wash tables outside the barracks. Regardless of the effort we expended we never could get the blood stains out of our underwear.

Speaking of underwear, we were issued white boxer shorts. Not the slim fitting style of today, these were boxer shorts that had a huge gaping fly and enough material to make a tent. I remember when we first stripped down for our first shower that nobody had boxer shorts on. I think the only reason they issued boxer shorts was to add another element of frustration for recruits.

When we marched the boxer shorts would grow legs and arms and climb deep into the crack of your butt. The temptation to reach around and pull it out was tremendous and God forbid you should get caught digging in your butt to pull the excess material out.

We were in week four of training when the Drill Instructors decided that Saturday should be spent harassing us recruits. They chained the doors shut and then padlocked them and put blankets over the door glass so that nobody could see inside the squadbay. They tossed our racks and had us dump our foot lockers into a huge pile that was pushed together to form a huge pile of clothing and personal contents. After about four hours of harassment and several bouts of IPT (Incentive Punishment Training – PT that was done to reinforce discipline) we were given an unrealistic time to put everything back and square away the squadbay. And Lord help you should get caught trying to locate your personal stuff; we were to do that on our time Sunday morning. So off to evening chow we went, upon return

more harassment and finally the evening BDR (Basic Daily Routine) consisting of mail call, showers and hygiene inspection.

Unlike the other services Marine Boot Camp did not allow for talking to your fellow recruits. The best you could hope for was a whisper and hope you are heard by the DI's, especially when the DI's are displeased with the platoon.

Upon completion of the shower I realized that the boxer shorts I was wearing belonged to another recruit. I dug furiously through my foot locker to no avail, the few shorts I had belonged to other recruits. I could only hope they were clean shorts I was wearing. I heard Corporal Campbell executing the final countdown for hygiene inspection; I quickly took my position on my foot locker at the end of my rack and stand upon it, toes on the edge, position of attention, wearing only boxer shorts.

I await my turn at inspection by Corporal Campbell. He was a very big man and had a very short fuse. Although I have my fly turned slightly to the right so that nothing falls out (remember the statement about how big of a fly the boxer shorts had). At the moment the DI is standing before you, your forearms are supposed to pop up to the horizontal position, palms flat to the deck, fingers extended and joined while slowly rotating them palms up and then back to palms down the recruit is required to say "**Sir, recruit _____ has no medical problems at this time sir**". Should the recruit have a medical problem they were to modify the statement to indicate what that medical problem is and if necessary point to the area of concern.

At the completion of the statement and hand rotation we were required to automatically rotate clockwise in short choppy steps so that the backside of the recruit could be examined for signs of injury. It is during the short choppy steps the recruits experience significant anxiety. Those who were so unfortunate to have their manhood flop out from the short choppy steps from turning in a circle were threatened with having it slapped. Yes, hygiene inspections were quite stressful. As I rotated clockwise 360 degrees I heard Corporal Campbell say "**JESUS H CHRIST, WHAT THE HELL DO WE HAVE HERE**" as my backside was towards him. A moment later I am facing him again.

DI: "**WHY ARE YOU WEARING RECRUIT HAVRO'S BOXER SHORTS**"

Recruit: "**SIR, THIS RECRUIT DOES NOT HAVE AN EXCUSE SIR**"

DI: "WHY DO YOU HAVE BLOOD ON THE BACKSIDE OF HAVRO'S SHORTS CROUCH"

Recruit: "SIR, THIS RECRUIT WAS IN A HURRY WHEN HE WAS GETTING DRESSED".

DI: "YOU'RE A QUEER AREN'T YOU CROUCH"

Recruit: "NO SIR, THIS RECRUIT IS NOT A QUEER"

DI: "HAVRO, GET OVER HERE"

Recruit: "AYE AYE SIR" Recruit Havro rushes toward us.

DI: "HAVRO, WHO'S UNDERWEAR ARE YOU WEARING"

Recruit: Havro looks down at the stamped name and yells "SIR, THIS RECRUIT IS WEARING RECRUIT JOHNSON'S UNDERWEAR SIR".

DI: "TURN AROUND HAVRO"

Recruit: "AYE AYE SIR" he replies as he turns around.

DI: "WHY DO YOU HAVE BLOOD ON YOUR ASS HAVRO"

Recruit: "SIR, THIS RECRUIT DOES NOT KNOW SIR"

DI: "GET OVER HERE JOHNSON"

Recruit: "AYE AYE SIR" Recruit Johnson rushes toward us.

DI: "JOHNSON, WHOSE UNDERWEAR ARE YOU WEARING"

Recruit: Johnson looks down at the stamped name and yells "SIR, THIS RECRUIT IS WEARING RECRUIT HENDERSON'S UNDERWEAR SIR".

DI: "TURN AROUND JOHNSON, LET'S SEE IF YOU HAVE BLOOD ON YOUR ASS TOO"

DI: "HOLY SHIT...WE HAVE US A GAY DAISY CHAIN. GET THE HELL AWAY FROM ME YOU WEIRDOS"

Recruits: "AYE AYE SIR" We all said in unison as each departed back to their place on line.