

Authors note:

Some parts may be hard to understand, but I didn't change or revise anything. This is what I thought, and how I thought it.

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Day 1 –

“Oh mum you don't have to come to graduation, this is gonna be easy.” I've been here for an hour and I'm already wishing I would've never said that. In processing was scary, I was like a deer in the headlights. I thought all it would be was them searching our bags and sending us on our way but that would've been too easy. They gave me a small book called an SOP or Standard Operating Procedures and water bottles which both were supposed to be on me at all times. When we first got to the barracks I was told to read the wall in which room standards were posted. I suppose this isn't exactly free time but it isn't exactly class/drill time either. I have met my bunkmate; he's in the same flight as me. I suppose that's to be expected. I better make myself look like I'm doing something other than trying not to cry.

[A quick transcript of a conversation, not taken in real time obviously]

Me: Flight Commander Sir?

Flight Commander: Just Flight Commander, no sir.

Me: Have you already been told of my condition? I brought extra copies of my pt waiver and my medicine dosing information would you like them?

FC: Yes I know, and its fine, I don't need them.

Day 1 (continued) –

It's “personal” time. We had classes all day over things I already know. Like for instance ORM or Operational Risk Management in which I've taken both basic and intermediate courses in. I already miss my iPod, in the sake of time, short and sweet: here you and your flight are the iPod, and the songs, not a song it's a Jodie. I've already lost track of time. The thermostat has a clock but it's wrong as we left the barracks at 2:45 pm and that's not possible, in processing continued till 3 or so. I would write more but I'm tired, they drilled us to death.

Day 2 -

“7.11, Latrines will be flushed after every use.”

- Standard Operating Procedures

It just shows you how in detail the SOP goes. There was a cadet from my home squadron that was in my flight here that dropped out today. Apparently we have inspections on: uniform wear, bunk condition, and foot locker condition

Inspection: Battle Dress Uniform (camo) FAIL

We had an intro to emergency services class today, I had already knew some of it, but it explained how I could get certified more in detail then I was told back home.

Day 3 -

2 down, 11 to go;

Another kid quit today I didn't know him, I really don't care. All I know is that another inspection was today.

Inspection: Blues (Dress uniform) FAIL

These inspections are mission impossible, or I believe them to be. I'm trying harder, you have to get everything in the footlocker perfect for example:

BDU undershirt, second shelf, folded perfectly to 6 inches by 6 inches and can't even be a 16th of an inch off, you know the width of a piece of paper is about a 16th of an inch.

I woke up sore today, presumably from the PT yesterday. I was still expected to move just as fast as I did when I got here if not faster, the last two days I've had to fallout during the mile run. I ended up running with the squadron commander and even though I was in a PT uniform, she still knew my name which brings me to something I was told before I got here:

"Don't let them learn your name. Once they do, they will never forget it."

- Anonymous Cadet Parents

Note: I think the Squadron Commander is the one nice flight staff member.

Day 4 -

Well lets get right to the fun...

Inspection: BDU FAIL

We cadets are starting to reach a stage of hopelessness; one is even talking about dropping even though ours and the Tac's strong words make an attempt to aid in the situation. I mean I think we all had that those thoughts but the Tac said something most of us forgot, this was the first CTG in Missouri wing. Historic right? Maybe the historical value of this CTG could be disputable but we need that mind frame, we are the first CTG, we are history in the making.

Day 5 –

I feel like a bloated fish, why a fish? I don't know, but I went to medical anyways, they gave me a laxative and sent me on my way. The pain kept on, it was bad. We were in a mapping class when it got bad real bad, my head hit the table and my teeth clenched my bunk mate ran to get the tac... he walked me to the van, and drove me to medical same song and dance, except for one thing, that cadet that was thinking about dropping did the obvious. Medical gave me a Tums and sent me on my way; it was inspection prep time when I reached a gut-wrenching new level of pain. There would be no inspection today but it was prepping for the final inspection or for me lying on my bunk grabbing my stomach being told to work through it by the flight sergeant, but it evidently wasn't happening for the most part.

[A conversation after the pain ended]

Cadet: So Lewis you're pretty depressed? Ready to quit?

Me: You may call it clinical depression, but not me my friend. I call it being down to earth as I'm optimistic about my situation.

I had to start using my PT waiver today, I didn't want too, I want to try but I have to be able to fallout when my leg starts to hurt. My disability is catching up to me allot anyways, the Tac is having to drive me around from place to place as I am having issues walking.

Our flight commander disappeared today, at group formation the first sergeant was standing in front of the flight at FC's post.

Day 6 –

Today is it, the last tests, the last inspections and the decision if we graduate or not. Because of what happened yesterday I am behind everyone else. My bunk looks like a hurricane hit it and my foot locker failed walkthrough inspection done by the Stan/Eval team, 45 minutes to completely redo a weeks work...

FINAL INSPECTION BLUES: ???

I wish I could post a heroic **PASS** here but I can't I like many other heard a lot of fails thrown around. Some people were rushing so bad they had to take inspection with their pants down literally. We had a little question and answer session with the Squadron commander, we were all asking questions like when we will know if we passed or not.

With my flight commander being replaced my life just got harder on the last day of this encampment. This new commander hasn't been told anything of my disability therefore he doesn't think it exists and looks to me as if I'm attempting to be lazy. I actually had to have the TAC brief them like he did the other FC. Me and the Tac have bonded I guess, him and the medical officer are nice as long as you remember your courtesies which I have no problem with since I was reminded by male shakedown about how to greet an officer, I didn't forget.

Day 7 –

This is the way the world ends (okay... maybe just encampment but still.)

We had a PT competition today which was fun for the most part, really made the workout less of a drag. They did a mile run today, I was in the med van using my waiver as they didn't want anyone to fallout and I didn't want to have to do that to my flight.

Before the run, they were told one thing, we all passed.

After PT... Cleaning. Ugh. I think I lost some brain cells from the bleach product I used to mop with.

We had personal time and for the first time since we got here, we didn't have to do anything besides change into our blues.

We had the banquet after personal time, two unexpected things

- 1) They presented me with the Lionheart award
- 2) The CTG honour cadet was beside me

After the banquet was the parade, this is what hurt the most out of the week. After my fight and my win here at encampment, I knew no one was here for me. Sure, I had someone here to give me a ride home but they had a daughter themselves and probably wanted to hear about her time rather than mine. No one was here for the single most proud moment of my cadet career and possibly my life.