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HEADQUARTERS
Engineer Replacement Training Center
Fort Belvoir, Virginia

INFORMATION BULLETIN



July, — 1941

INFORMATION BULLETIN



INTRODUCTION

This bulletin is published for the information and guidance of you, the newly arrived soldier at the Engineer Replacement Training Center, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Its purpose is to acquaint you with the conditions under which you will live for the next few weeks. If it does not supply the information you want, ask one of the permanent personnel.

THE REPLACEMENT CENTER

First, let us explain the Replacement Training Center, for brevity generally called the Replacement Center, to you. It is a far stretch from the easy going ways of civilian life to the well regulated way of Army life. The Replacement Center helps to bridge the gap for you. The Replacement Center has been developed to give the recruit training that was formerly given by the regiments. Here, because of unexcelled facilities and training personnel, we are able to give the basic training of the soldier, including such subjects as bridging, roads, demolitions, field fortifications, weapons, construction and combat principles. Training is the principle mission of the Replacement Center so that there is the minimum of interference from the outside. Here also you will be classified and trained for the job in the Army for which you are best fitted.

It takes you through the basic training courses before assigning you to tactical units or to specialized work. You will be taken in graduated steps from civilian life to that of the Army. You will go through exercises to harden and toughen you physically. You will have regular hours and will have the best of good wholesome food and well-planned, balanced meals.

You will learn to be clean, orderly, neat, alert, to respect authority. You will learn the basic weapons (the rifle for example) and facility in movement. It is true that such days may be the hardest for the new man. You will fret perhaps at what may seem to be absurdities. Presently you will learn that the Army employs no magic, that its aim is not to be acquired overnight, nor without trial and error. The composition of the Army's new personnel, a cross section of democracy, does not blend nor boil without some overheating.

LOCATION

This Engineer Replacement Center is located at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Fort Belvoir (formerly Fort Humphrey) is 11 miles south of Alexandria, Virginia and 18 miles south of Washington, D. C. The village of Accotink is adjacent to the camp. The railroad and express station is Accotink Station. The post office and telegraph office is Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

HISTORY

Fort Belvoir is situated on the Virginia side of the Potomac River. The land now comprising Fort Belvoir was included in a grant given by James II of England to Lord Culpepper in 1688. The estate descended to the sixth Lord Fairfax, who, in 1734 persuaded his cousin, Colonel William Fairfax, to move to Virginia and there act as his agent. Colonel Fairfax selected a spot on the peninsula, the one next below Mount Vernon, as the location for a beautiful mansion, which was completed in 1741 and which he named "Belvoir". Here the young engineer, George Washington, first practised his profession in the employ of Colonel Fairfax. The mansion was destroyed by fire in the year 1783. During the War of 1812, a British Fleet, opposed by American resistance from the Belvoir estate, bombarded and further demolished the ruins. After this, the ownership of the immediate estate of Belvoir passed into various hands, and during the next hundred years the lands became more or less vacant and uncultivated.

The original tract of land, covering 1,500 acres lying on the main peninsula, was acquired for the use of the District of Columbia. By an act of Congress approved August 24, 1912, it was transferred to the War Department in order that the latter could establish a rifle range and summer camp for the Engineer troops, then regularly stationed at Washington Barracks, District of Columbia. The first Engineer officers' training camp of the World War was held at Fort Belvoir (then Camp Humphrey) in May of 1917. Between May, 1917 and Armistice Day, 1918, some 57,000 men received training here and 37,000 troops had gone forth from the post to duty overseas. At one time during that period there were 24,300 officers and men in camp. The size of the reservation was increased by subsequent purchases until it now comprises about 8,000 acres of beautiful rolling woodland with miles of river frontage. You can see from this description of Fort Belvoir that you are stationed at one of the more historic Army posts in this country.

ADJUSTMENT

While you are in the Replacement Center, your privacy is deeply invaded. You will live in barracks, stoke the stove, scrub floors, make beds, peel potatoes, clean windows, clean the lavatories. Your life is radically changed. You will have trouble perhaps, adjusting yourself to mass living, to the pranks, banter and even bullying of your comrades. You may object to what you regard as undue severity in drill and mess sergeants. Your uniform may not be as romantic as you have pictured it nor fit as well as your civilian clothes. However, you'll come to know that the uniform is practical for field service, comfortable, and well appearing when properly cared for. The soldier can fight in any garment, provided his shoes fit him and provided that he is dressed properly to meet the climatic conditions he lives in. Pride in appearance and a general neatness and comfort of dress are an incentive to ambition and help make a good soldier.

Your life will not be unrelentingly stern. The soldier in this Army has access to athletics, the movies, sight-seeing trips. He may receive visitors during his time off—usually half of Saturday and all of Sunday. The camp libraries offer intellectual relaxation. In the recreation buildings there are dances, games, social gatherings. There are post exchanges, very much like the small-town store. They are run for the benefit of the soldier, who may purchase what he wants at reasonable prices, either for cash or on monthly credit. Liquor, except for light beer, is prohibited. All sales profits are returned to the benefit of the men through their unit commander, who may spend them for athletic paraphernalia, amusements and additions to the unit mess.

The soldier's life may be divided into two classes—fighting men and housekeeping or maintenance men. Both groups are intermingling, often interchanging. All are exposed to the same hardships, the same discipline, the same sacrifices in campaign and in battle. To be a good soldier you must obey orders promptly and good naturedly; show proper respect for your superiors at all times; put forth every effort to do your job well; and be neat in your appearance and loyal to your country.

ADVANCEMENT

The new Army needs efficient junior leaders. The trainee has plenty of opportunity for promotion to non-com grades and to commissions. He will be observed by officers hungry for capable squad and

will reach you at your company. The proper mailing address is as follows:

Private John Doe,
Company ----, Engineer Training Battalion,
Engineer Replacement Training Center,
Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Stamps will be available from the mail orderly in your company orderly room and at the Post Office. Mail will be delivered usually at the noon meal and the evening meal. Other usual post office services are performed at the Post Office.

TELEGRAPH

A Western Union office is located in Building NJ-19 at Humphrey and Goethals Road.

POST EXCHANGE

Branches of the Post Exchange are located as follows: For Battalions 1, 2 and 3 the PX is next door to the 2d Battalion Administration Building. For Battalions 4, 5, and 6 it is in rear of the Service Club. The PX for Group 2 is located directly across the street from the mess hall of Company A of the 9th Battalion. Shoe polish, brushes, etc., can be purchased at the PX. You will find that the PX will carry most types of merchandise desired by the soldier. A barber shop is located in each PX. The price of a haircut is 35 cents. You may wear any uniform in the PX until 5:00 PM, but after 5:00 PM and on Saturday afternoon and Sunday you must be in uniform A, B, or C to be served.

CHAPLAINS

The Chaplains' Offices are on Beauregard Road midway between Goethals Road and Abbott Road. The Chaplain will designate the buildings in each area in which religious services will be held regularly. Watch your bulletin board. Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish services are held regularly. The chaplains are also available for consultation.

TRANSPORTATION

The government does not furnish you with transportation to and from town. However, busses run regular schedules at frequent intervals to and from Washington and Alexandria. The bus fare to Alex-

andria is 20¢; to Washington, D.C. the fare is 35¢. Bus tokens can be purchased at the PX and used as bus fare at a saving in transportation cost. Military personnel are forbidden to thumb rides. Due to the limited parking area and regulations of the Army, trainees of the Engineer Replacement Training Center are not allowed personal cars on the post.

RADIOS

Radios are permitted in squad rooms but be careful that they do not disturb others. The squad room is the common home of thirty or more men, so be sure to respect the rights of others. You may operate a radio in the recreation hall as much as you desire.

PICTURES

You are not permitted to hang pictures or photographs on the walls of barracks. Use the inside of lid of your foot locker. Trainees are cautioned not to mark or deface any wall or building in the area.

PUNISHMENT

"Confined to Quarters" means restricted privileges. You may be confined to quarters because of some disciplinary measure, or confined to the guardhouse for serious offenses. Your company commander has certain disciplinary powers which will be explained to each trainee.

SICKNESS

If you are sick, report to your First Sergeant so that your name may be entered on the sick book.

If a near relative becomes very ill, or dies, every effort will be made to grant you furlough to go home.

SMOKING

You may smoke while off duty. Smoking will be permitted in barracks if proper ash trays are provided for the purpose of extinguishing cigarette butts. No smoking will be permitted during drill or periods of instruction, except during rest periods when so authorized.

PROPHYLACTIC STATIONS

If you should expose yourself, make use of every reputable prophylactic method available. The best procedure is to avoid illicit sexual intercourse and a chance of causing moral or physical harm to yourself or another. The government provides chemical prophylaxis for your protection, and it costs you nothing. The sooner the prophylaxis is used after exposure, the more effective the protection.

There is a prophylactic station in each infirmary. Those for 1st Group are at Goethals Road and Foster Road, on Abbott Road next to the 4th Battalion Administration Building, and Black Road south of Goethals Road. For the 2d Group the infirmary is next door to the theater.

Prophylactic stations in the nearby cities are in operation 24 hours daily and are located as follows:

Alexandria—white—Health Department, City Hall Bldg. on Cameron St.

Alexandria—colored—404 Princess Street.

Washington—white—Dispensary, 3d floor, 2115 C Street, N.W.

Baltimore—white—Hearst Tower Building Arcade, East Baltimore Street and Guilford Avenue.

CLOTHING

Civilian clothes will not be worn by the trainees while on the Post nor when leaving the Post at any time. While participating in athletics on the Post, suitable clothing may be worn. The issue uniform A, B, or C will be worn at all times unless fatigue uniform D is prescribed. Your Company Commander will inform you of the proper uniform to be worn and how you shall wear it. See Poster on Barracks Bulletin Board.

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

To sell, swap, or wantonly destroy the uniform or equipment is a serious military offense punishable by court-martial. All uniform clothing issued to you belongs to the government. Trainees are not permitted to buy any article of issue. All regulation articles that you need are issued to you, and you are not permitted to wear any other.

If you lose or damage military equipment or clothing you should report this fact to your First

Sergeant. He will inform your company commander who will investigate the conditions. If the loss or damage was due to your fault or neglect, you will be required to pay the amount due. If, on the other hand, it was not due to your fault or neglect, you will not be required to pay.

LAUNDRY & CLEANING

On a specified day of each week, the Company Supply Sergeant will collect all company laundry. The charge for laundry is \$1.50 per month, which is deducted from your pay on pay day. Dry cleaning is handled similarly and the cost depends upon how much cleaning the individual has done.

TAILOR SHOPS

Each Group has in its area a Tailor Shop where you can have clothing alterations made for a nominal charge. For Group 1 the Tailor Shop is located in Building NC-29 across Abbott Road from the First Battalion. The Group 2 Tailor Shop is located in Building NL-6 near junction of Franklin and Warren Roads. Certain alterations may be made at government expense when clothing is not available in your size for issue. Such alterations must be authorized by your company commander.

ADVICE

If you need advice you are free to consult your platoon officer and non-commissioned officers. If you desire to speak to your company commander, tell the First Sergeant and he will arrange it for you. These men are all deeply interested in your welfare and development, but don't bother them with petty or fancied troubles. These men will see that you are treated fairly.

If you have personal or family difficulties, and want advice, see your company commander, platoon leader, or the chaplain. The latter is especially fitted to cope with such matters. He can be of help to you. Call on him in his office.

THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS

In conclusion, you are in the Corps of Engineers. This Corps has a history as long as that of the nation itself. It is proud of its past and looks to you to add to its prestige and accomplishments. In turn,

the Corps of Engineers has much to offer you. Its work is interesting and constructive and affords an unexcelled variety of service and opportunity. You may learn a variety of trades that will be of value to you upon your return to civil life. There is, for example, opportunity to learn to operate various types of heavy construction equipment, carpentry, drafting, surveying, the use and handling of explosives, warehousing, clerical work, foremanship, auto mechanics, truck and automobile driving, cooking and railroading, to mention only a few.

"You're in the Army now." The time you will serve in training must not be lost to you nor to the nation. It is the Army's hope, the country's hope, that you may finish your year of training a better man, physically, mentally and morally.

