



## Ronald Winter Transcript

>> From the Library of Congress in Washington D.C.

>> Boot camp experience is probably the most shocking thing a young person will ever encounter going from civilian world to the military. I had an impression when I went that because people sent us off saying good luck and, you know, do a good job, and this, that, and another thing. Met a lot of former marines who gave us all kinds of advice, but nobody can really prepare you for the intensity of the shock when you get there and you realize no one really cares who you are, or what you did in the past, and they're not all that happy you're there, and they're not going to treat you that way. And in an instant -- literally an instant we never even got off the bus. I can tell you I still remember the drill instructor getting on the bus and it was like probably one o'clock in the morning in Paris Island, South Carolina early January -- a guy got on the bus with a Smokey the Bear hat and had a few nice words to the bus driver and when he turned it was just this complete personality change. And he's screaming at us -- you have ten seconds to get off this bus. Well there's maybe 100 people on that bus. And he's saying anybody's left on the bus after I count down from ten is going to die. And all of the sudden you realize he wasn't kidding. So there's this scramble to get off the bus. And right outside the bus there's more of the same. And everyone's screaming at you. And there's these yellow footprints on the road. And they're screaming at you to stand on those yellow footprints. And from that second on everything that happened was just mayhem and bedlam and all it seemed to be geared toward, you know, you could never do anything right. And he just -- you're just looking around like -- oh my God -- you're like a rat in a maze or something. Which way do I go? What do I do? As the weeks went by you started to realize there was a purpose. And what it all really was that they immediately stripped you of everything that you had ever known and considered comfortable in civilian life because you were about to become a marine. And it's an entirely different world with an entirely different set of standards and requirements. And they literally do. They take all your clothes and you ship them home. They shave off all your hair. You shower down. And then they start right from the very -- socks and underwear upwards. Everything is new and different. And when you finally emerge from boot camp you're a totally different person. Some people see that as a negative thing and I think if you want to take it that way you can. But in the reality of it -- in the long run if you see that you encounter challenges and met and overcame them then it's not so negative. You learn to thrive and even survive in that environment, but there were a lot of things about that environment you could take forward as a civilian later on.

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