

Jefferson Barracks
by CHARLES REYNOLDS

SOMEONE ASKED ME WHY I DIDN'T LIKE ST. LOUIS. NOTHING REALLY EXCEPT THAT IT IS NEAR JEFFERSON BARRACKS.

IT ALL STARTED WHEN A BOARD OF MY FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS DECIDED IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA IF I JOINED THE ARMY AND SEE THE WORLD. FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS LIKE THAT I CAN DO WITHOUT.

WE STARTED AT 5:30 IN THE MORNING AND IT WOULD BE THREE THE NEXT MORNING BEFORE WE WOULD GET ANY SLEEP. AFTER BEING CHECKED AND DOUBLE CHECKED THE DOCTORS FOUND THE BODY WAS STILL WARM SO WE WERE SWORN IN. AFTER THAT WE WERE SWORNED AT!! THE NAME WENT TO "PRIVATE" OR "HEY-YOU". WE SPENT THREE DAYS AT CAMP UPTON WHERE WE WERE ISSUED BARRACK BAGS AND A WEIRD CONGLOMERATION OF CLOTHES AND EQUIPMENT ALL OF WHICH WEIGHED TOO MUCH. THE NEXT MOVE WAS TO MIAMI BEACH WHERE YOU STAYED BECAUSE THERE WERE A COUPLE OF LARGE, NASTY TEMPERED M.P.'s AT THE CAUSEWAY TO SEE THAT YOU STAYED OUT OF MIAMI. AFTER A MONTH OF LECTURES, MORE SHOTS, DRILL AND MORE DRILL WE WERE SAID TO BE SOLDIERS AND WERE SENT TO JEFFERSON BARRACKS FOR OVERSEAS TRAINING.

J, B. HAS A HISTORY AS ONE BEING A CALVARY OUTPOST AND MANY CALVARY UNITS WERE TRAINED THERE I DO NOT DOUBT; HOWEVER AFTER THE AIR FORCE TOOK IT OVER THEY FIGURED IF THE CALVARY COULD TRAIN HORSES THEN THE AAF COULD TRAIN JACK-ASSES SO THEY PROCEEDED TO SEND A LOT OF ROOKIES AND 90 DAY WONDERS THROUGH THERE. BELIEVE ME THERE WERE SOME BEAUTS. OUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME WAS TENT CITY PRACTICALLY IN THE RIVER AND MAN IT WAS HOT AND MUGGY DOWN THERE. IF IT WASN'T DUST IT WAS SLICK, STICKY, SLIPPERY MUD.

WE GOT STUCK DOING TEN MILE HIKES, ALL UP HILL, I AM STILL WONDERING IF ANY OF THOSE HILLS WENT DOWN. TO HELP, YOUR CANTEEN WAS ALWAYS FULL OF WARM WATER. OUR WING GOT TO STAND PARADE FOR A WEEK. YOU FELL OUT AT 3:00 PM TO GET LINED UP FOR A 5:00 PM O'CLOCK PARADE. I CAN IMAGINE WHAT WE LOOKED LIKE.

I ALSO WENT FOR A DENTAL CHECK AND IN SO DOING LEFT THREE TEETH THERE. TO PROVE WE WERE COMBAT READY WE SPENT 1 DAY ON THE FIRING RANGE FIRING AN ENFIELD 45 AUTOMATIC AND A 45 CAL. TOMMY-GUN. AFTER A MONTH OF THIS AUGUST WEATHER EVEN DOING CLOSE ORDER DRILL IN A DOWN POUR WE WERE FINALLY

LOADED AND MOVED OUT. I TOLD THE LT., I DIDN'T GIVE A D--- WHERE THE TRAIN WENT, UP, DOWN, EAST OR WEST JUST AS LONG AS WE GOT OUT OF J.B.

ONE NIGHT WE CROSSED THE RIVER AND STARTED EAST AND ALL OF US THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO FORT DIX FOR OVERSEAS SHIPMENT. I IMAGINE HOW SILLY WE ALL FELT WHEN WE WOKE UP AND FOUND OUR TRAIN IN THE YARDS OF ST. PAUL, MINNE.

NOW YOU ALL KNOW WHY I AM NOT FOND OF MISSOURI AND I AM STILL WONDERING IF ANY OF THOSE HILLS WENT DOWN.

I KEEP READING IN THE "SMB" ABOUT ALL THE HANGARS AND SO FORTH ON SHEMA. LORD LOVE YOU, WHEN I LEFT THERE THE ONLY PERMANENT BUILDING WAS THE MESS HALL.

WE CAME NEAR TO LOSING WHAT PASSED AS A CONTROL TOWER WHEN A B-24 WRECKED ON TAKE OFF AND A 500 FOUND BOMB EXPLODED IN IT. WE THOUGHT THE WHOLE ISLAND WAS GOING TO SINK.

THE ONLY SHOWER WAS THE ONE THE FIGHTER GROUP LET US USE AND THE LATRINE WAS A TENT WITH A FOUR HOLER. YOU DIDN'T STAY THERE LONG!!! YOU GUYS WHO CAME LATER MUST HAVE LIVED AND WORKED IN LUXURY.