

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 106

Dearest grandchild,

Perhaps you have heard that Peter Mouton has completed his Marine Boot Camp at Parris Island, South Carolina. Here is an article about enduring hardship. I sent it to Peter to verify it's accuracy and here is his e-mail reply received on 9/11/16.

Dear Grandpa,

First of all I would like to say I really like the message you're conveying and the way it aligns with the training I was doing. I only wish I was able to read it while I was in recruit training. It's a great reminder of the similarities of all the different hardships people may go through whether it's training, or religious persecution, or marital issues, or financial troubles. They are all enough for God to handle and he reaches out to us if we ask when, in Jesus' name, we inevitably suffer.

Secondly all the information included in there is accurate and I think it would be great for the whole family to read.

ENDURING HARDSHIP

“Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ” (2 Tim 2:3)

This Scripture assumes a new significance as our grandson, Peter Mouton, is graduating from the Marine Corps Boot Camp at Parris Island, South Carolina. Some have described this experience as the most difficult thing they have done in their entire lives. But this is the only way you can become one of the few, the proud, and a marine.

There are three phases to the program, each of which is carefully designed to transform recruits into marines. It goes without saying that the program does not change to accommodate the recruit, the recruit changes to accommodate the program. This means that the marines decide what kind of hair cut you will have, and what kind of clothing you will wear. They also tell you when to go to bed and when to get up. Further, they decide what you will eat and how long you have to eat it. Yes! The training is hard, but the hardship is designed to produce a “good soldier”.

Remember! Timothy was told to endure hardship as a “good soldier”, and so are we!

Since recruits arrive at various stages of physical fitness, they are first tested to see if they are physically fit to begin training. This preliminary test includes a mile and a half run, sit-ups, and pull-ups. Training a marine not only involves developing physical strength, but also the core values of integrity, discipline, teamwork, duty, and esprit de Corps.

An 11 station obstacle course is designed to build confidence as well as develop upper body strength. It goes without saying that during a war, a marine is bound to experience “obstacles”. So also Timothy was warned that all who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12).

The 13 week course not only produces marines, but also weeds out those who cannot make the grade. Soon the stress begins to show and the tired and hungry recruits sometimes turn on one another. In actual combat this could prove fatal. Marines are trained to disregard hardships and remember that teamwork is an essential ingredient to victory.

Before graduation each marine must survive the “Crucible”. This severe test lasts for 54 hours. It is well named, for the “Crucible” is designed to melt away the dross and produce a pure marine. The “Crucible” involves marching 40 miles, five of which are in the dead of night. During this time they must also face an additional variety of difficult tests. During these 54 hours they will receive only 2 ½ MREs, and only be permitted 8 hours of sleep.

Delta Company began their Crucible at 3 a.m. with a 6 mile road march. Next they stowed their gear in huts and prepared for the challenge of the first of four warrior stations. Each station is designed to be difficult. One station, for example, was built around an enemy mined rope bridge. The recruits had to cross this bridge with their gear and ammunition boxes. Another station involved engaging pop-up targets with only 10 rounds of ammunition in two magazines. Next the teams were required to battle one another with pugil sticks. The Crucible, by design, is not easy.

Their final 9 mile march began at 4 a.m. As the sun rises they cross the DI Bridge and draw closer to the main base. Their long journey ends around the replica of the Iwo Jima Memorial. A color guard raises the flag, the chaplain says a prayer, and the drill instructors present each recruit with the Marine Corps insignia - the eagle, the globe, and the anchor. He shakes their hand and for the first time calls them a “Marine”.

Remember! The Boot Camp experience is “easy” by comparison with real combat.

Remember! As you follow Christ you have a choice. The broad and “easy” way leads to destruction! The “difficult and narrow way” leads to life! (Matt.7:13.

Remember! We are all challenged to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ!

CONGRATULATIONS PETER!

I love you all,

Grandpa Boyce