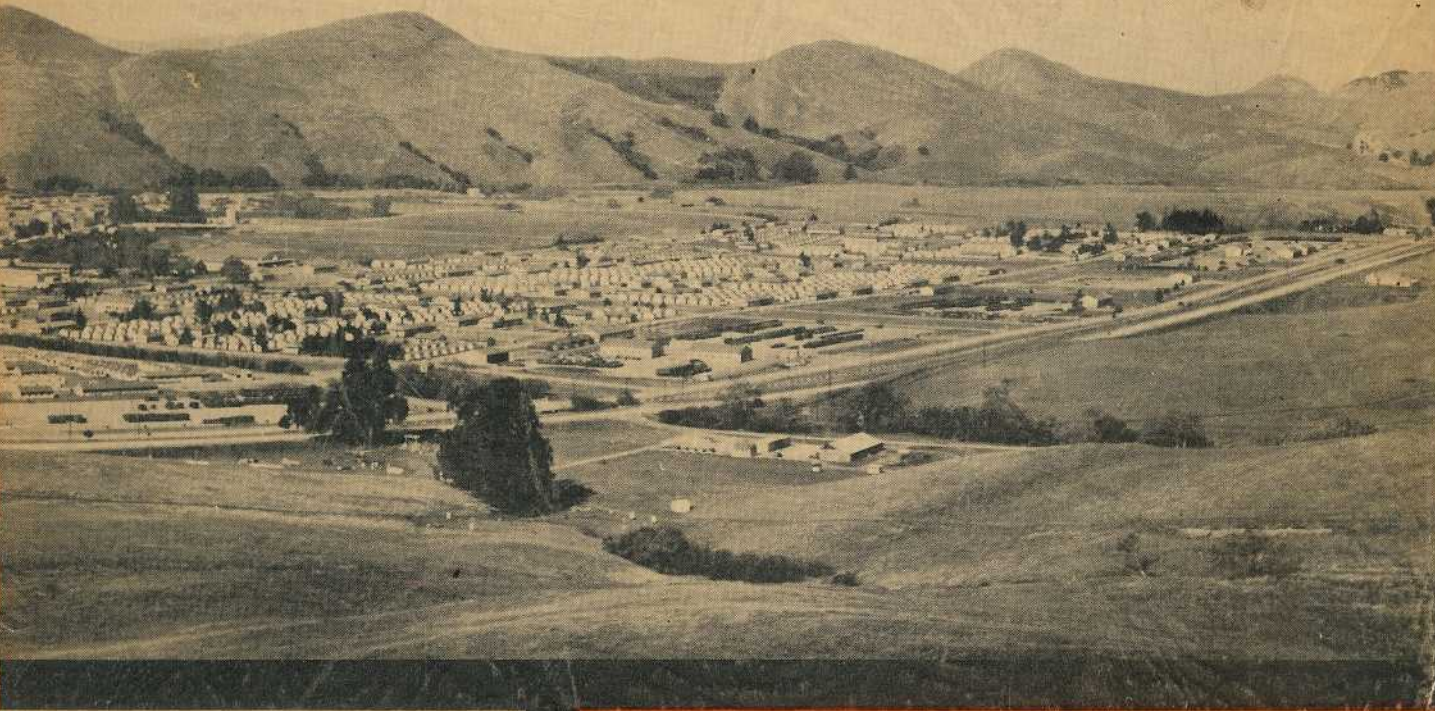
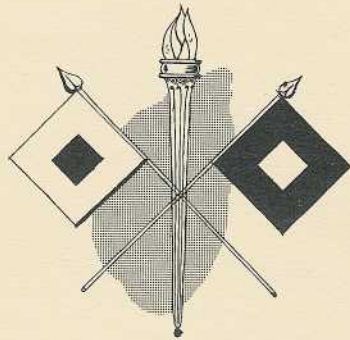


Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif.



Basic Training Group

**SOUTHWESTERN
S I G N A L
REPLACEMENT
TRAINING
CENTER**



**A Photostory
by LENNIE
of the
Basic Training Group
of the
Southwestern Signal Replacement
Training Center
Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif.**



a basic trainee . . .



**Can you put between the covers of a book,
the story of eight weeks of sweat,
of strange surroundings
slowly taking on the aspects of familiarity . . .
of different faces slowly becoming those of friends . . .
of barking voices and aching muscles . . .
of days spent in the burning sun
learning how to march and shoot . . .
of nights beneath the stars on your first week of bivouac . . .
of other days and nights in the classrooms and hutments
learning the how and why of Army life . . .
How can you put it into words and get it down on paper?
Can you capture with photographs the many, many facets
of the most important man in the Army—**

**In the following pages we've tried to present a composite life
of a basic trainee—Pvt. E-1—
at the Southwestern Signal Replacement Training Center
It won't represent what any one man went through
from the moment he stepped from the train, plane or bus
to the time he stood, after eight weeks of training,
his last formation with his Basic Training Company
and heard the words of congratulations, . . . "Well done!"
But, rather, it will be the story of any man who has passed
through the Basic Training Group
of the Replacement Training Center.
To be something he can have to look at in later years
and looking, recall those first weeks of Army life . . .
and recalling the general phases of training,
also remember the small, personal happenings
which took place while he was—**

a basic trainee.

**In the days of training
We learn something about the Signal Corps—**

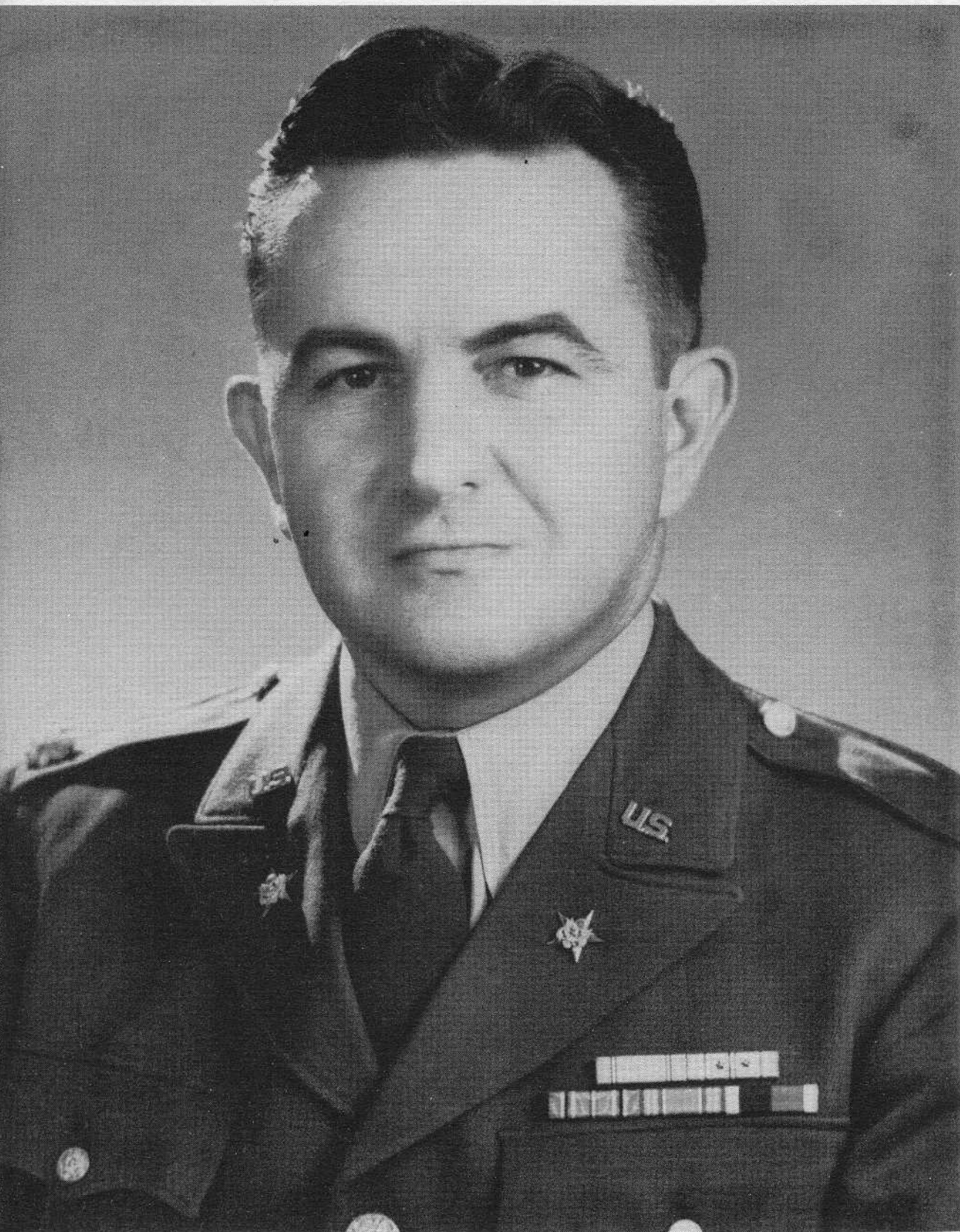


Maj. Gen. George I. Back, Chief Signal Officer

Who some of our leaders are—



Colonel R. P. Lyman
Commanding Officer
Southwestern Signal Corps Training Center and Camp San Luis Obispo, California



Lt. Col. Matthew C. Mautz
Commanding Officer,
Southwestern Signal Replacement Training Center



Lt. Col. James A. McClung
Commanding Officer, Basic Training Group

HEADQUARTERS
9603 TECHNICAL SERVICE UNIT
SOUTHWESTERN SIGNAL REPLACEMENT TRAINING CENTER
CAMP SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA

Trainees of the Basic Training Group:

As members of the Basic Training Group you are engaged in preparing yourselves for future life in the Army. At the same time, the period spent in basic training also is time spent in the Army. You must be a man among men, a soldier among other soldiers so that later you can be a part of a team working and fighting for freedom and victory.

All your training is aimed at making you capable of working and fighting. Your basic training is not easy. But the life of a soldier is not a life of ease.

In basic training you gain an appreciation of the life of an Infantry soldier. From this you can learn something which you should remember every minute you are in the Army: that you must be a soldier first and a technician second.

I am proud to be in command of the calibre of men who are being trained at the Replacement Training Center, and I am confident that the attitude shown in basic training, if carried by you through your Army careers, will result in the perpetuation of the high standards and ideals which other Signalmen have fought and died to uphold.

May God guide your training and protect you in combat.


MATTHEW C. MAUTZ
Lt. Col SigC
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS
BASIC TRAINING GROUP
SOUTHWESTERN SIGNAL REPLACEMENT TRAINING CENTER
CAMP SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA

To the Graduates of the Basic Training Group:

As Commanding Officer of the Basic Training Group, I have watched your progress with much interest and ever-increasing pride. The fine attitude and enthusiasm with which you have entered into all phases of training is commendable.

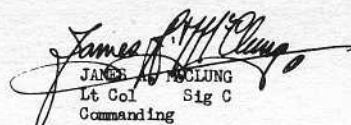
It has become apparent that you have the ability, the spirit and determination of the true American which is essential for developing into a good Signal Corps soldier.

The eight weeks of training which you have just completed constitutes only the first phase in the transition from civilians to qualified soldiers. Much more training and schooling lies before you.

I am confident that you will continue the splendid work which you have displayed in the past in accomplishing your goals.

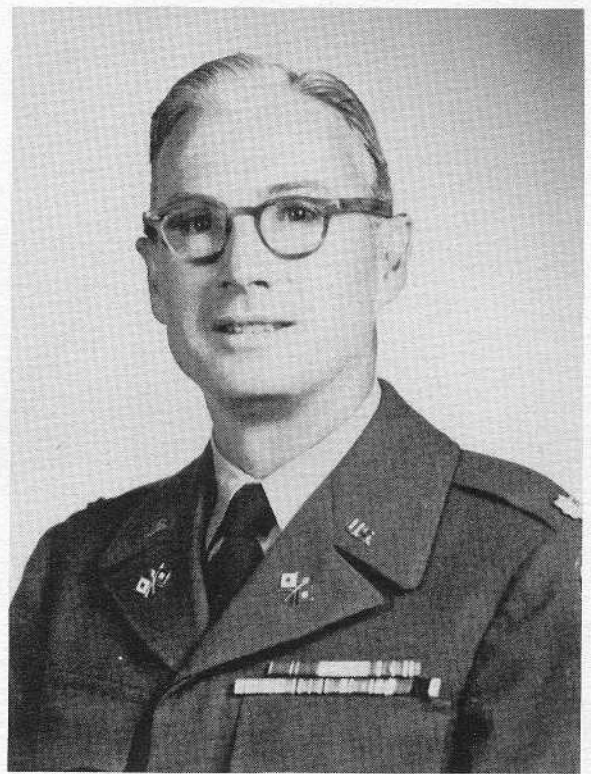
You will recall that during your orientation, I urged you, as basic soldiers, to do your utmost to learn well, and to improve yourselves in every way so that you will be able to serve your country as a proficient soldier, with Pride, Distinction and Honor.

As you look back on your eight weeks in the Basic Training Group, I believe that you can say with me that you have done your utmost. To all of you, my congratulations and good luck in the future.


JAMES H. POLJUNG
Lt Col Sig C
Commanding



Lt. Col. Stanley M. Mix
S3 (Plans and Training)



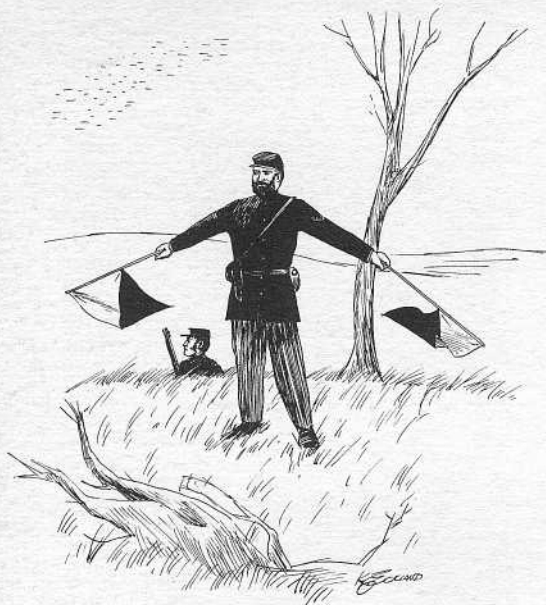
Maj. James J. McKenna
Executive Officer



Capt. B. D. Chatnet
Commanding, 1st Bn.



Maj. Carl E. Reed
Commanding, 2nd Bn.



How the Signal Corps began—

Born in the Union Army during the Civil War, to meet the demands of McClellan and other generals, the Signal Corps has grown from a visual and telegraphic unit to the modern electronic giant of signal communication.

When Samuel F. B. Morse invented the telegraph he opened the way for a great many advances in military communications. Not only was the telegraph itself soon proven to be the swiftest means of communication available to commanders, but the dot and dash system also opened new vistas of signalling.

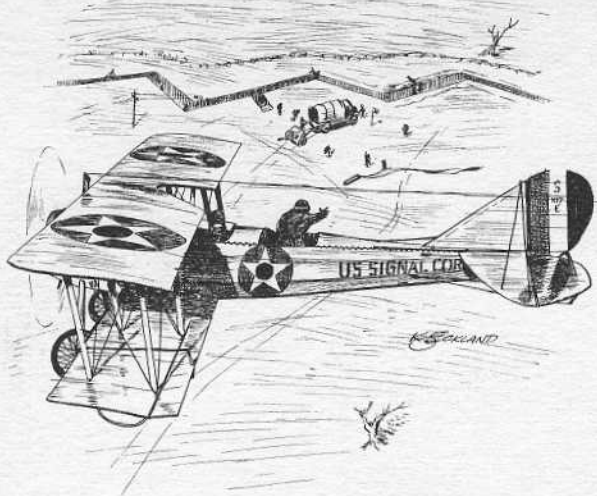
Major Albert J. Myer, a doctor with the Union Army, used the Morse dots and dashes and devised a means of signalling with lights at night and flags by day.

By the close of the Civil War, the use of the Morse code transmitted by flags and lights and the use of telegraphic "trains" had proven so successful that they were copied by the German Army, and a Signal Corps, with Major Myer as the first Chief Signal Officer, had been established in the U. S. Army.

But the old standbys remained . . . the messengers of Alexander, Hannibal and Caesar, the messengers and pigeons of Genghis Khan . . . these continued in use while others were added. The telephone was used first by the United States Army in the Spanish-American War. The wireless telegraph, which appeared on the horizon at the close of the Nineteenth Century, was developed rapidly and saw wide use in the first World War.

But as communications improved, new complications arose. The wireless was not immune to interception and the science of cryptography was called upon to conceal and reveal messages.





Then in World War I, the opposing armies required communications systems as complex as those of large cities and infinitely more varied. Lack of communications has been blamed for the defeat of the Russians by Von Hindenburg in East Prussia, and poor communications led to the halting of the advance of the right wing of the German Army through Belgium and Northern France.

With the stabilization of front lines in trench warfare, the telephone came into wider use, and another new device also was employed. The airplane was brought into service by the Signal Corps Aviation Section . . . an aviation section which now has become the huge and formidable U. S. Air Force.

After World War I, research in the Army Signal Corps centered mainly on the improvement of radio communications. The teletypewriter was incorporated into the wire communication system and field telephone equipment was improved.

Then came World War II and the research and development paid off when the Signal Corps met the vastly increased demands of the commanders by spinning a web of communications around the world with radio-telephone, radio-teletype, motor and airplane messengers.

What it Means Today—

Today, the Signal Corps continues its program of research and development and the training of specialists to install, maintain and operate the many kinds of communication equipment available to the commander.

Radar, a World War II baby, is growing into an electronic giant. Radio equipment continues to be improved. Facsimile and television are being adapted for field use.

The silent war in the electronic laboratory goes on . . . a fight for superiority every bit as earnest as the Korean campaign.

It is not inconceivable that the struggle against forces seeking to enslave the free world will be decided by the quality of our electronic research and the ability of our Signal Corps technicians.





Mount Cerro Remaldo, Camp San Luis Obispo

and learned, too, about Camp San Luis Obispo,

the Southwestern Signal Corps Training Center

The site of Camp San Luis Obispo, one of the finest training areas in the United States due to the variety of terrain and even climate, was obtained by lease originally as a National Guard Summer camp by the State of California.

When war clouds gathered over the world in 1940, work of expanding the camp was begun. The work was finished in 1941 and California's 40th National Guard Division began training. Also in 1941, the camp was Federalized and other Army divisions including the 6th, 7th, 35th, 81st, 86th, 96th, 97th, and 104th, received training here.

The camp remained active until June, 1946, when it was returned to the State of California.

In December, 1951, Camp San Luis Obispo again was federalized and the Southwestern Signal Corps Training Center was activated during the same month. It was established at Camp San Luis Obispo under control of the Chief Signal Officer. Thus it became the third Signal Corps Center in operation, the others being at Fort Monmouth, N. J. and Camp Gordon, Ga.

Mission of the Southwestern Signal Corps Training Center is the training of Signal personnel. Basic military training and certain technical courses, including pole line construction, teletypewriter and telephone switchboard operation, signal message clerk and telephone installer repairman classes, are conducted by the Basic Training and Technical Training Groups of the Southwestern Signal Replacement Training Center. Unit training for the various Signal Corps organizations is under the direction of the 505th Signal Group.



Technical Training

Leadership Training



and the Southwestern Signal Replacement Training Center

In the RTC, basic training is conducted for the first eight weeks in subjects which change the trainee from civilian to soldier. The subject matter includes training for living in the field and the use of infantry weapons.

The second eight weeks of basic training is spent in the RTC's Technical Training Group, (TTG) where the soldier receives training in one of five Signal Corps specialties. And at TTG the trainee continues to learn to be a soldier.

The term "Soldier First, Then Technician" applies throughout the trainee's stay at the RTC. He must always be a soldier, even while learning a technical skill. He is taught that his primary mission is that of a soldier. Because the Army has found that, in combat, the man who has learned to be a good soldier will also perform as a technician to the full extent of his capabilities.

In addition to the BTG and TTG, the RTC also operates the Leaders' Course which trains outstanding soldiers as future leaders of small Signal units. This training can be put to use in Signal units where the Leaders' Course graduate may become a non-commissioned officer in charge of a message center, a wire construction team, a radio team, or one of the many other small units which must operate to provide communications in combat.

The RTC also provides the administration, including messing and housing, for students at the Southwestern Signal School.

A brief chronology of the first year of BTG is:

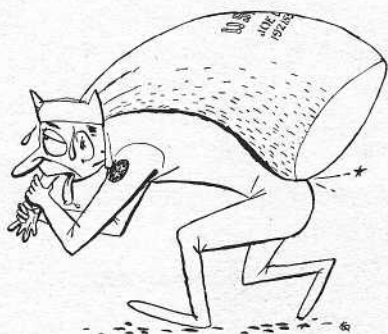
- 1 February 1952 First trainees assigned.
- 11 February Company 1, BTG begins eight-week training period.
- 22 March BTG holds first battalion-size parade.
- 5 April Company 1 completes training. Company 4 forms first Post Honor Guard.
- 12 April BTG holds first regimental review.
- 24 May BTG's Post Honor Guard participates in Fiesta parade in San Luis Obispo. Guard is so outstanding after only five weeks of training that local newspaper describes it as "crack MP outfit."
- 2 June BTG completes first training cycle with graduation of Company 10.
- 20 August Lt. Col. James A. McClung named commanding officer, BTG.
- 1 February 1953 Approximately 6,500 soldiers complete training at BTG in one year.



**When we got off the bus at Camp San Luis Obispo
we were fresh from the Induction Center.**

**We still wondered what it was all about . . .
how we'd be treated . . .
what we'd be doing . . .**

**The sergeant checked our names on the roster
and assigned us to a company.
They gave us bedding and equipment
and put us in a hutment—
five men to a hut.**

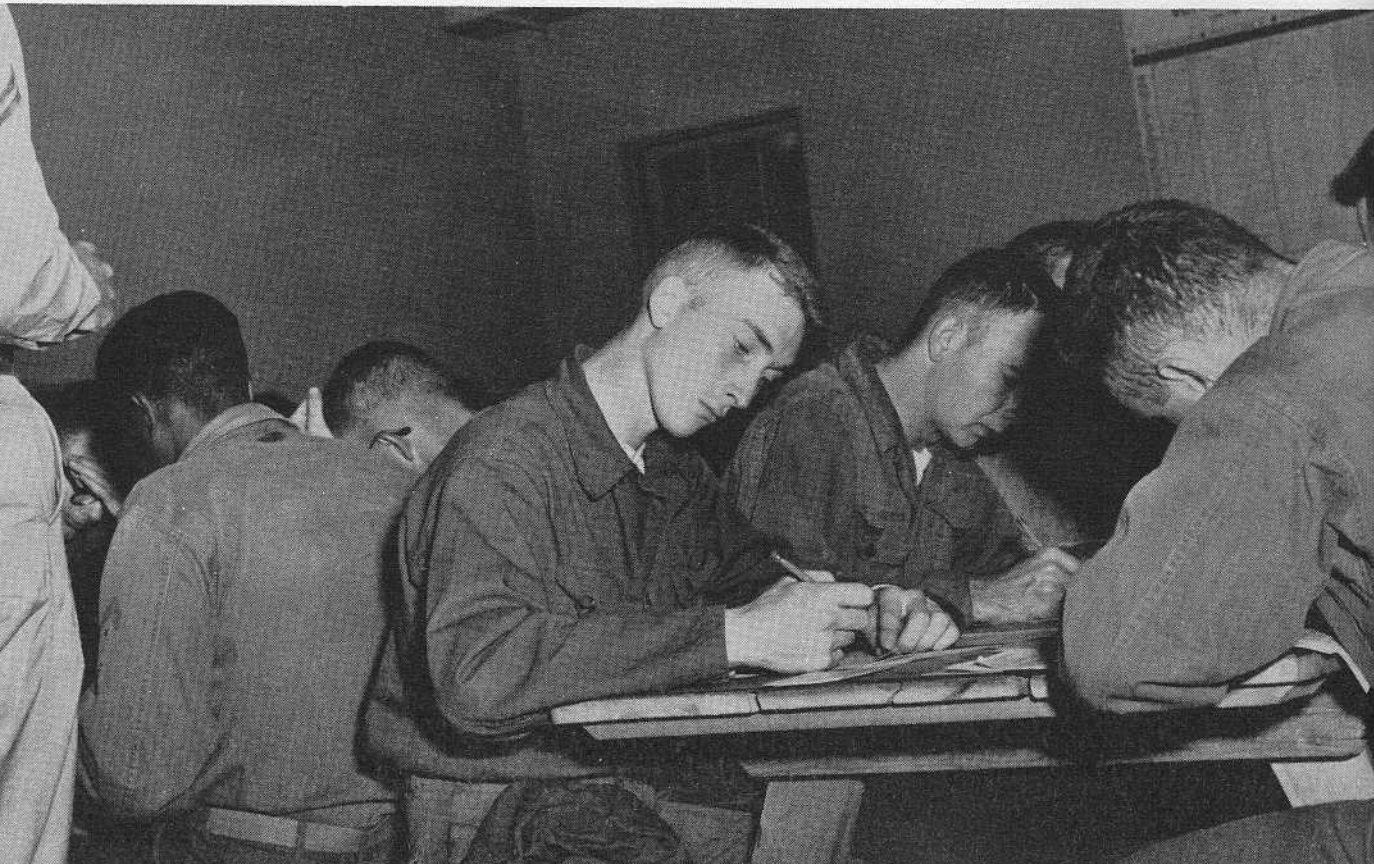
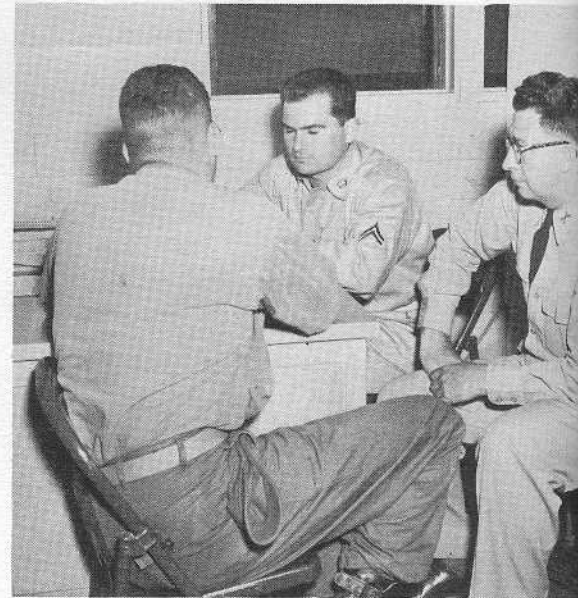




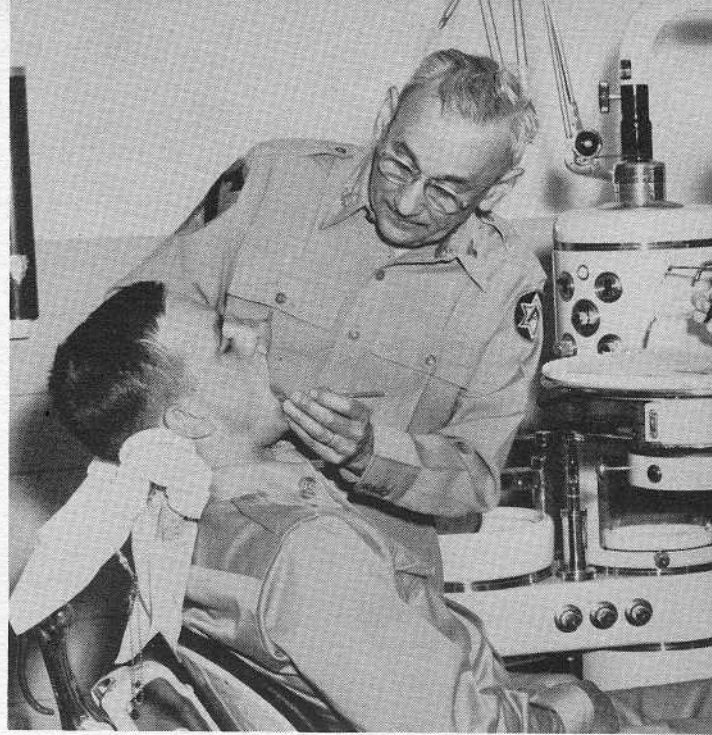


For a few days we were "Processed" . . .
days they call "pre-cycle" . . .

**We went to Classification and Assignment
(they call it C & A) for tests and interviews
and had our records checked.**



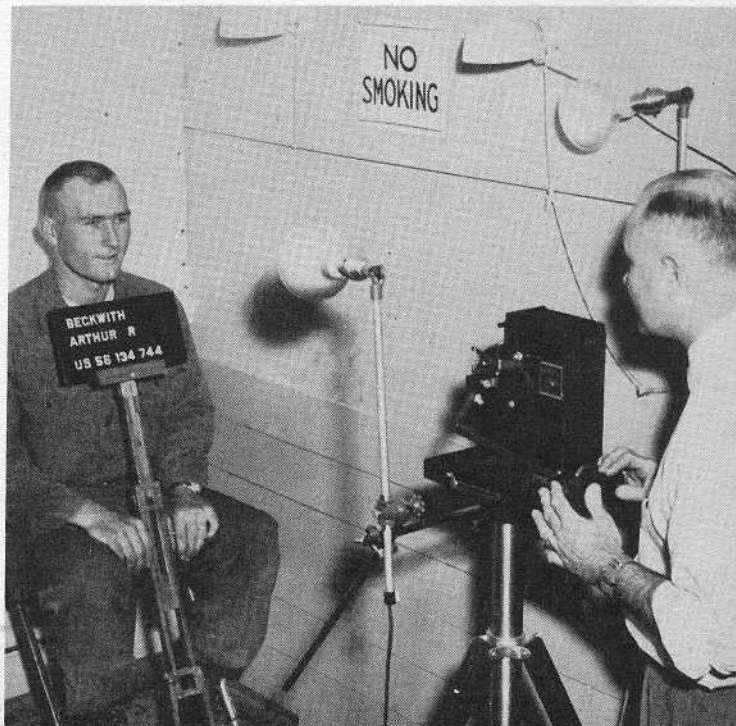
Then to the dental clinic.



**Worked around the Post on all sorts of things . . .
cutting grass . . . hauling gravel . . . gathering
brush . . .
preparing for the eight weeks of solid training ahead.**



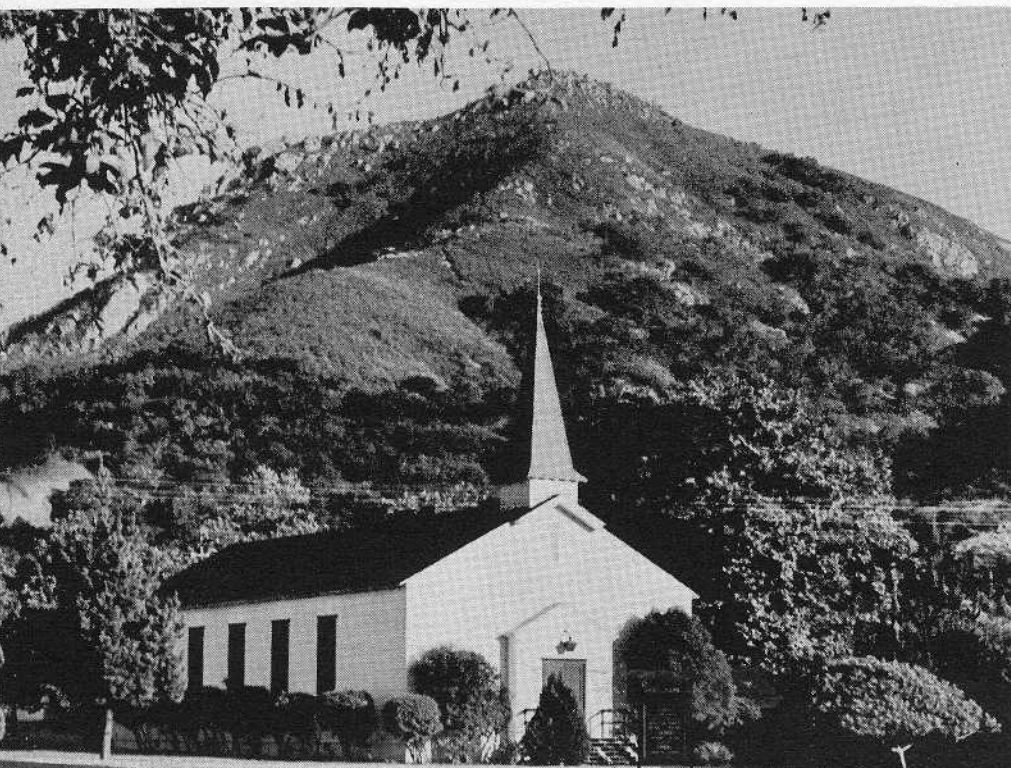
**Had our photos taken . . . with a short haircut . . .
for our ID cards.**





The "Shrine of the Centurion" and the old adobe building are landmarks familiar to all soldiers who train at Camp San Luis Obispo...the shrine, a wartime monument erected in 1941 by Guardsmen.

Over the week end, services at the Post Chapel





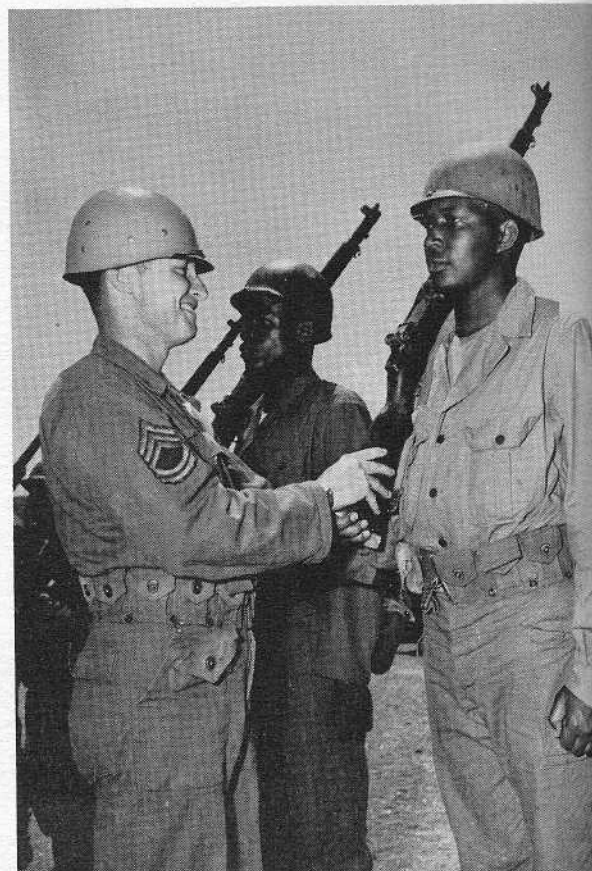
The adobe structure, a memory of a bygone day when the camp site was part of a sprawling ranch. Situated across from the Post Theatre, the attractive spot was spared when the new portion of the camp was constructed. Today it stands in quiet contrast to the military activity in the area.

... a visit to the PX





and basic training begins in earnest





**The first few days are over . . .
and dazedly we begin to feel again . . .
Some of the numbness wears off . . .
and then, the sergeant's shrill whistle blows again . . .**

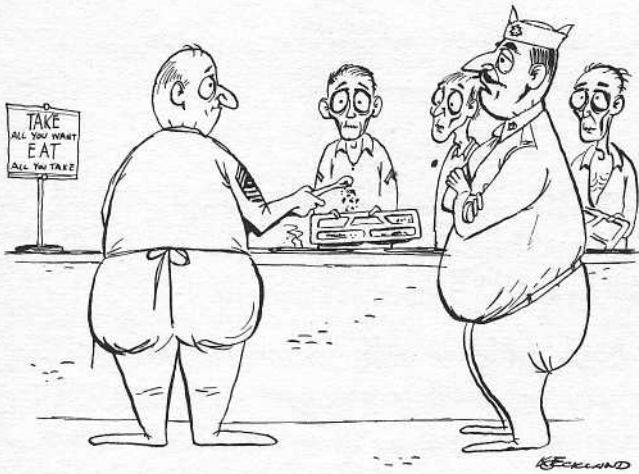




get shots

get paid

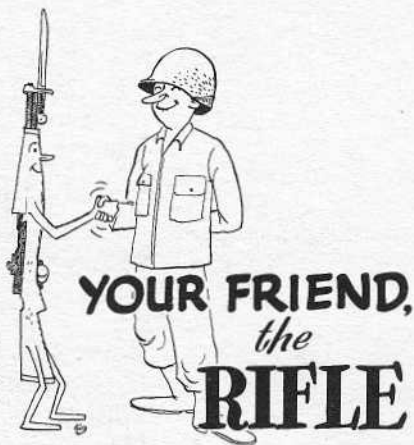




**cooks and KPs ...
Napoleon was right.**

**"YOU CAN GIVE CRENSHAW A LITTLE
MORE HE JUST MADE CORPORAL!"**





Receive it with misgivings—

a cold impersonal piece of steel and wood. A constant companion during the next eight weeks, it will have to be cleaned well and often.

Back in the hutment, a closer look reveals its intricacy and solid construction. The other men around you all have a rifle too and most of them feel the same as you, slightly in awe of it and just a little worried about whether they can learn how to handle it . . .

Then in a few days you are learning how to do the manual of arms . . .

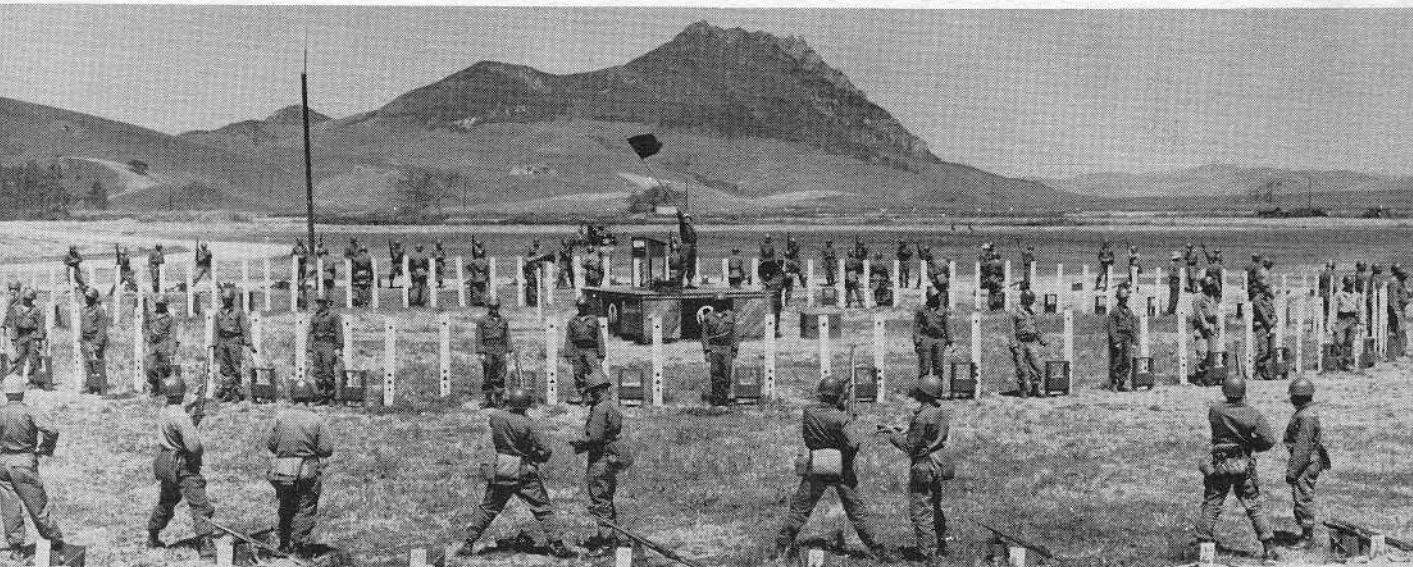
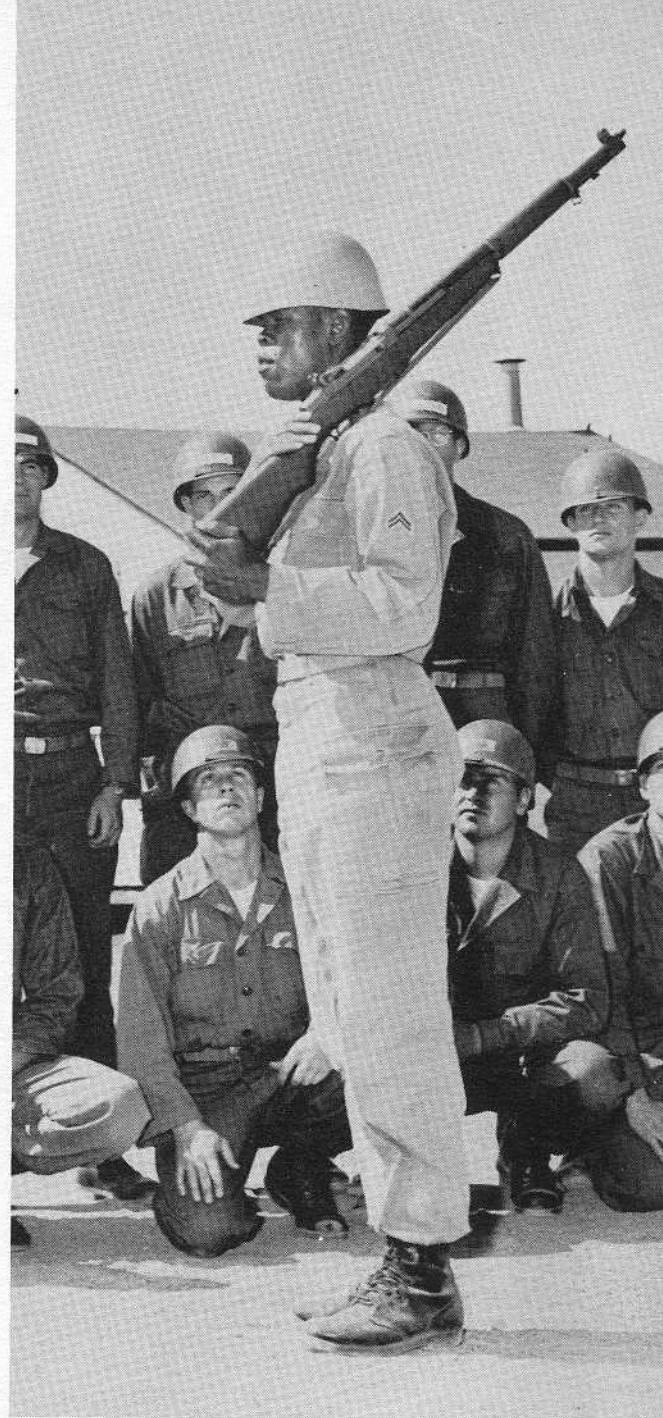
A sergeant who handles the rifle as easily and familiarly as Stan Musial swings a baseball bat, teaches you how to come to port arms, right shoulder and present arms and parade rest . . .

A corporal just back from Korea tells you what it means to keep the rifle clean and shows you how to strip it down for cleaning . . . Later in the hut you spend time on the rifle, cleaning and handling it . . . And when you draw a bead on the pin-up across the room and whistle and say, "Not bad," you mean the M-1.



At the PRI circle, the sand dirties the rifle and you feel a little sad . . . not because you've got to clean it . . . but because the grit can harm the rifle.

On the range you get a string of bull's-eyes and you pat your old Garand lovingly. "She's a sweetheart," you say and you know now that it's a full-fledged partnership. You guard it against rust, dust and abuse and it lays them in the groove for you. You know that in combat it will do all you expect it to. A bond of mutual respect seems to pull you two together . . . you and your friend . . . the Rifle.



at home on the range

The sun beats down on the long line of rifles
poised awaiting the word to fire.

The voice from the control tower,
crisp and cool, intones

"Ready on the right?"

"Ready on the left?"

"Ready on the firing line?"

Bodies tense and all the thing the
instructors have said fade from memory for a
moment.

Then "The flag is up . . ."

"The flag is waving . . ."

"The flag is down!"

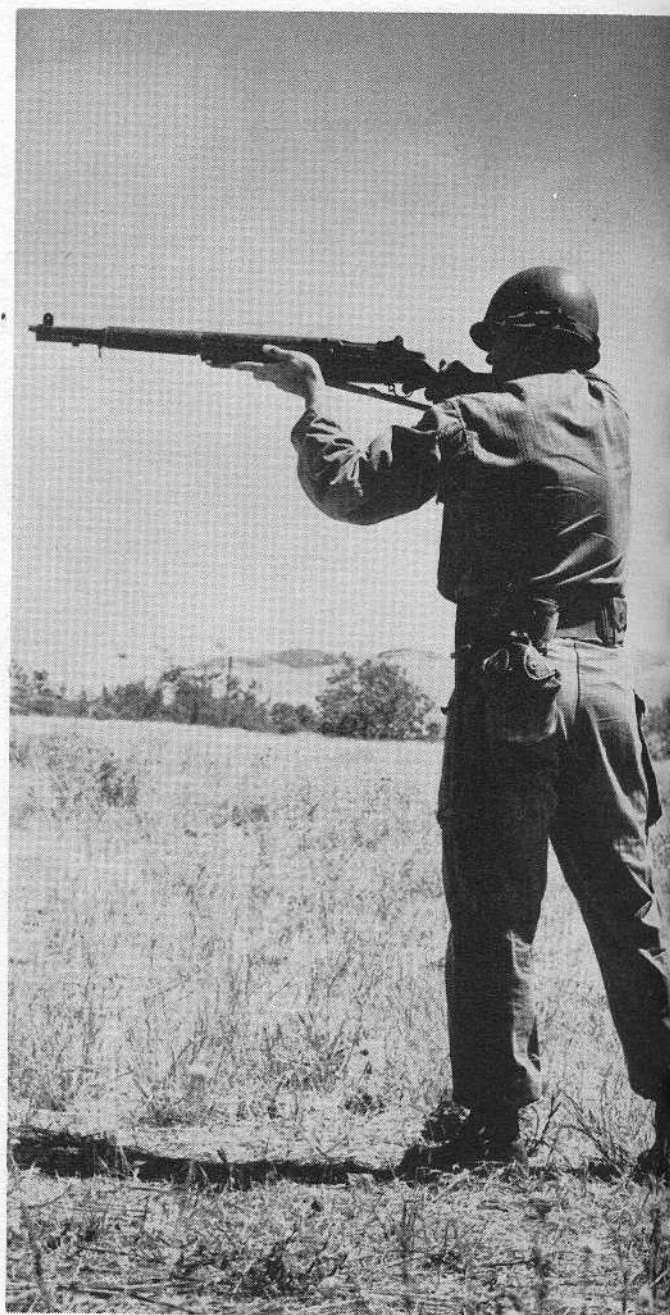
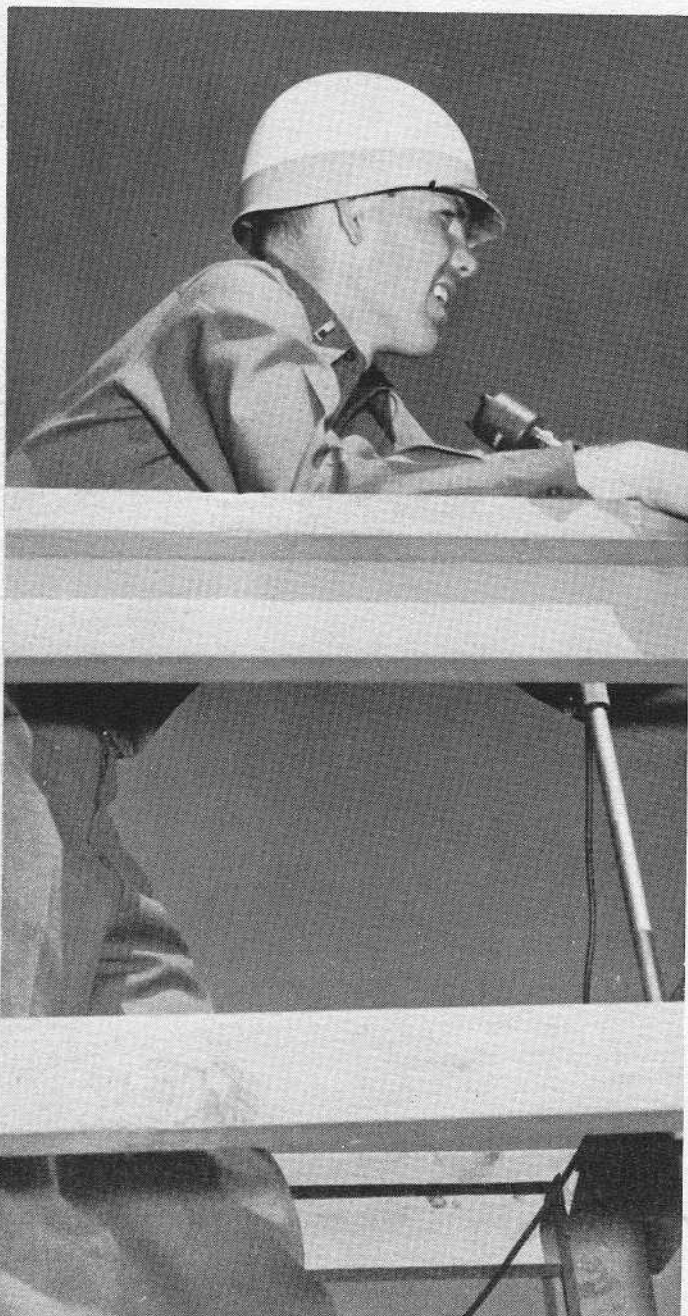
And the carefully drilled movements come naturally
as the rifle blasts a bullet at the target.



ready on the firing line...



**"The flag is up . . .
The flag is waving
The flag is down!"**

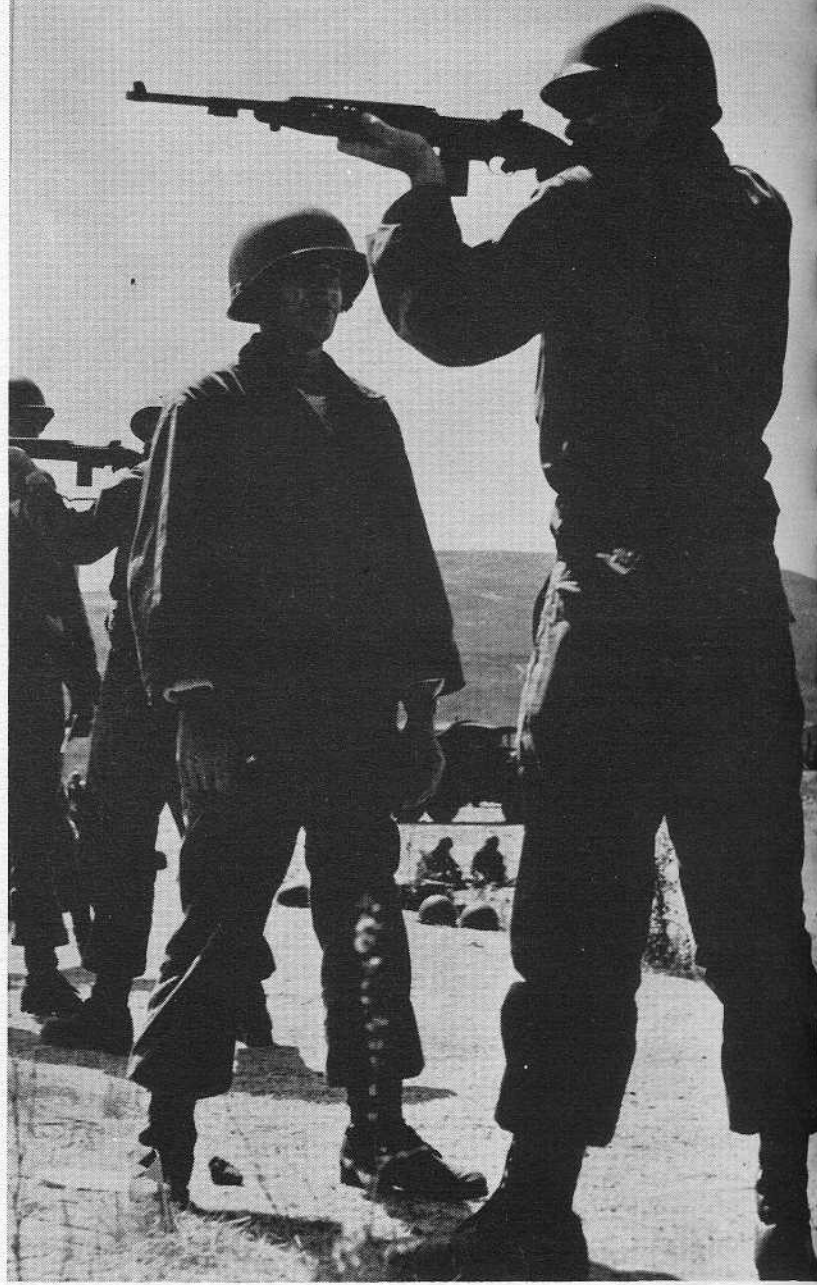




Looking at the results . . .



Carbine





**On the transition range
Instructors show us how**



**And then one day they
tell us to do it alone**

**and we're on our own—
for record!**





**Through the full days
we learn how to use
rifle grenades
and gas masks**



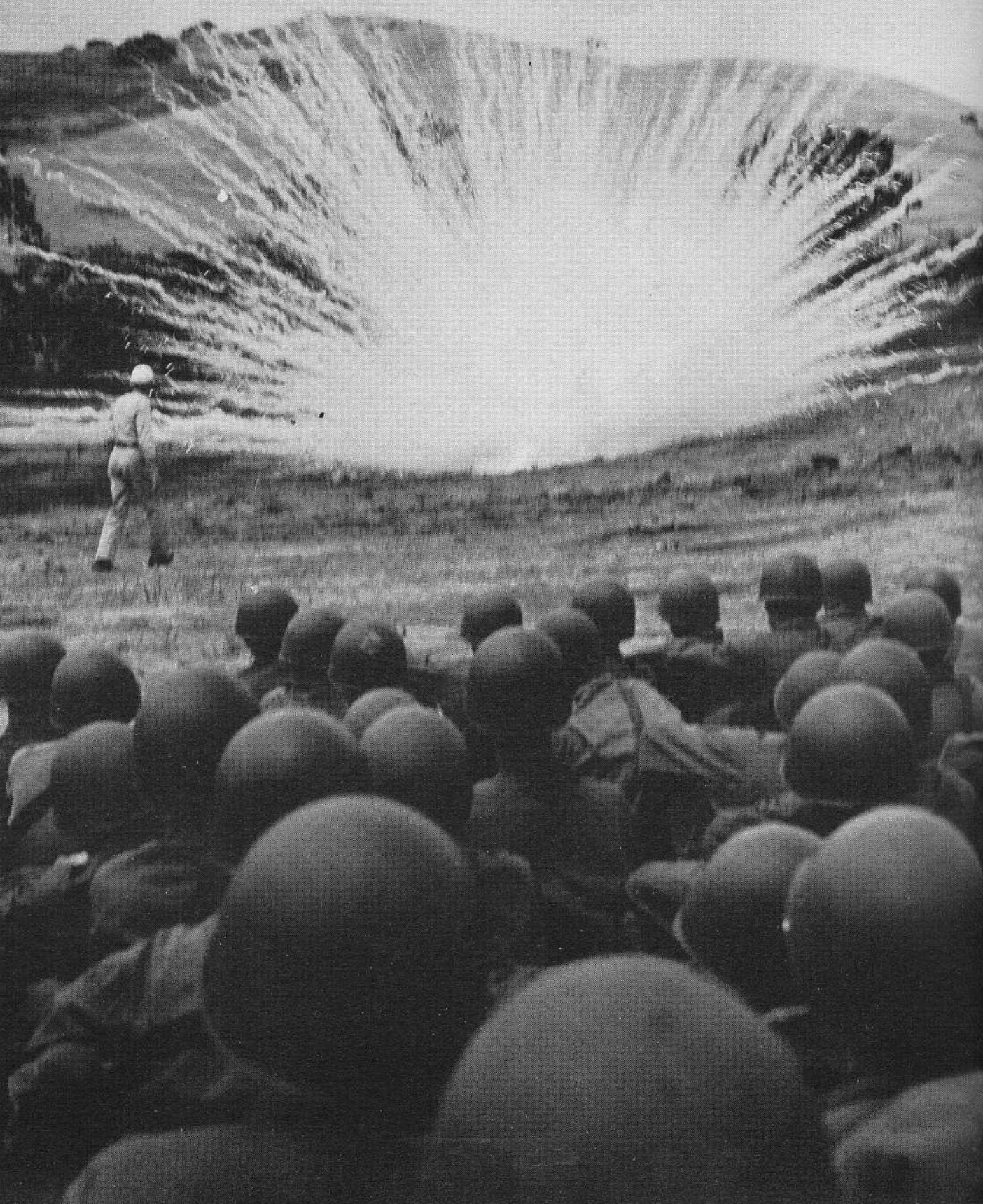


the rocket launcher

light machine gun



Chemical warfare



Mines



—and booby traps

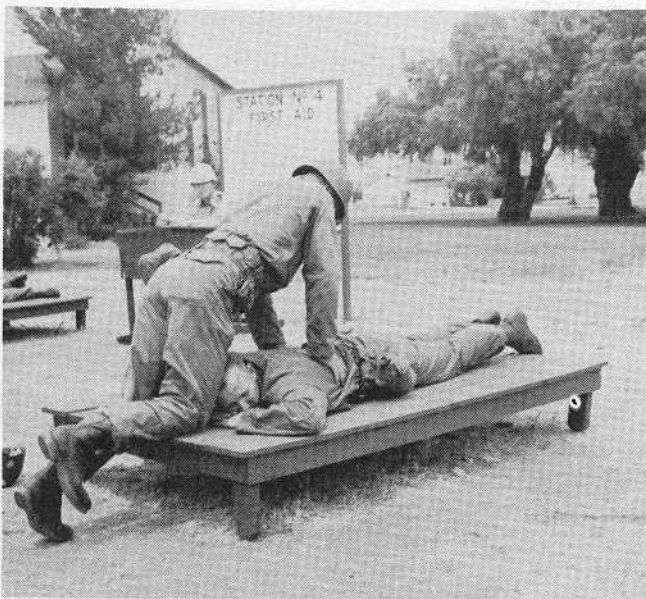




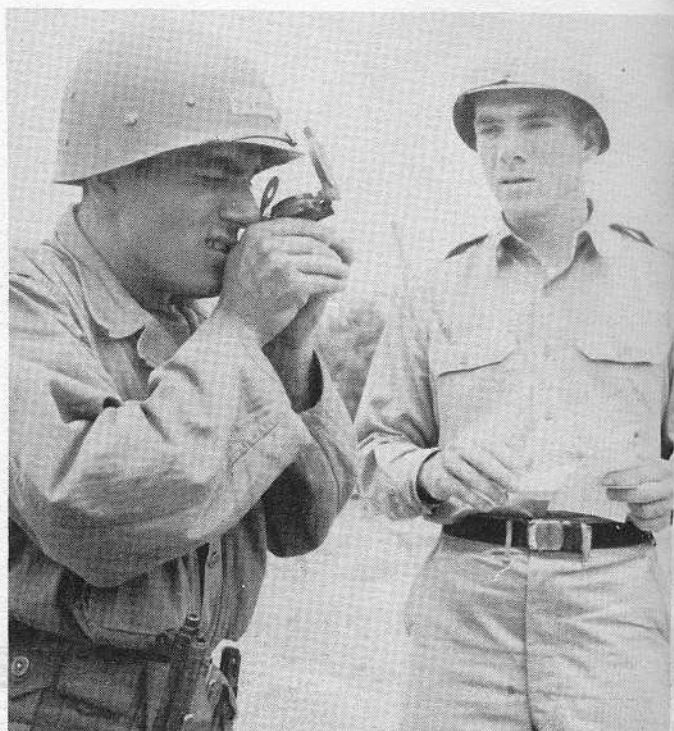
**camouflage
and concealment**



**Signal communications
and first aid**



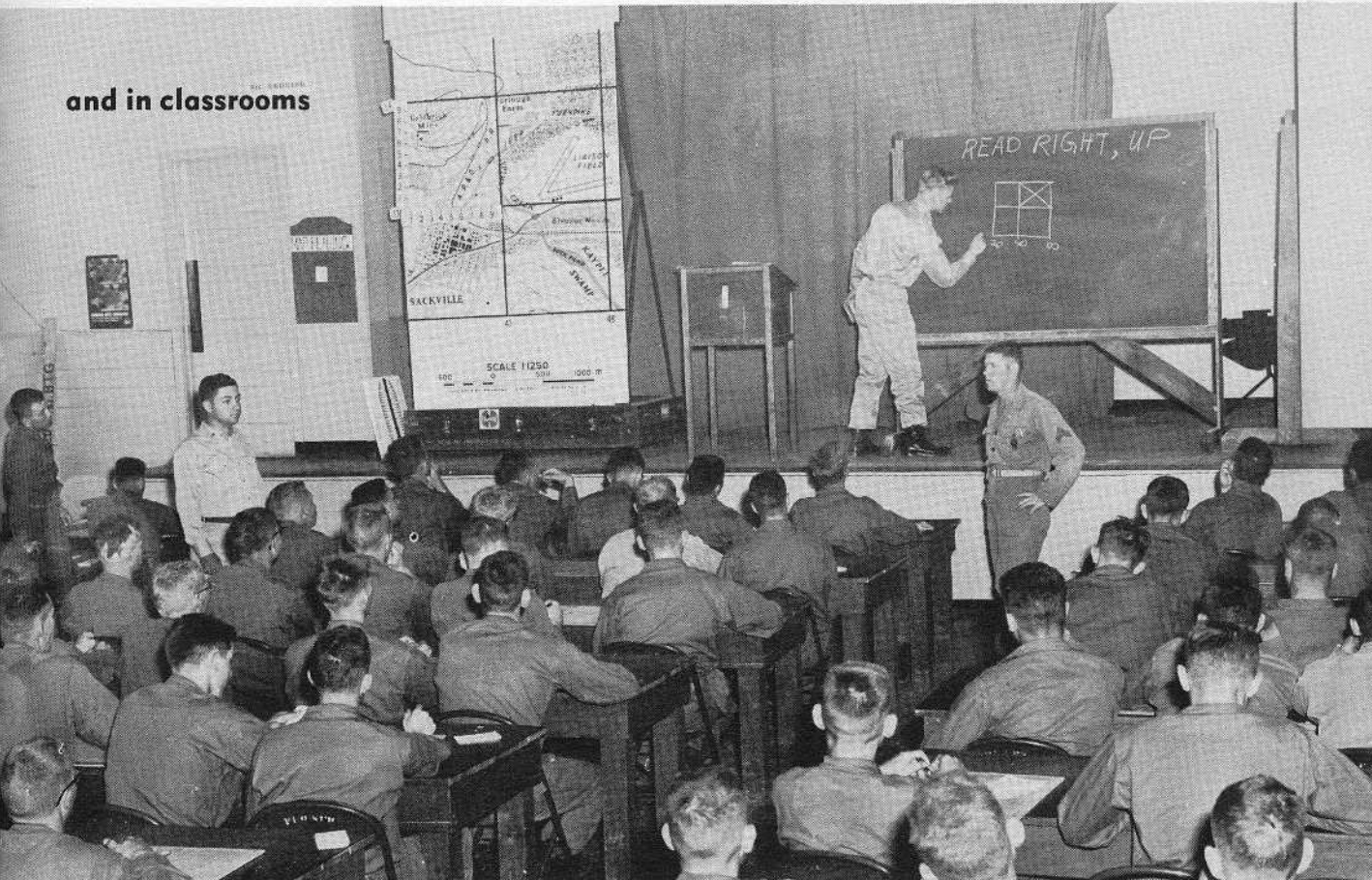
**compass and
map reading**



attend classes - - - outdoors



and in classrooms



Run the confidence courses



hands, feet and a prayer





look, one hand yet!



look, no hands!



See Hollywood stars
at the Post Theater



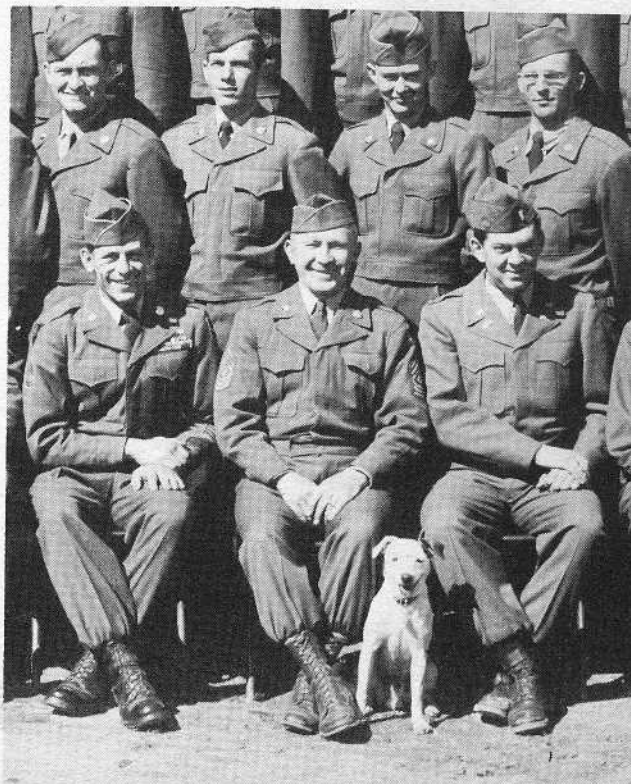


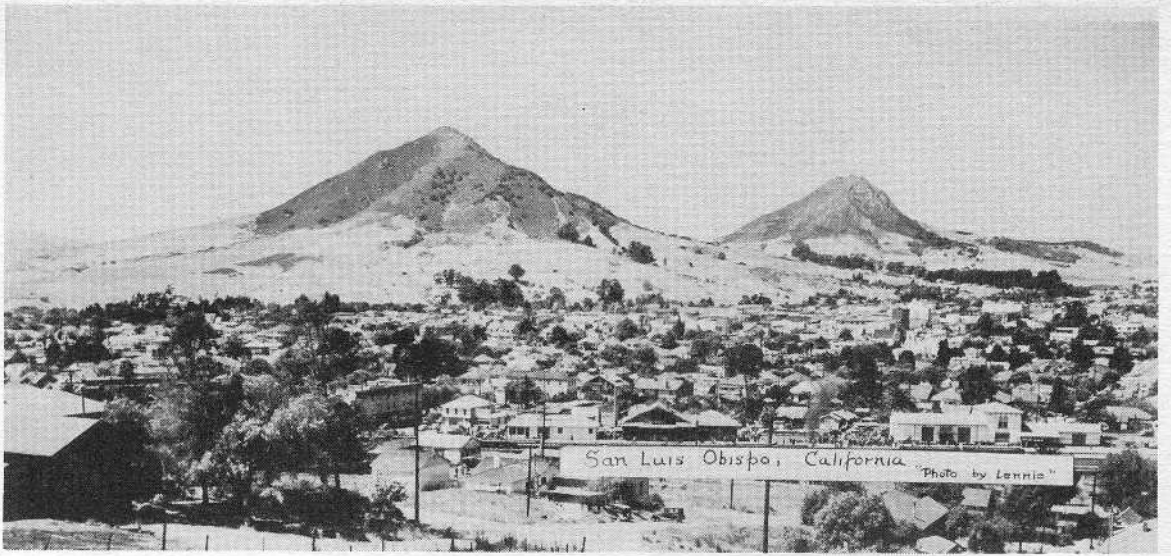
Or a show put on by the boys at Camp

Even the dogs can act!

When one basic company had a group picture taken it was a serious business, even for the first soldier's dog.

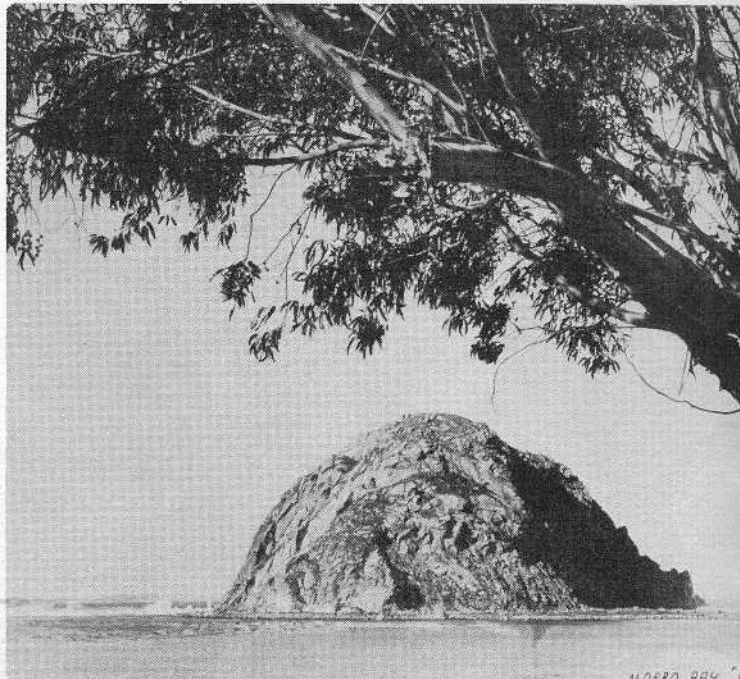
Then the photog said, "Smile" ... everyone did ... including pooch.





**And we can visit
San Luis Obispo**

or look at scenery at Morro Bay





go swimming in the Post pool

or look at scenery and swim at Avila Beach





play pingpong in the dayroom



**or go to a dance
at the service club**



play volleyball

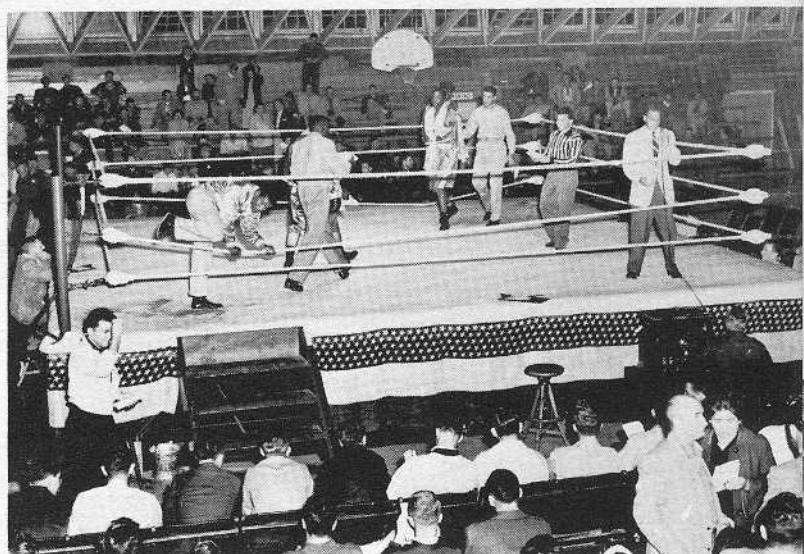


watch a ball game

go to the library



**or relax by concentrating
on a game of checkers or chess**



or watch boxing bouts





...then we go on bivouac





--- learning to live in the field





bayonets

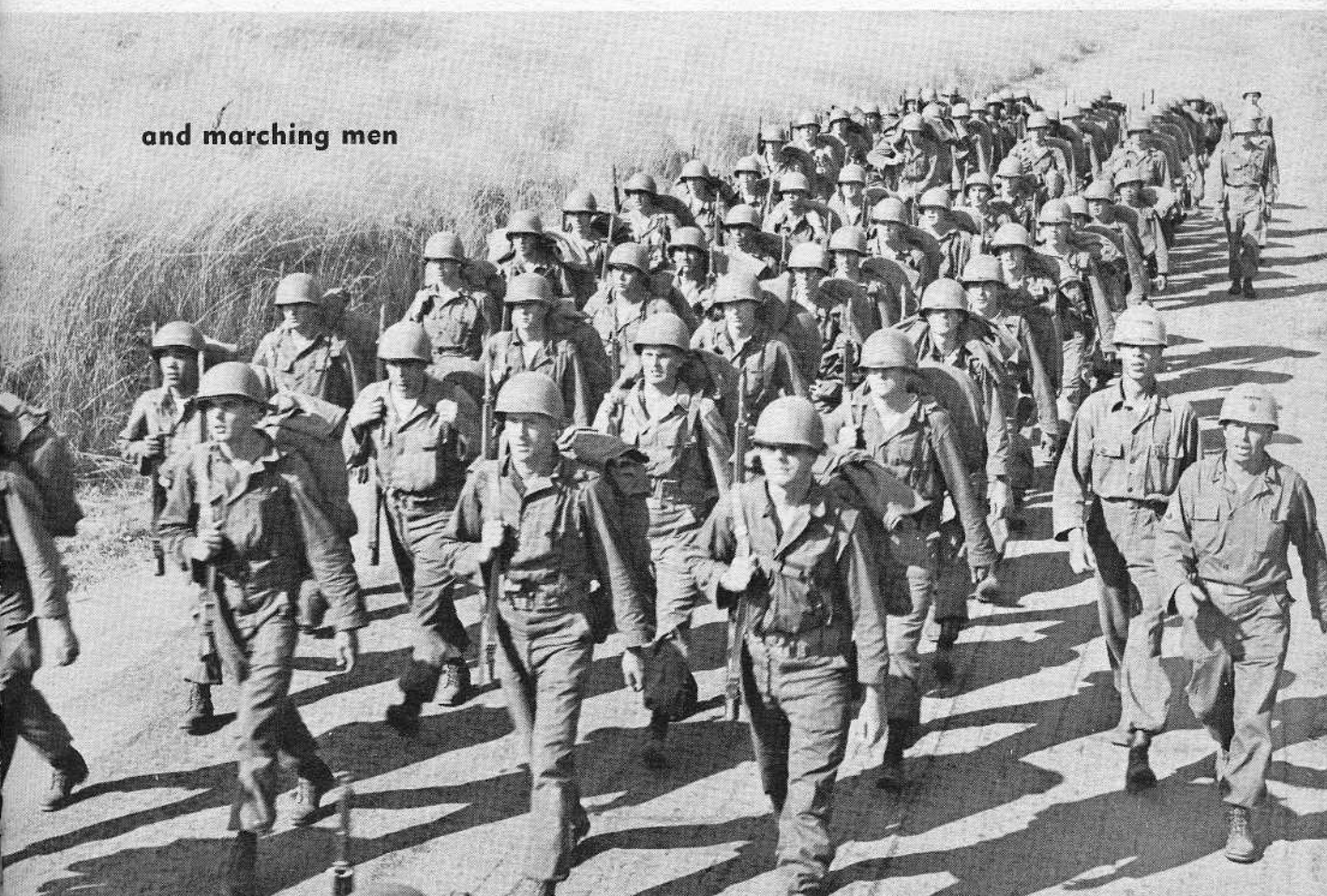


and bombs

mechanized menace

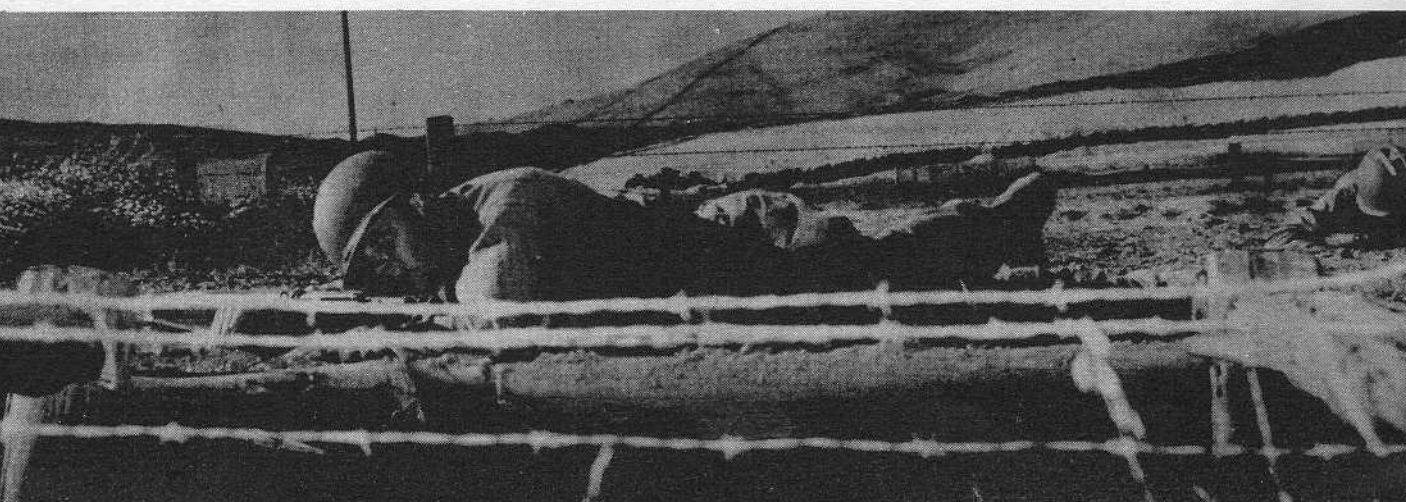


and marching men





**get the feel of the real thing
on the infiltration course**





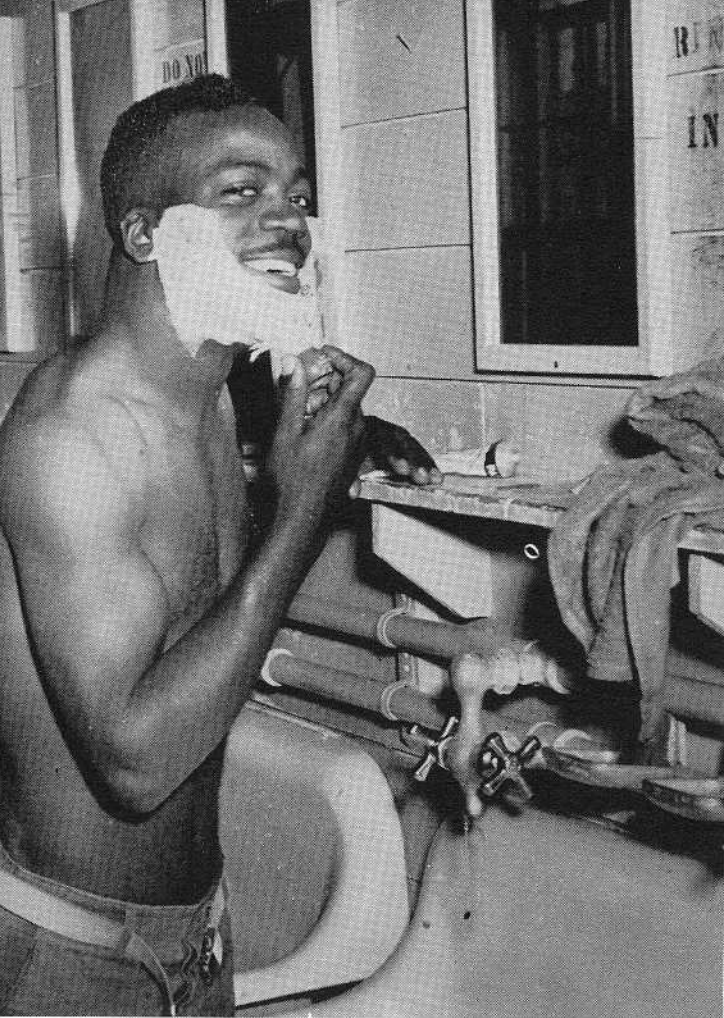
and the close combat course





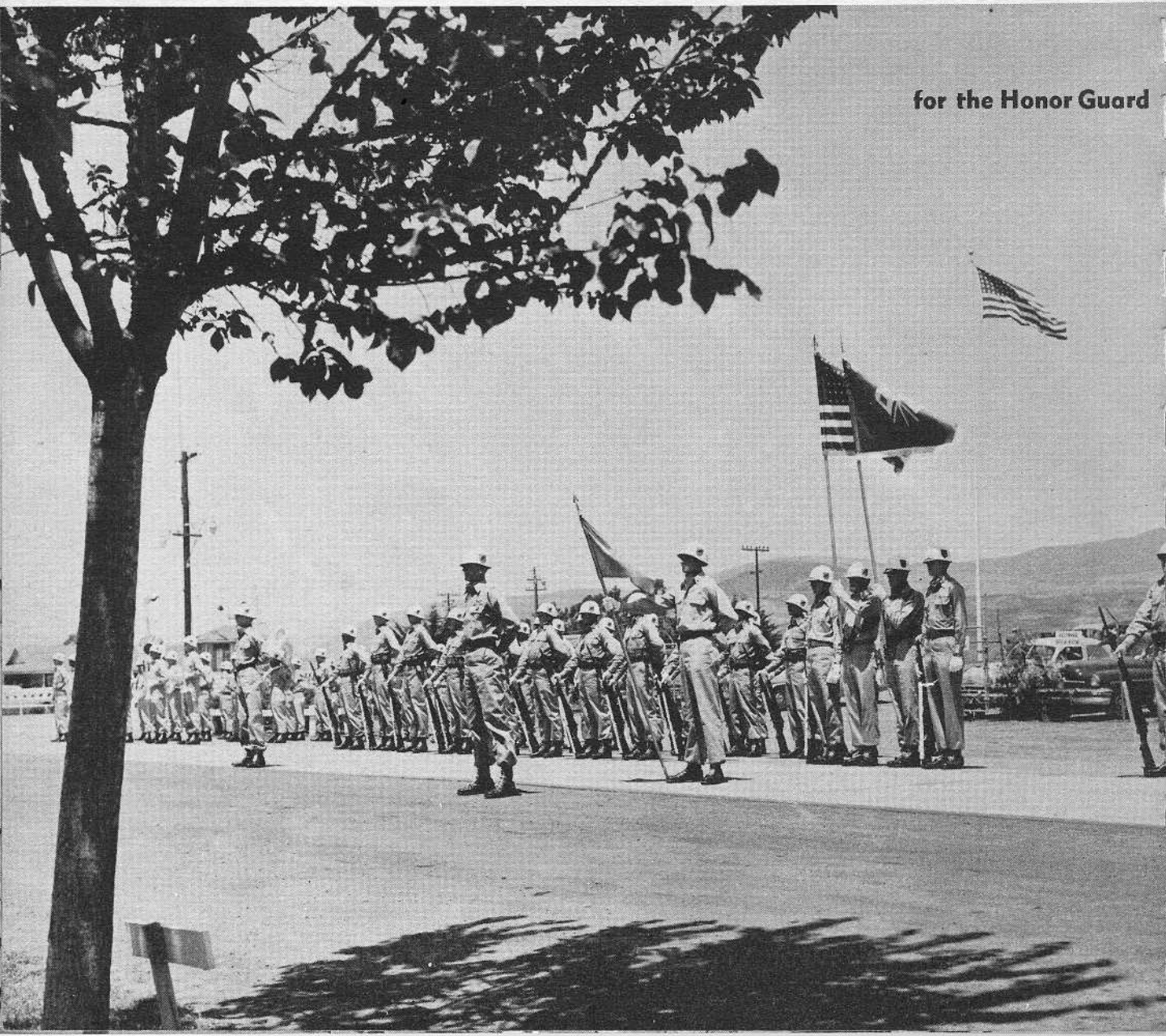
we take our final proficiency tests





and prepare

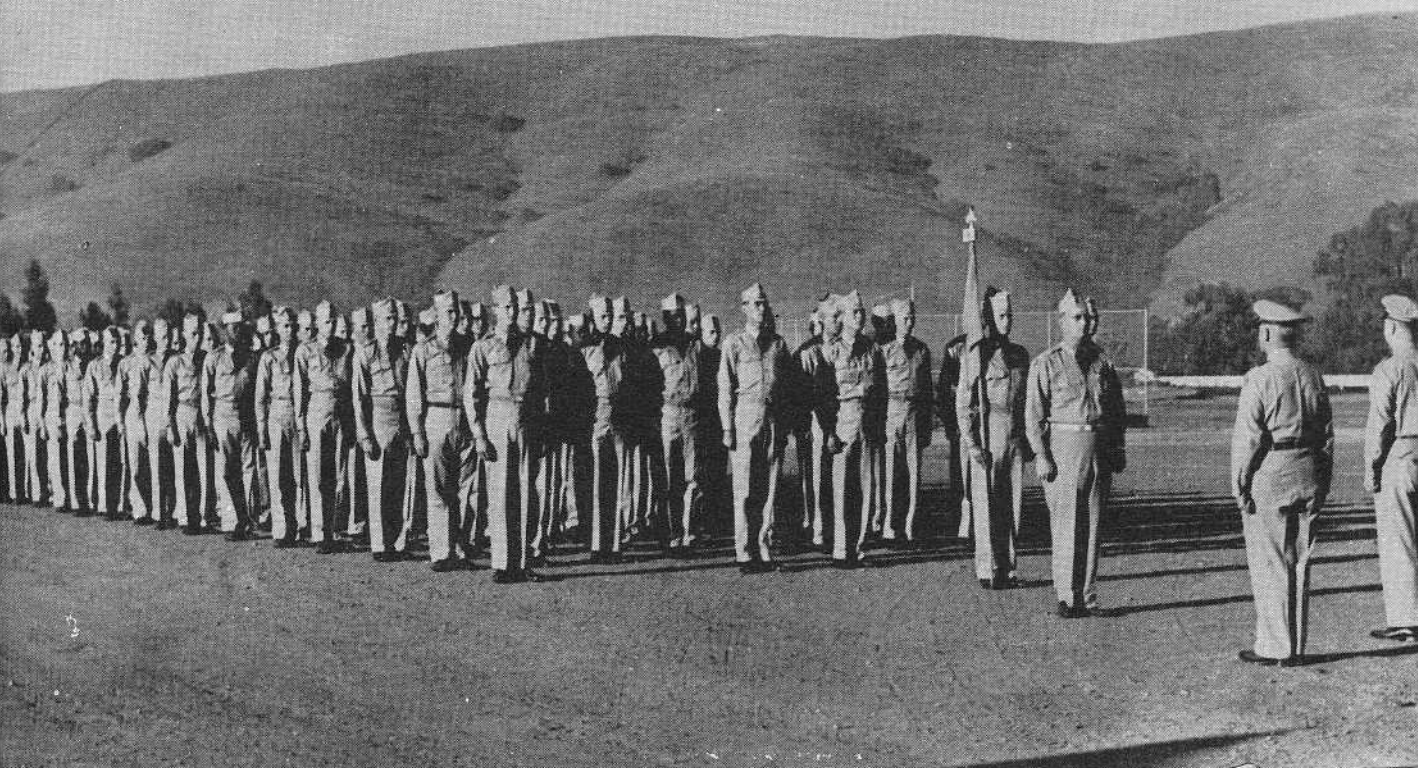




for the Honor Guard



and for our final ceremony



**The first eight weeks are over
and muscles which protested against the strain
of push-ups and pull-ups
now are hardened and firm.**

**The rifle that was strange to the touch
now is a familiar friend;
The equipment, a duffle-bagful that seemed
awkward and snarled, is now as easy to wear
as an old sports jacket;**

**The talk of first aid, field sanitation,
compass points and maps, squad tactics, guard duty,
bivouac and bayonets, mines and booby traps,
all the many subjects learned in the eight weeks
now begin to sink deeper into the mind as we realize
that it may have been tough, but then again . . .**

We made it!

**And we look forward to the next phase,
recalling the phrase from the orientation lecture
"Soldiers first, then technicians."**

**And so some of us will go to Technical Training Group,
some to Leaders' Course . . .**

others to the Southwestern Signal School . . .

**the process of breaking up what has become
a unit with a heart begins
and "goodbyes" are said . . .
Basic training, the first eight weeks in
the process of making a soldier, is ended.**

We made it!

Snapshots and Autographs



PHOTO BY LENNIE

