

As You Were

Not Regulation

IN 1943, after my first month of training with the U.S. Navy's Waves at Smith College in Massachusetts, the Navy arranged a dance by bringing in Navy cadets from Amherst College.

We were paired up and were to spend the whole evening with that one partner. The next day, an orchid was delivered to me from my cadet. Of course, I couldn't wear it on my uniform, so I placed it in a glass of water on a table next to my bunk.

The following day, when officers inspected the rooms, our room got demerits. The reason listed: orchid adrift.

—Dodie T., Monterey, California

Fear of "The Gestapo"

IN OUR battalion at Navy boot camp in Bainbridge, Maryland was a chief petty officer we all called "The Gestapo" because of his stern attitude and the rakish angle at which he kept the visor of his hat.

One Sunday, by order of "Gestapo," I was on punishment duty with about 40 other "boots" for not knowing the 11th General Order of a Sentry. Gestapo got our calisthenics under way and then ordered one of the boots to lead us.

We were at this for about an hour when a Good Humor ice cream truck came by (this was allowed on the base over weekends). Our leader told us to take a break, and several of us bought little ice cream cups.

We hardly started eating when Gestapo came out of headquarters across the street and began bracing us up and asking, “Whoever told you to take an ice cream break?!”

Gestapo got us back into formation and told us to put the ice cream cups upside down on our heads under our caps. Now in that summer heat, it wasn't long before chocolate and vanilla ice cream began running down noses, ears and the backs of heads.

In a short time, yellow-jacket wasps came for a visit. While it was tough to endure holding a 9-1/2-pound rifle at arm's length or above our heads with wasps crawling all over, it was endured. We held more fear of Gestapo than of the wasps.

—Richard B., Hamden, Connecticut

“Panning” for Gold

IN THE SUMMER of 1964, as a Navy chief petty officer at the air station in Alameda, California, I was one of six pallbearers for the funeral of a recently retired chief in San Jose.

On the way back from the ceremony, our gray Navy station wagon got a flat tire on the Bay Shore Freeway during the 5 o'clock rush hour. Since the Alameda motor pool had, for some reason, removed the spare, we had to call an emergency number and wait for help.

It was very warm, so we all got out of the car and stood in our dress blue uniforms with large medals. We began to notice that the four lanes of roaring traffic began to slow down. Some people honked

horns and waved, others shouted “Yea, Navy!” and a couple took photographs. We waved back at folks and felt like celebrities.

A black-and-white highway patrol car finally pulled up behind us. A frazzled-looking young officer jumped out and exclaimed, “Good grief! Get back in your car. You’ve got traffic jammed up for 3 miles!”

The leading chief replied, “We have?”

The officer said, “Yes. These people haven’t seen this much gold since the gold rush!”

—Don E., Prescott, Arizona

Jell-O and Good-Bye

IN 1945, I was serving in the U.S. Merchant Marine as 2nd cook and baker on the Liberty ship Risdan T. Bennett. One morning, I made a couple of trays of cherry-flavored Jell-O for lunch and placed them in a cooler to set.

I retired to my cabin for an hour or so of sleep, but on this particular morning, I was awakened by a knock on the door and told that I was wanted in the crew’s mess.

Upon entering the mess, I was bombarded with 5-inch cubes of reddish rubber-like projectiles. It turned out that in making the Jell-O, I had inadvertently doubled the amount of gelatin required, thereby rendering the Jell-O inedible. With enough work, however, the crew managed to cut it and decided I should be called to task.

A mini food fight of flying Jell-O ensued, but no damage was done and everyone had a good laugh.

—Richard H., Glenview, Illinois