

My Army Experience

From housewife to leader

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Abstract

The bus ride from New York in July 30 1986 in route to Fort Dix Jersey it felt to be the longest in my life. When we got to Fort Dix a specialist named Joe in-processed us in about five days and informed us that we would meet the man I heard about named Drill Sergeant the next day. I was somewhat amazed at the power the guy with the brown hat had. All that changed the day the senior drill sergeant screamed "At ease" when that short gentleman with the diamond like symbol in the middle of all that rank entered the building. The senior drill sergeant walked up to him and said "Good morning First Sergeant we are conducting training as planned. I knew from that day on I wanted to have that power.

My Army Experience from housewife to a Leader

After been a housewife and leaving New York in late 1986 in route to Fort Dix New Jersey for basic training I didn't know what to expect. After all I had never been on the outside of New York in my life, and let me tell you it was a traumatic experience were. The bus ride from New York seemed to be the longest in my life and not being able to see the high skyscrapers of New Jersey made me sick to my stomach. I didn't sleep much and the unknown was the motivating factor that seemed to keep my eyes wide open. It was about 1700 hrs and the bus was suddenly stopped by what seemed to be a security guard at a gate that had a concrete slab that read, "Welcome to Fort Dix.

About twenty minutes up the road the bus stopped again. This time a slim gentleman got on the bus and said "welcome to Fort Dix basic training Reception station". He then said, "You got 30 seconds to get of this damn bus and 29 of them are already gone. Suddenly there was a wild frenzy trying to be the first one to get off the bus". He told us his name was SPC Jody and for the next two weeks he would in-process us. I was confused because I was looking for the guy with the hat, the one they told me about at the recruiting station they call Drill Sergeant. The next day during in processing we were informed that we would meet and get picked up by the drill sergeant after we were completely in processed in 5 days.

Finally our in-processing was complete and the day came that we would meet that person I heard about named Drill Sergeant and coming out of New York as housewife I was really frightened. The drill sergeant marched us around the corner that we called for the next 8 weeks our new home. I was amazed at the power this guy had. After all, when SPC Jody walked up to him he immediately went to the position of parade rest. During the first briefing one of the drill sergeants screamed out at the top of his lungs, "At ease". I noticed that all of the drill sergeants

stopped what they were doing and assumed the position of parade rest.

A short gentleman entered the building but he had no brown hat on! This confused me; I looked at my drill sergeant for answers, but he seemed to be preoccupied with trying not to get in this mans way. Now remember, until this point I thought my drill sergeant was harder then woodpecker lips and that the brown hat he was wearing ruled the Army and everything in it. The Drill Sergeant who was the senior guy walked up to this little man and said "Good morning First Sergeant we are conducting training as planned", then he immediately went back to parade rest again. I couldn't get a good look at this guy until he walked by me and said "Carry on". I noticed he had some type of symbol in the middle of all that rank that looked like a small diamond of some type. At the next briefing they showed us another Army video, and I'll never forget that SPC with the thick mustache drinking a cup of coffee in the field say "Good morning First Sergeant, how are you". I knew from that day on I wanted to be a soldier with all that rank.

In June 1989 I got station at Fort Hood Texas, after I have been station for a year, I started hearing a rumor that we may deploy to Saudi Arabia. July 1990 I was on leave, while I was on leave, I received a phone call from my unit stating, that I need to report to the company with all my gear within 24 hours. When I reported to the company, I was told by my senior leaders that we just received a deployment orders to either Kuwait or Saudi Arabia and that we need to start preparing our equipment and personal. Late on that day my OIC and Platoon Sgt called me at their office and told me, base on my logistic and leadership experience, I was assigned to be the NCOIC of the advance party team.

The total of 30 soldiers was assigned to the advance party team, included myself and the OIC. The next day I held a formation, the first thing came to my mind was how the drill sergeant take control of his troops by using that authoritarian command. I called the formation to "Fall in"

with an authoritarian command and quickly the soldiers executed the command.

Before we deployed I was making sure that soldier's family and soldiers was mentally prepared for our departure. When we got to Saudi Arabia, the temperature was about 124 degrees and I was afraid to lose one of my soldiers and I started to passing bottle of water and I told them to make sure they drink plenty water.

After we got Saudi Arabia, a bus to take us to a place called tent city to in- processing. Once we finished in-processing we were told that the Col in ground want to have a meeting with all OIC and NCOIC in the camp. While we were at the meeting the COL told us that we need to get ready our troop, because 99.9 percent chances that we are going to war. I paused for a minute, and I said to myself "we were told at the home station, that we were coming to guard Kuwait not to fight"

When I got to the tent, I got the team together, I looked the team straight in their faces and I told them, there is nothing to be afraid, on what I am about to tell you. The COL said base on the situation in the ground, it is 99.9 percent of possibilities that we are going to war with the Iraqi.

From that day on, my main mission was to prepare my soldiers mentally and physically by me trained then realistically on all assigned task. I felt that the lives of these Soldiers rode on my decisions as a leader. I gained the respect and trust of my Soldiers by making myself visible on missions, treated with respect and dignity

Coming from New York as housewife and deployed as SGT (E-5) NCOIC. My advice to anyone preparing yourself and soldiers for war, has never been is simply, don't be afraid to use your combat veterans experience as a resource but your main resource started in basic training