

CLIPBOARD FREEDOM



True story but I wrote this just for fun.

In the early and mid 1960's the Army was not politically correct. The Army used what can best be described as a "destroy the old you and make you into the new Army you" method in Basic and Advanced Training. At least that was their plan.

During "Basic Training" I learned to survive the Army's version, at that time, of Hell. I am told that in the modern incarnation it has become more genteel. In those days it meant little sleep, being treated like a convict on Devils Island, long marches, verbal abuse, almost inedible food, etc.

After "Basic Training" you graduated to "Advanced Training". In my case I was sent to be trained on "Indirect Fire" weapons. Mortar Gunnery School. Unlike Rifles or Artillery, which are, at least in theory, "Direct Fire" weapons, the Mortar is fired high into the sky and, done properly, comes raining down out of the sky on your enemy like "Fire and Brimstone" on Sodom and Gomorra.

I also learned that the Mortar is a useful fishing accessory but that's another story.

In addition to learning how to kill your enemy without ever seeing them, I think the most valuable thing I learned in Advanced Training was the magic of the clipboard. It was a ticket to freedom on many days.

Walk around with a clipboard containing several pages of paperwork and others assumed you were working on a task of some kind. That clipboard would make those NCO's and Officers who had the power of making your life miserable more likely target those whose hands were empty for such enterprises as moving a pile of rocks from one side of the Parade Ground to the other on a day when it was 102 degrees in the non-existent shade.

By the time I made Sergeant I had turned the use of the clipboard into an art form. It very often bought me many hours of leisure in place of undesired labor at menial tasks.

Want to have some fun?

In civilian life I observed that many public "servants" and private workers who serve the public, do

not like note takers as they fear what might come back to haunt them from carefully documented note pages.

So, I substitute a notebook for my army clipboard.

I like to take a notebook with me when needing to visit the offices of sometimes surly City, County, State or Federal employees. It also is helpful in commercial public enterprises.

For example, you might want to try this:

In a public office or private enterprise, enter and walk up to the counter. After making sure you are being observed, take out and open your notebook and, looking at your watch or the clock on the wall, make note of the date and time. Then, with a friendly smile say "Good Morning" and ask the clerk for their name or copy it carefully from their name badge into your notebook. If they ask you what you are doing, just smile and say that your memory is not so good and you need notes to remind you of the purpose of your visit and what you accomplished during your time there.

Make some notes to yourself in the notebook during the visit. At all times, and despite any aggravation, remain, pleasant and courteous. It works even better if you have a silent friend with you who just listens and smiles.

You might be amazed at the polite, helpful, even courteous service this usually leads to.

A little planning ahead and a clipboard, notebook or other prop can greatly enrich your life.

I have many fun examples I could share from my experiences but enough for now.

Bob Bandy