

A Marine's Tail: Chesty Goes to Boot Camp

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- Page 1:** When Chesty was much younger, a bullpup in his teens,
He told his Mom and Dad, "I want to join the Marines.
Marines are tough and brave. I think I'll fit right in.
I'm not scared of anything," Chesty said with a grin.
- Page 2:** Chesty raced to go enlist and put his paw in the air.
He would soon be off to Boot Camp. Drill Instructors beware!
- Page 3:** When he arrived at Boot Camp, Chesty took a look around.
He saw rows of yellow footprints, painted on the ground.
"Stand there!" a D.I. hollered, "and listen as I speak.
In my beloved Marine Corps, there is no place for the weak."
- Page 4:** In the position of attention, Chesty had to stand and wait.
Thumbs along the trouser seams, chest out and back straight.
- Page 5:** First, the recruits got haircuts. "A little off the top," Chesty called.
But before Chesty knew it, he and the other recruits were bald!
- Page 6:** Next the recruits waited, in line to use the phones.
Chesty's Mom and Dad were startled when the phone rang at home.
"I've arrived at Boot Camp safely, Goodbye now," Chesty said.
Without a chance to talk, Chesty's folks went back to bed.
- Page 7:** The squad bay was Chesty's home, for the next 12 weeks.
It had rows of metal bunk beds and a floor so clean it squeaked.
- Page 8:** The Series Commander met them, and gave the Drill Instructors' creed.
Then the Drill Instructors took charge, and all Chesty heard were...
- Page 9:** **...SCREAMS!!!**
- Page 10:** The Drill Instructors yelled and they hollered and they screamed.
They stalked around the squad bay looking very mean.
They pushed aside the footlockers and messed up all the bunks.
Then a D.I. looked at Chesty and yelled, "Clean up this junk!"

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- Page 11:** Chesty's Drill Instructors were remarkable Marines.
Their uniforms fit perfectly and their boots were pristine.
They never seemed to tire, though they never seemed to sleep.
Their fitness was top notch, and their Marine Corps knowledge deep.
- Page 12:** Boot Camp was tough indeed, but Chesty didn't crack.
He learned to lace his boots, roll his sleeves, and make his rack.
Each day the recruits worked out, to make their bodies lean.
And they learned a lot about the history of the Marines.
- Page 13:** As part of warrior training, the recruits learned how to fight.
They learned to hook and jab with their left and with their right.
- Page 14:** Soon there came the week of the swim survival test.
Chesty summoned all his courage and jumped in with the rest.
He swam around the pool, dog-paddling his best.
After swimming hard all day, Chesty sure could use a rest.
- Page 15:** But for Chesty and the others there was no time to rest.
For that day they accidentally left the squad bay a mess.
The Senior Drill Instructor saw it and he threw quite a fit.
He yelled to the platoon, "All of you, to the pit!"
- Page 16:** Chesty and the others hurried out the doors,
and found a place in the dirt for the pain that was in store.
They exercised until all their muscles were sore.
Then when they thought they were done, they had to exercise some more.
- Page 17:** When the first phase of Boot Camp was over and through,
Recruit Chesty's platoon embarked on Phase Two.
"Out to the parade deck," the Drill Instructors called.
"It's time to practice marching. Hurry up! Don't dare stall!"
- Page 18:** And they drilled. And they drilled. And they drilled, drilled, drilled, drilled.
They learned all the movements, and practiced until...
the platoon became crisp; every move sharp and true.
And with every next practice, their confidence grew.
- Page 19:** Next up was the rifle range and a most important class.
They learned when firing a rifle, "slow is smooth, smooth is fast."

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- Page 20:** Over the next several days they fired round after round, while sitting and while standing and while lying on the ground. At the end of rifle training, their skills were put to test. Chesty qualified "expert." For a Marine, that's the best!
- Page 21:** Back at the squad bay, Chesty got some mail from home. His Mom and Dad had written to tell him hello. All of the recruits so enjoyed getting mail. It lifted their spirits and made Chesty wag his tail.
- Page 22:** Because the title MARINE is not given, but earned, in Phase Three recruits were tested, to see if they had learned, the core values, the traditions, and the battles that were fought. Chesty passed the test, no problem, remembering all he'd been taught.
- Page 23:** Next Chesty's platoon faced a challenging mission. They had to march and be judged in final drill competition.
- Page 24:** All their practicing paid off. They got a near perfect score. They marched about in unison like they never had before. Out of all of the platoons, they were clearly the best. "You recruits did very well," their DIs confessed.
- Page 25:** The final test in Phase Three was a three-day event, Hiking mile upon mile, into the treeline they went. With little sleep and little food, they faced obstacles big and small, The recruits displayed great teamwork; never let each other fall.
- Page 26:** The Crucible taught courage, dedication, and more; Traits Chesty would need for a life in the Corps. When the Crucible was over and triumph was achieved, The recruits stood in formation and an emblem they received.
- Page 27:** The D.I.s handed each recruit an EGA pin. A new life as Marines, they would all now begin. When Chesty put his paw out and received the symbol of the Corps, he felt a little strange, unlike he'd ever felt before. An enormous sense of pride was welling up inside. Private Chesty felt as if he were going to cry.

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- Page 28:** At week's end they were tired. They were dead on their feet. Then came the Warrior Breakfast, a refreshing, tasty treat.
- Page 29:** After 12 grueling weeks, graduation day had come. Many families came to watch, but Chesty was glum. He didn't see his parents when he looked into the crowd. But then he heard in the distance, his Mother cheering loud.
- Page 30:** Chesty's parents were there watching; his Aunt and Uncle too. They were waving American flags; the red, white and blue. At the top of the grandstand, they were eager to see, as he marched smartly by, Private Chesty, USMC.
- Page 31:** "Congratulations! You did it," Chesty's parents cried out. "We knew you could make it; never had any doubt." "Thanks for coming," Chesty said. "It sure means a lot. I can't wait to tell you all the things we've been taught."
- Page 32:** The Drill Instructors congratulated their brand new Marines. Reminding them to be leaders and keep their honor clean. "Always set the example, in peace and in war. It's been an honor to train you. Welcome to our Corps."