

THE R.O.T.C. CONNECTION

Story by Sanford "Sandy" Friedman, Spring 1955



Sanford "Sandy"
Friedman

We went into the Marines right after high school as we had planned, not early. Gary was in the R.O.T.C. and that was where his head was at the time ... the direction of the military. Me, Pete Julius and Gary all went down to the Marine recruiting station when we were seniors to check it out. Me and Pete wanted to go for three years but there were no more three year terms left so we said "the hell with it" and went for the four year enlistment. Of course we both knew that Gary was a career man.

Here's a favorite Gary story:

We're in boot camp and just issued new M1 rifles. When you get these things they are full of a substance called cosmoline grease. We were given buckets and told to tear down the rifle, clean all the parts and put it back together. Well ... Pete and I were scared. We had never seen an M1 rifle before! But thank God for Gary and the R.O.T.C. One of the pieces of the rifle is a long rod called a "gas rod" and I had a tough time getting it out of the rifle and noticed as I was cleaning it that it had a bend in it.

So there I was thinking I had already screwed up my rifle. The only thing I thought of was to bend it back straight. While I was trying to do just that, Gary looks at me and says "What the hell are you doing?" I told him my plan. He says "Let me see it" and I gave it to



Pete Julius

him. Then he hold up his gas rod next to mine and low and behold ... they were both bent! "Look!" he says. Yes, I would have really screwed up my rifle if it had not been for Gary. That would have been THE most serious of infractions I could have made, no kidding. The DIs would have drawn and quartered me and fed me to the seagulls! Gary saved me!

After boot camp we were all stationed in different places. Pete became a driver for an officer. Gary went into RECON and that's where I was going to go except I was competing on the Marine track team throwing the discus at the time so I was assigned to an infantry company.

Then there's my "It's a small world" story:

So the years passed by and I eventually got stationed in Okinawa. The Marine Corp was conducting this great military exercise ... they would put us on ships and take us to the Philippines. As time went by, we took a 40 mile hike into the middle of the island. I'm standing there one day on a hill, looking out over the jungle. I hear my someone call my name ... "Sandy!" I turn around and stands Gary!

Gary MartE

They had flown his outfit out to the Philippines just for this exercise. Out in the middle of the stinking jungle I run into that guy! There we were, thousands of miles from home, surrounded by thousands of Marines ... and Gary finds me. It was so great to see him!

