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ASHLEY, James D.  
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20 July 1960

FOURTH ENDORSEMENT on subject record

From: Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery  
To: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Board of Investigation to inquire into a major disturbance  
occurring at the U. S. Naval Retraining Command, Camp Elliott,  
San Diego, California, on 1 July 1959



1. Forwarded, contents noted.

5th Op-09B22/jc  
ENDORSEMENT 27 JUL 1960  
From: Chief of Naval Operations  
To: Judge Advocate General

By direction

1. Returned, contents noted.

By direction

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OFFICE OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL  
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25 JUL 1960



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SECOND ENDORSEMENT on RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS of a BOARD OF INVESTIGATION to inquire into a major disturbance at the U. S. Naval Retraining Command, Camp Elliott, San Diego, California, on 1 July 1959



From: Chief of Naval Personnel  
To: Judge Advocate General

Subj: Board of Investigation to inquire into a major disturbance occurring at the U. S. Naval Retraining Command, Camp Elliott, San Diego, California, on 1 July 1959

Encl: (1) Comments on findings of fact, opinions, and recommendations

1. The command of a major confinement facility is an assignment quite unlike any other Navy duty. To operate the U. S. Naval Retraining Command, Camp Elliott, the commanding officer has a staff of Navy and Marine Corps officer and enlisted personnel and a small civilian staff. Marine personnel handle custody and security. Naval personnel, in addition to being responsible for the retraining function, a task to which all staff members contribute, perform administrative, supply, and medical functions. The civilian staff includes fire-fighters, maintenance personnel and a small professional group that includes two psychologists, a psychiatric social worker and a penologist. It is the commanding officer's job to organize this staff into a team which will be able to effectively carry out the command's mission.

2. Confined at the Retraining Command are about 800 Navy and Marine Corps general and special court-martial prisoners. Typically they are young, immature, and somewhat unstable. They are below the service average in intelligence and much below in formal education. As a group they are not vicious nor are they criminal in the accepted sense, most having been guilty of military offenses only. They live in an "open" institution. Sentences are short and the population turns over about three times a year. For these reasons many of the tensions found in large civilian correctional institutions are not present. Nevertheless, it is a group almost completely lacking in self-discipline. Furthermore, many of them suffer from personality disorders which severely limit their usefulness to the service and may create problems in confinement. An analysis of the population clearly indicates that there are elements present capable of organizing and carrying out a disturbance with little or no provocation. It is possible for a riot to occur even when the administration of the activity is alert, well organized and operating a well-rounded program. It is much more likely cur when these qualities are lacking.

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3. The inquiry revealed that the command was not operating efficiently. The various departments were not working together to fulfill the command's mission. Communication among the staff was poor. The necessary day-to-day functions took place but the command was operating far below its potential. The talents of some staff members were being wasted. Others did not have a proper understanding of their jobs. Prisoners were injuring other prisoners, and those responsible were rarely apprehended and punished. Duty personnel allowed prisoner control to slip away from them. This was condoned up the chain of command. In various subtle ways prisoners were running the show. Prisoner leaders made their appearance in each barracks, and by and large, these inmate leaders kept the prisoners under control.

4. The evening of 1 July presented an ideal opportunity. SSGT who was thoroughly disliked by the prisoners was in immediate charge of the compound and a new commanding officer had just assumed command. It was an excellent opportunity to embarrass and test the new commanding officer. Those responsible for organizing the riot -- and they remain unknown -- had little to fear. The few men on duty were powerless to oppose them and could be counted on not to turn them in. By virtue of the "code", the prisoners would do their bidding. There was little likelihood of punishment. Events proved their estimate of the situation to be correct.

5. It is clear from the foregoing that the disturbance did not just happen. Existing conditions made it possible, even likely. It is also clear that many of the staff were not fulfilling their proper roles. The staff, more than adequate in quantity and quality, was not pulling together. This was because there was and had been for a long time a lack of command leadership. It is, of course, almost impossible to find an officer of suitable rank and experience who can bring to the job of commanding officer of a retraining command knowledge and experience in the field of corrections. But other officers, Marine and Navy, have been able to cope with the demands of this job and have been able to unite the various elements of the command into an effective team. Captain \_\_\_\_\_ was unable to do this. His task was not easy since he took over a command that for several years prior to his assuming command had been permitted to lean so far on the side of treatment that there was a strong undercurrent, a demand practically, that control replace treatment. Unfortunately, in rejecting treatment, Captain \_\_\_\_\_ did not get control. It should be noted that nothing in the testimony supports the proposition that those in the command who were primarily concerned with treatment actively opposed the reimposition of more control. It appears rather that those responsible for control were ineffective in their attempts to establish it.

6. In the months since the disturbance, the new commanding officer, Captain \_\_\_\_\_, USN, has taken many steps to correct the conditions that caused the riot. The problems he faced have been difficult but they have been met and apparently solved. In December 1959 the Secretary of the Navy approved a new concept of corrections that will permit the disestablishment of the Camp Elliott Retraining Command by 30 September 1960. Under this plan prisoners who are to be retained in the service after confinement will be retained in local briggs. Only those to be discharged from the service will be transferred to a large confinement activity.

7. Subject to the comments contained in enclosure (1), the proceedings, findings of fact, opinions, and recommendations of the board are approved.

Copy to:  
COMELEVEN  
CO USNRC Camp Elliott  
Senior Member, Board of Investigation

Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel

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Bnd. #5484-60

13 JUN 1960

From: Judge Advocate General  
To: Chief of Naval Operations  
Via: Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

Subj: Board of Investigation to inquire into a major disturbance  
occurring at the U. S. Naval Retraining Command, Camp Elliott,  
San Diego, California, on 1 July 1959

1. Forwarded for information and return.

2. It has been ascertained that \_\_\_\_\_, airman recruit, U. S. Navy, and \_\_\_\_\_ seaman recruit, U. S. Navy, who were injured in the disturbance, have been discharged from the naval service with undesirable discharges. \_\_\_\_\_ was discharged on 16 October 1959, \_\_\_\_\_ on 2 October 1959. Under these circumstances an expression of opinion as to line of duty or conduct status of the injured men is not necessary.

3. The proceedings in the attached case are legal.

By direction

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FIRST ENDORSEMENT on RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS of a BOARD OF INVESTIGATION to inquire into a major disturbance at the U. S. Naval Retraining Command, Camp Elliott, San Diego, California, on 1 July 1959

From: Commandant, Eleventh Naval District  
To: The Judge Advocate General  
Via: Chief of Naval Personnel (Correctional Services)

Subj: Board of Investigation to inquire into a major disturbance occurring at the U. S. Naval Retraining Command, Camp Elliott, San Diego, California, on 1 July 1959

1. The Commandant makes the following general observations concerning the matters under investigation prior to considering in detail the findings of fact, opinions, and recommendations of the Board of Investigation.

a. The mental attitude of the retrainees immediately prior to and during the incidents related, may well have been one of frustration and resentment, particularly in view of the fact that the July 4th holiday weekend was about to commence and the weather had been and continued to be unseasonably hot for this area.

b. The record implies a lack of leadership attributable in part, to the previous Commanding Officer, Captain U. S. Navy. This implication must be viewed in the light of the background and experience of the officer so assigned, inasmuch as the problems arising at a retraining command in the matter of discipline are necessarily far different from those arising in a command where morale is high or even average. Unquestionably, the Bureau of Naval Personnel considers these matters in selecting officers to command retraining commands, and makes the best selection possible of officers considered sufficiently aggressive and forceful, even though later events may cast doubt on these qualities when they must operate in the retraining command environment. Captain [redacted] was an average Naval officer with no experience in administering a penal institution. Upon being confronted with 700 to 1,000 disciplinary case population, with penologists, psychiatrists and psychologists, he did the best he could within the limitations of his background of experience.

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5. It is noted that Opinions 1 through 6 allude to the previous Commanding Officer. As indicated above, the Commandant is pleased with the assignment of Captain \_\_\_\_\_ as the new Commanding Officer, and considers that the stated problems of lack of leadership, control, and coordination will be resolved.

6. It is considered that the newly established medium security compound will also effectively lessen, if not completely curtail, the force and operation of the "underground organization" mentioned in Opinions 19 and 20.

7. In regard to Recommendations 3 through 7, 13, 14, 17, 23, and 31, involving the expenditure of funds and assignment of personnel, it is considered that any action to be taken in regard thereto is more appropriately within the purview of the applicable department in the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

8. Because of the nature of their injuries and their consequent impossibility of avoiding identification, as opposed to the very many other unidentifiable retrainees actively involved in this episode and the leaders against whom no action can be taken, it is considered that the imposition of severe disciplinary action against \_\_\_\_\_ Y and \_\_\_\_\_ would be inequitable. Any other disciplinary action deemed appropriate may properly be taken by the Commanding Officer of the Retraining Command.

9. In regard to the other recommendations of the Board, the following is noted:

a. Captain \_\_\_\_\_ has advised that various Emergency Bills have either been rewritten or are presently being studied for improvement.

b. There exists a continuous program to remove surface rocks from the compound area, but because of the geological formation of the ground, it is virtually impossible to remove all at any given time.

c. The Commanding Officer of the Naval Personnel Research Field Activity now has additional duties as an advisor to the Retraining Command.

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- d. Church attendance by retrainees can be and is encouraged, but it cannot be made mandatory.
  - e. There presently exists an in-service training program of instruction in regard to furthering the mission of the retraining command which will undoubtedly receive greater amplification under the present administration.
  - f. Changes are presently being made in the recreation department to enable greater participation by retrainees and thus reduce any idle time.
  - g. The training of Marine personnel in basic Marine Corps subjects has been reduced, but it is recognized that this training must be such that it meets the minimum standard established by the Commandant of the Marine Corps.
10. The Commandant disapproves Finding of Fact 22, as a fact, since this is more properly expressed as an opinion (Opinion 25) and as such, is approved. Similarly, since the Brig Manual, Section 602, requires the censorship of retrainee mail, Recommendation 30 is disapproved.
11. Subject to the foregoing, the proceedings, findings of fact, opinions, and recommendations of the Board are approved.

### FINDINGS OF FACT

Findings of fact 1-21 and 23-32 are concurred in. Findings of Fact # 22 is not concurred in since, as was pointed out in the first endorsement, it is more properly expressed as an opinion (Opinion 25).

### OPINIONS

Opinions 1-22, 24 and 25 are concurred in. Opinion 23 merits comment.

"23. That the Command and Corrective Services have not fully utilized the research data gathered at Camp Elliott, nor have the experience and abilities of the specialized professional personnel been fully exploited. The Board feels that the testimony of Dr. Mock should be given serious consideration by the reviewing authorities."

It is true that the research data gathered at Camp Elliott has not been fully utilized. The extensive research conducted over a six year period at Camp Elliott was undertaken under BuMed and BuPers sponsorship. This Bureau took the position that wide scale application of the results of this research could not be authorized until the research had been evaluated. A professional evaluation of the research by a panel of five consultants (psychiatrists and psychologists) took place in the summer of 1959. BuMed in approving their report indicated that none of the results of the research could be approved for operational use either in the retraining commands, the briggs or in other settings. BuMed support was withdrawn from the project. In view of this unfavorable evaluation, BuPers could not use or authorize the use at other activities of the Camp Elliott research.

It is agreed that the experience and abilities of the specialized professional staff were not properly utilized for many months prior to the date of the disturbance. All of the testimony -- not just that of Dr. Mock -- has been given careful consideration. Much has been learned from studying the testimony that will prove useful in the future in the management and technical control of confinement facilities.

ENCLOSURE (1)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

"1. That retrainee James D. Ashley, 521 95 01, airman recruit, U. S. Navy and retrainee Henry F. Duvall, 349 99 49, seaman recruit, U. S. Navy be punished within the scope of punishment which the Commanding Officer of the U. S. Naval Retraining Command, Camp Elliott, is authorized to impose."

Concur.

"2. That all emergency bills, fire, escape, riot, etc. - be simple and explicit so that all retrainees and ship's company personnel will readily know of the emergency by clear and definite signals. It is especially important that the retrainees know an emergency exists and have simple and explicit orders to proceed to a specific station on the double for count or detail as directed."

Concur. The substance of this recommendation will be included in the forthcoming revision of the Brig Manual.

"3. That the Command Headquarters Building be complete renovated and changed so that all administrative spaces be in one open area, separated only by waist high partitions, and located so that retrainees have direct access to it without having to approach the command area of the building. Give Control an open area with complete view of compound, entrance and egress passages, and communications facilities for control. Put the Officer of the Day duty stations in or adjacent to Control. Segregate the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer and Wardroom area such that retrainee traffic in this area is an absolute minimum and is completely controlled. Reason: Present situation allows a perfect retrainee information gathering system which, to all appearances, is functioning better than that of command."

Do not concur in view of decision to disestablish the command.

"4. Provide adequate security by expanded wire screening for company commander's and supervisors' offices and sleeping rooms within retrainee barracks."

Do not concur in view of decision to disestablish the command.

"5. That a board be appointed of military and civilian experts familiar with the requirements and layout of corrective institutions to survey Camp Elliott and recommend such physical changes as may be necessary."

Do not concur in view of decision to disestablish the command.

ENCLOSURE (1)

"6. That a greater quantity and variety of recreation equipment and facilities be provided and that the compound area be extended so as to provide for more playing fields."

Do not concur in view of decision to disestablish the command.

"7. That more close confinement cells be constructed. (Note: Portsmouth has approximately 400.)"

Concur in part. Eight cells are under construction. It is not recommended that additional ones be constructed. The problem at Elliott revolves around the program, not security.

"8. That all retrainees be turned-to to pick up all rocks within the compound and dispose of them."

Concur. All loose rocks, rubble, and the like should be disposed of as a matter of good housekeeping.

"9. That the possibility of Camp Elliott and Corrective Services utilizing the facilities and talents of the Naval Personnel Research Field Activity, Point Loma, be investigated."

Concur. It is assumed that the Naval Neuropsychiatric Research Field Activity, Point Loma is referred to rather than the Naval Personnel Research Field Activity. Some utilization of this activity has already been made and more is contemplated.

"10. That the following papers be especially called to the attention of Command and of Corrective Services: "Rehabilitation of Naval Disciplinary Offenders"; "A Review of the Navy Delinquency Research Project 1959"; "Status Report of Correctional Research at Camp Elliott" by E. K. Gunderson, PhD.; "The Seventh Technical Report Program Effectiveness in Naval Retraining, 3 Feb. 1958"."

Concur. The Bureau is cognizant of the results of Camp Elliott's Research. The usefulness of these reports is, however, restricted by the unfavorable Bureau of Medicine and Surgery evaluation of the studies on which they were based. They do, however, provide an excellent base upon which to establish future research.

"11. That Character Guidance Instruction be given more stress and be given often enough so that all retrainees may complete the course during their period of confinement."

Concur.

ENCLOSURE (1)

"23. That marine company supervisors be assigned who meet all of the following minimum requirements:

- a. Rank of Corporal or Acting Sergeant (E-4). (Note: Corporal under the new rank structure is equivalent to sergeant under the old.)
- b. GCT of 100.
- c. Clear record.
- d. Two years remaining on current enlistment."

Partially concur. The minimum requirements of company supervisors have been studied jointly by Marine Corps and Bureau of Naval Personnel and it has been decided to raise the rank structure of all marines whose duties require direct contact with prisoners.

"24. That custody personnel have four weeks of training prior to assuming their duties, followed by continuous in-service training."

Partially concur. All personnel require an adequate amount of indoctrination. This can be done in less than four weeks. If well planned and organized, one week instruction plus several days "snapping in" on the job will suffice. The recommendation for continuous in-service training is fully concurred in and has been implemented.

"25. That the training of Marine company supervisors in basic Marine Corps subjects be reduced to one-half day each week, and that they be given the equivalent of one-half day school each week toward improving their effectiveness in handling retrainees."

Concur. To keep hours on the job at an acceptable level reduction in time devoted to instruction in Marine Corps subjects appears to be needed. This problem will be taken up with HQMC representatives.

"26. That no retrainee be placed in authority over another retrainee. That positions of squad leader, right guide, etc. in close order drill be rotated frequently."

Concur. Retrainees should never be placed in authority. The use of retrainee instructors is approved but these instructors are under direct supervision of a duty man. The instructors themselves have no authority whatsoever.

"27. That retrainees restored to duty or discharged from the Service be given a formal and cordial send-off by the Commanding Officer or an officer representing him."

Concur. The commanding officer or executive officer should give all men discharged or restored a cordial send-off.

ENCLOSURE (1)

"28. That the same standards of military courtesy and respect for persons in authority over them be exacted from retrainees as from recruits in recruit training."

Do not concur. It is not considered necessary or desirable to require prisoners to comply with the standards of military courtesy required of recruits in recruit training. Some practices, e.g., double timing, lend themselves to abuses when permitted in confinement. Prisoners are frequently not permitted to observe normal military courtesies including the salute. It is not desired to require uniform practice in this respect at this time. However, it is considered appropriate to require prisoners to observe normal military courtesies. The forthcoming revision of the Brig Manual will enjoin commands to review local practices with a view towards requiring the same courtesies from prisoners as are required from men not in a disciplinary status.

"29. That the Command take steps to improve the period of screening and orientation of incoming retrainees."

Concur. Screening appears adequate but the program of orientation (which immediately follows screening) should be greatly expanded.

"30. That the requirement for censorship of all incoming and outgoing mail be eliminated; and that censorship be conducted on a basis that will result in some censorship of each retrainee's mail and complete censorship of the mail of retrainees who are objects of suspicion."

Do not concur. It has long been maintained that for reasons of security and custody incoming and outgoing mail shall be censored. A requirement that this be done is set forth in the Brig Manual. Some of the reasons for censoring prisoners' mail are to prevent the introduction of contraband and to intercept malicious or indecent letters or those containing information that might be unduly disturbing to prisoners. The system used to censor prisoner mail at Camp Elliott, where all officers of the staff inspect a portion of the day's mail, is a poor one. A better system is to train and use several enlisted men as full time mail inspectors.

"31. That action be taken to increase the "health and comfort" allowance of retrainees in a non-pay status to a realistic figure which will compensate the loss of purchasing power of the currency since the present \$3.00 per month allowance was established."

Concur. Legislation has been proposed by the Army which, among other things, removes monetary restrictions from the health and comfort allowance. After passage it will be up to the Secretary of the Navy to set the limit. \$6.00 per month is recommended.

ENCLOSURE (1)