

Primary Source: Basic Training in World War II ^[1]

This interview is from the "Remembering World War II. World War II Veterans Oral History Preservation Project." Veterans of the war that were interviewed for this project recounted what it was like to undergo basic training.

Interviewer:

Okay now you said you were drafted.

Christensen:

Right I was drafted.

Interviewer:

When did you receive your draft notice, do you remember when that was?

Christensen:

I think it was in March of '42. Probably I got the notice late in '42 because I had to go to Camp Croft which was in Spartanburg, South Carolina, in April of '43.

Interviewer:

Where were you called to report for induction, do you remember?

Christensen:

I went down there for this Army pre-physical, talked to a big ugly fellow named Clayton Heffner, who then was a big name in local golf, and the next, I think they gave us a week to return and our return trip was to Fort Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina.

Interviewer:

Where did you take basic training?

Christensen:

From there, we drew complete GI issue which included an overcoat which we had to wear and we boarded the train and went to Camp Maxey in Texas.

Interviewer:

What part of Texas is that?

Christensen:

Which was in the northeast corner in a little town called Paris, Texas, 90 miles northeast of Dallas.

Interviewer:

Was that your boot camp?

Christensen:

That was where I took my basic training. After we took our normal basic training, I was in an outfit, in a [engineer outfit](#) which was under the control of a _____ in California and they couldn't get our scheduling right, so we had 30 days in which we had nothing to do so Lord and behold, they gave us ranger training for 4 weeks.

Interviewer:

What did that consist of?

Christensen:

Well that was everything. That was obstacles, that was firing every weapon that the Army had at the time, had to qualify with it. Had to get an Army's driver's license for every piece of equipment that engineers operated, had to learn simple medical procedures and it was the toughest physical training that I had.

Interviewer:

Did you volunteer for this or were you assigned to it?

Christensen

I volunteered when the man said we will all take ranger training (laughter) and back then it was nothing to get up out of the sack at 4:30 in the morning and grab a full field pack and go 26 miles in, this was probably in June or early July of 1943, temperature would be up around the 100 mark and there was no such thing as falling out unless you just fell on the ground. Then the ambulance would pick you up and if you weren't dead, they'd take you to the

hospital.

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