This memory was donated by Chris Byers
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Christopher Byers

BOND TROOP
Junior Leaders Regiment
Royal Corps Of Transport\Royal Army Ordinance Corps
Azimghur Barracks, Colerne near Bath.

Not from the dole queue though, but from college.
I simply didn't want to end up like to guy I went to school with who I spied one morning, drunk and wearing the same clothes he'd been wearing for a week. I could see my entire future rolling out before my eyes, it involved flat caps (this being Lancashire and all), Whippets and five pounds on the gee gee's on a Saturday afternoon being the highlight of my week. I had to do something.

A couple of weeks later I had been to the dentist and was waiting for a bus outside the Army Careers office in Preston, I was looking at a map in the window which showed all the British Army units world wide and I was sold.
It was a way of getting out of my hometown and travelling the world.
Several months later I was starting training with the Junior Leaders Regiment Royal Corps Of Transport\Royal Army Ordinance Corps at Azimghur Barracks, Colerne near Bath.

Training was to last a year, split into 3x14 week terms, and it was no soft option. I was placed into Bond Troop 57 Junior Leaders Squadron RCT as I had been spammed to play trumpet in the band and all band members are in 57 Sqn.

Now picture this, you are 16 years old and have committed yourself for an entire year of pain and punishment, and the worst thing is, you have no idea initially of what is to come.
When you first arrive, you look at the 3rd termer's (those about to pass out and go on to trade training) and they look, well, old. A hell of a lot older that you do, and that's for sure, and it really makes you think hard about what is to come.

The terms were divided into these important stages...

Term 1.
Basic training, Marching (in my case very badly) and basic drill, skill at arms and PT etc.

Term 2.
Advanced training and lots of PT (up to twice a day including Saturdays), which gave rise to the term 'Second term blues'.

Term 3.
Education, and basic trade training (MT skills) and lots of freedom with the ability to go down town at the weekend and have full access to your wages. The only downside was the march and shoot competition at the end.

My troop (Bond Troop) under the excellent leadership of Sgt Willy Brodie started with 45 soldiers, out of that only 15 passed out, and after trade training 9 people made it to working units.
The army invested a hell of a lot of money to ensure that they got the best end result possible, and the attrition rate of recruits reflected this. It was however one of the best times of my life, I learnt more about myself and how other people think and work in that 12 months than at any other time in my life.

By Chris Byers
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