SO THAT'S WHY THEY CALL IT BOOT CAMP...
Dedicated to all who sacrifice in service to their country—especially to those who served in Vietnam, those who are still missing, my friends in the 4th Allied P.O.W. Wing, and the devoted families of all of the above.

All royalties from this book go to the Navy Relief Fund.
SO THAT'S WHY THEY CALL IT BOOT CAMP...

By Jeff Macnelly
Camp LeJeune
UNCLE COSMO?... WHAT'S THE NAME OF THIS CAMP YOU WANT TO SEND ME TO?

HECK, IT'S ONE OF THOSE FUNNY-SOUNDING NAMES.

CAMP TOMAHAWK? CAMP MONADNOCK? CAMP MOWALO?

CAMP LE JEUNE!?

Yeah! That's the one!
WELL, HERE WE ARE AT CAMP LE JEUNE...

I HOPE MY COUNSELOR IS A NICE GUY.

AWRIGHT, YEW GROSS TOADS! OFF THE BUS!

SO THIS IS WHAT THE INCREDIBLE HULK DOES IN THE SUMMER.

ONE THING ABOUT CAMP... EVERYONE GETS A LITTLE HOMESICK... BUT THESE GUYS LOOK REALLY SCARED.

REMEMBER, GUYS, WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!

GOD! I DON'T WANNA DIE!

OF COURSE, HOMESICKNESS ISN'T THE BIGGEST WORRY AT CAMP LE JEUNE.
My friend Larry told me his camp had a nickname - the campers were called Eaglets or something... I wonder what nicknames they use at Camp Lejeune... Awright!! Listen up, maggots!

This camp Lejeune is really tough!! They treat us like dirt, but we're all together in this... And that's what builds esprit de corps and character. We all draw strength from the shared hardship... I want my mommy! Oh, good grief...
Dear Uncle Cosmo,

I've discovered how to keep my bed neat for inspection here at camp...

but now I'm flunking footlocker.

Dear Uncle Cosmo,

Today, we ran the obstacle course and I finished first.

--which isn't such a big deal, since I've had so much practice...

walking through your living room.
Back to LeJeune
Y'KNOW, SKYLER... I LOVE QUIET SUMMER EVENINGS, SITTING OUTSIDE... RELAXED AND PEACEFUL....

I'M GOING TO PRESERVE THIS MAGIC MOMENT FOR THE WHOLE SUMMER.... HOW?

I'M SENDING YOU TO CAMP....

OH, COME ON, SKYLER.... I KNOW YOU HAD A ROUGH TIME LAST SUMMER AT CAMP LEJEUNE.... BUT YOU GOT A LOT OUT OF IT.... BESIDES, IT'S A CHALLENGE!

HOW COME THE WORDS "CHALLENGE" AND "FUN" NEVER SHOW UP IN THE SAME SENTENCE?
UNCLE COSMO... I'M PACKING FOR CAMP, BUT I CAN'T FIT MY CLOTHES IN THE TRUNK.

WHAT?

WHAT HAVE YOU PUT IN THERE?

JUST MY SURVIVAL GEAR.

MY STEREO, MY ATARI, 32 CARTRIDGES, THE APPLE II, FOUR CASES OF DR. PEPPER, MY BILLY JOEL ALBUMS...

WAAAAA!

WELL, HERE YOU GO... OFF TO GOOD OLD CAMP LEJEUNE.

YOU'LL HAVE A GREAT TIME, SKYLER....

IS THAT THE CAMP BUS?

YEAH... THE ONE WITH THE HURRICANE FENCE WINDOWS.
GEE, THIS IS THE PITS....
THESE KIDS ALL LOOK LIKE
THE GUYS FROM LAST YEAR...
THEY GRUNT A LOT, AND
THEY'RE SORTA SHINY...

BUT I DON'T SEE
ANYONE I REMEMBER
FROM LAST SUMMER.

HELLO, MAGGOT!

UH...GOOD MORNING,
SERGEANT!

AWRIGHT, YEW CLOWNS,
FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS!!
PICK UP CAMP UNIFORMS!!

GREAT!! CAMP UNIFORMS!!
I HOPE WE GET SOME NICE
SHORTS WITH STRIPES UP
THE LEGS—MAYBE A CAMP
SHIRT WITH A MONOGRAM,
AND A BASEBALL HAT...

BUT I KEEP FORGETTING:
CAMP LEJEUNE IS NOT YOUR
STANDARD SUMMER CAMP.

NEXT!!
AWRIGHT, MAGGOTS... WE JUST GOT OUR ASSIGNMENT FOR OUR SUMMER CAMPING TRIP!!

GREAT! THE CAMPING TRIP!! IT'S ALWAYS THE HIGHLIGHT OF SUMMER CAMP.

NOW I'M PASSING OUT TO YOU IMPORTANT INFORMATION THAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR OUR TRIP.... WHITETWATER CANOEING IN CANADA, MAYBE? HIKING IN MAINE?...

"POISONOUS SNAKES OF EL SALVADOR"...?

I COULDN'T EVEN RUN A HALF MILE BEFORE I CAME TO CAMP LEJEUNE.

I GUESS YOU NEVER KNOW THE LIMITS OF YOUR PHYSICAL ENDURANCE...

UNTIL YOU'VE BEEN CHASED BY A DRILL INSTRUCTOR...
Aright, maggots!! Double time!! To the Obstacle Course!!

We're goin' to the Obstacle Course to build bodies and build character...

And we're gonna build men, right, maggots?

Yes, sir!!

Couldn't we just go to shop and build birdhouses?

Come on, move it, maggot! You gotta cross this ravine—and all you got is this rope.

What do you do now, son?

Call the acrophobia hotline?
WHAT AM I GONNA DO WITH YOU MAGGOTS?! YOU ARE A DISGRACE TO CAMP LEJEUNE!!

MAYBE I SHOULD WHUMP EACH ONE OF YOU LIZARDS WITH THIS M-1 RIFLE UNTIL YOU'RE JUST A QUIVERING PILE OF KHAKI COLORED JELLO!!

THAT WOULD SAVE THE MARINES A LOTTA TROUBLE!! AND PUT YOU DISGUSTING MAGGOTS OUT OF YOUR MISERY!!

THE SERGEANT'S SENSITIVITY TRAINING SEEMS TO BE WEARING OFF, I SEE.

AWRIGHT, MAGGOTS... WE'RE GONNA SING THE CAMP SONG!!

YOU DO KNOW THE CAMP LEJEUNE SONG, DON'T YOU, MAGGOTS?

OHHH, BROTHER... YES SIR!!

WHAT CAMP SONG?

YESSIR!

FROM THE HALLS OF MONTEZOO-OOMA

LOUDER. MAGGOTS, LOUDER!!

I WAS HOPING FOR "MICHAEL, ROW THE BOAT ASHORE."
What a rough day... we've been painting the barracks since before sun-up.

We've got an old saying here at Camp Lejeune: If it moves, salute it; if it doesn't, paint it;

And if it smells funny, eat it.

Okay... when you maggots get outta Camp Lejeune, you got a big career decision to make!!

Infantry... tanks... helicopters... fighters... what's it gonna be for you there, snakebait?

Me?... Oh, I'm aiming a little lower than that, Sergeant...

I'd just like to get to the sixth grade in one piece.
Parris Island
No summer camp for this cowboy.
Another six weeks at Good Ol' Camp Lejune? No way, Jose!
I've saved up just enough money to go to Europe!!
I'll just spend the whole time bummimg around...
And what a deal I got on the ticket!
Uw, Paris? You got that right, Jack!

What an adventure!! I didn't know that you could get there by bus!!

Just think! A whole summer with no obstacle courses, no drill instructors, no forced marches in full combat gear!!

Paris... Here I come!!... Hey... we're stopping...

Welcome to Parris Island Marine Corps Training Center

Up against the wall, yew maggots!
OH, COME ON, SKYLER, THINK OF CAMP AS A... A NICE VACATION.
WHAT?!
THE LAST TWO SUMMERS I SPENT AT CAMP LE JEUNE!! YOU CALL THAT A VACATION?
FOR ME.

Dear Uncle Cosmo,
Camp hasn't changed much since last year, but I need a few things to help make the summer really enjoyable:

1. Satchel charge and detonator
2. Wire cutters
3. A hundred bucks in small bills

Love,
Skyler
Hey, these C-rations don't look bad at all.

Fettucini Alfredo, tossed salad with thousand island dressing, iced tea, ... and Boston cream pie.

Of course, it's all in the same can...

No!! The obstacle course! The dreaded wall!! I remember this from last summer!!

But it's not too difficult... — once you learn a few tricks:

Like establishing a firm beakhold.
Dear Uncle Cosmo,

Some kids go to camp to hike and swim...

or they go to basketball camp to play basketball...

or tennis camp to play tennis...

or computer camp to learn all about computers...

Some kids go to Drama camp to act and dance and sing.

Some even go to Fat camp to get skinny...

but I go to Boot camp...

and get kicked around.

That's so you maggots can write home and tell your folks what a great time you're havin' at camp...
But I hate camp! Last summer I got stranded at Parris Island!!

And the year before I was sent to Camp Le Jeune by mistake!!

Well, this camp is different. It's a flying camp.

Flying camp?

Yes, and flying is something you really want to master...

Especially if you want to pursue a career as a bird...

You'll love it. It's near the North Carolina coast...

Place called 'Cheery Point'...

That sounds harsh, enough I guess...

Have a wonderful time, and be sure to write...

Okay.

No such place as 'Cheery Point'...

-Got a 'Cheery Point', though...

Course, that's a U.S. Marine air station...

On the bus yew maggots!! I mean now!!

Good gravy.

Tickets

Tickets
OH NO, I'VE DONE IT AGAIN!! I'M ON THE WRONG BUS!!

I'M HEADED FOR CHERRY POINT MARINE AIR STATION, NOT CAMP CHEERY POINT!!

HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN AGAIN? HOW WAS I FOoled?

THE COUNSELOR WITH NO NECK SHOULD HAVE BEEN MY FIRST CLUE...

I KNEW THIS WOuLDN'T BE A NORMAL CAMP.

I DON'T KNOW WHY I NEVER LEARN...

YOU NEVER GO TO A SUMMER CAMP.

THAT HAS COUNSELORS WITH NAMES LIKE "RED DAWG" AND "MAD GOAT."
I'm gonna make yew maggots into U.S. marine pilots!!

Well, I can handle that. I can fly already...

So I'm halfway there.

I just have to do the marine part.

Gimme 50, maggot

Sergeant?... We've been doing all this grunt training for days now...

When do we get to do some serious flying?

I had to ask.

Boof
Hey, if we're supposed to be pilots, how come we gotta do all this? Survival training? Survive what?... In case we get shot down. Move, yew maggots! And captured by a sweaty, no-neck, sadistic slick-headed master sergeant.

Aright, yew maggots! We're gonna take a little vote here! Do yew really want to fly for the U.S. Marines? Yessir!! Of course, this is a democracy...

Good... It's a free country, after all... We should all be allowed to freely express our opinions... Heck, no.
IF I MAKE IT THROUGH TRAINING, SARGE... WHAT SKILLS WILL THIS GIVE ME?

YOU WILL BE A lean, MEAN FIGHTING MACHINE!! A Flyin' U.S. MARINE!!

YOU'LL BE ONE OF THE FEW PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO CAN LAND 40,000 POUNDS OF SCREAMING WAR BIRD ON THE TOSSED DECK OF A CARRIER...

HMM... THAT SHOULD GO OVER REAL BIG ON MY APPLICATION TO BUSINESS SCHOOL...

BEFORE YEW MAGGOTS CAN FLY FOR MY MARINE CORPS I'VE GOTTA TRAIN YEW...

TOUGHEN YOU UP... GIVE YEW SOME GUTS!!

DEVELOP THE QUICK REFLEXES YOU'LL NEED TO MAKE THOSE SPLITS SECOND SURVIVAL DECISIONS!!

I COULD'VE USED THOSE QUICK REFLEXES BACK IN THE BUS STATION.
Okay, maggots, this is your basic survival kit!

It contains your inflatable vest, your food ration, your beeper, and shark repellent.

Of course, since this is the U.S. Marine Corps, you can use your food as shark repellent, too.

Listen, sarge, I already know how to fly... why do I need to fly this?

I mean, what can this bucket do that your standard bird can't do?

Okay, besides flying Mach 2 with 1000-pound bombs under each wing?
Hey, Colonel... I can't see over the controls.
No sweat. You can adjust the seat...
It's the switch on the far right...
Or maybe that's the ejection seat.

Aright!! Let's go over the checklist.
You do remember your preflight checklist...?
Right.
Um... seatback tray in the up and locked position?...
Your flight helmet is a U.S. Marine pilot's best friend!...it could save your life!

You got that maggots? Yes, Sergeant...

Now, your oxygen mask is also your best friend. It could save your life...

Your parachute is your best friend!! It could save your life!!

Your reserve chute is your best friend!! It could save your life!!

Your life jacket is your best friend. It could save your life!!

Your shark repellent is your best friend. It could save your life!!

Your rocket-fired ejection seat is your best friend. It could save your life!!

My discharge papers could save my life...
U.S. Marine Corporation
IT'S JUST ABOUT THAT TIME AGAIN, SKYLER—TIME FOR SUMMER CAMP.

NO, SIR. I'M NOT FALLING FOR THAT AGAIN...

EVERYTIME I'VE GONE TO SUMMER CAMP I'VE ENDER UP IN SOME FLY-SPECKED TOWN GETTING YELLED AT AND CHASED THROUGH THESE OBSTACLE COURSES!!

THE SUMMER IS TOO SHORT TO SPEND IT GRUNTING, LIFTING, SWEATING AND RUNNING!!

YES, I'M A CAMP Dodger!!

DOES THIS MEAN?..

SO YOU DON'T WANT TO GO TO CAMP THIS SUMMER, SKYLER?

NO, I'M AFRAID I'M AT THAT AWKWARD STAGE, UNCLE COSMO...

TOO OLD FOR CAMP...

..AND TOO YOUNG TO RETIRE.
WHAT KIND OF SUMMER JOB ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

SOMETHING ON THE WATER, YOU KNOW... BOATS AND STUFF.

AND WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'LL FIND A JOB LIKE THAT AT THIS LATE DATE?

I'VE ALREADY APPLIED AT ONE COMPANY, AND I'M ON MY WAY TO AN INTERVIEW WITH THEM.

IS THIS THE U.S. MARINE CORPORATION?

CLOSE ENOUGH, BUDDY!

WHAT KIND OF SUMMER JOB IS THIS?

ANYTHING YOU WANT?

HUH?

SURE! WE'LL TRAIN YOU IN YOUR CHOSEN FIELD.

REALLY?

ABSOLUTELY. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE?

INVESTMENT BANKER.
Wow! This sounds like a great summer job!

Sure... and any of our special schools will train you in the field of your choice.

We're looking for a few good men.

Look over this brochure and pick which career path you would like to pursue.

Great.

Nothing in mergers and acquisitions, I see.

How long is this summer job with you at the Marine Corporation?

I have to go back to school you know...

Sure. Don't worry about that. We pay for all your schooling when your time is up with us...

Great!

Wait—how much could the sixth grade possibly cost?
SO, SKYLER... WELCOME ABOARD!
THANK YOU, SIR.

THIS IS GREAT! A SUMMER JOB!!

WITH THE U.S. MARINE CORPORATION!!

THAT'S MARINE CORPS TO YOU, MAGGOT!!

OH, NO.

AIN'T RIGHT, MAGGOT!! ON THE BUS!
HOW DOES THIS KEEP HAPPENING TO ME?

SERGEANT? WHAT EXACTLY ARE MY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT IN THIS JOB?

HECK, MAGGOT... IF YOU GOT SOME TALENT THAT MAY BE USEFUL TO MY MARINE CORPS, WE'LL TAKE IT.

GREAT... MAYBE I CAN AVOID SOME OF THIS GRUNT NONSENSE THIS TIME AROUND.

WHY? DO YOU SPEAK LIBYAN, MAGGOT?
SARGE, AS YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN THROUGH BASIC TRAINING A FEW TIMES BEFORE.

I WAS AT CAMP LEJEUNE, CHERRY POINT, AND PARRIS ISLAND...

RIGHT, MAGGOT. SO WE'RE PLACING YOU IN THE MARINE CORPS ADVANCED TRAINING PROGRAM...

WE CALL IT BOOT CAMP IV.

GREAT!! THANK YOU, SARGE!!

ACTUALLY, I'M GLAD TO BE A PART OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPORATION...

THE FEW...

THE PROUD...

THE PETRIFIED.
Dear Uncle Cosmo:
Well, things are really looking up around here.

Tomorrow morning Sarge says we're all going to the beach together!

It's about time we had some R and R.

Aright, maggots!! Hit the beach!!

GREAT!! A care package from home!...just what the lonely camper needs...

I hope Sarge didn't see that.
I fail to see what all this (grunt) has to do with (pant pant) training me...

In my chosen field (grunt) mergers and acquisitions...

I mean... sneaking up on the enemy and slitting his throat?...

— Come to think of it...

Explain it to me again, Sergeant! Why do we do all these chin-ups?

To build character, maggot!!

That's what I thought.

I wonder why building character...

Always involves destroying your body...
DO YOU KNOW WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR, MAGGOT?...

YES, SERGEANT!!

YOU'RE "LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MEN!!"

BUT THEY'VE BEEN KNOWN TO STRETCH THE RULES...

TIME TO MAKE MY MOVE...

AND SPRINT TO FREEDOM!!

ARE YOU GOING AWOL, MAGGOT?

UH, NO, SERGEANT...

I WAS TRYING TO GO ASAP.
I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THE SERGEANT IS RIGHT.

MY WEAPON IS MY BEST FRIEND.

IT'S THE ONLY THING IN THIS CAMP...

THAT DOESN'T YELL AT ME.

SERGEANT? I'LL HAVE TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL SOON...

NOW, HOW DO WE WORK THAT?...

OKAY, IF THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN DO IT...

I WONDER IF I'M THE ONLY KID IN HISTORY TO ATTEND SIXTH GRADE ON THE G.I. BILL.
DON'T GET ME WRONG, SERGEANT... I THINK BASIC TRAINING IS GREAT...

BUT I'D LIKE TO GET SOME EXPERIENCE IN ANOTHER DIVISION OF THE MARINE CORPORATION...

WONDERFUL.

3rd Marine Underwater Demolition Division

SIR?... I'VE BEEN WONDERING...

IS THERE GOING TO BE ANY OPPORTUNITY FOR ADVANCEMENT IN THIS SUMMER JOB AT THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPORATION?...

ADVANCEMENT? CERTAINLY!!

FORWARD, MAGGOTS!!
SARGE, WHEN DO WE GET TO THE COMPUTER TRAINING?...

WE DON'T HAVE COMPUTERS IN THE MARINES, MAGGOT!

COMPUTERS CAN'T FIGHT THE ENEMY, CAN THEY?

NO, BUT I BET THEY COULD AGGRAVATE THE HECK OUT OF HIM...

THE SARGE SAID I WAS A MODEL MARINE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

HMMM... MODEL:

"Small imitation of the real thing."
I ADMIT IT: I USED TO GET HOMESICK AT SUMMER CAMP.

I GOT OVER THAT FINALLY.

BUT THIS SUMMER JOB IS SO BAD.

I THINK I'M SCHOOL SICK.

SOME OF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT ME AND HOW I'LL MAKE THE ADJUSTMENT TO THE REAL WORLD WHEN SCHOOL STARTS.

WELL, DON'T WORRY.

COMpared to THIS SUMMER JOB...

...THE SIXTH GRADE IS CLUB MED.
Your summer job changed you...

How did the summer job turn out?

Great! I got a lot of really solid business experience!

How could you possibly learn all that in just a few weeks with the U.S. Marine Corporation?

Sure! Now I know what it will really be like to have a career in the real world.

First of all, I was hugely underpaid.

I got yelled at on a regular basis.

How could you possibly learn all that in just a few weeks with the U.S. Marine Corporation?

EASY.

First of all, I was hugely underpaid.

I ate strange food with roomfuls of total strangers.

Yeah, I’d say you got a good solid foundation in American business.

And at least twice a week I found myself up to my armpits in snakes, leeches and alligators.

No sleep.
THE SOLES, SARGE? YOU WANT US TO SHINE THE SOLES OF OUR BOOTS?...

THAT'S CORRECT.

SERIOUSLY, SARGE... DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S A LITTLE SILLY?

I MEAN, WHAT'S THE POINT?

TRAINING, MAGGOTS, TRAINING!

LET ME SEE IF I CAN EXPLAIN THIS TO YOU...

SEE, I TELL YOU TO POLISH THE SOLES OF YOUR BOOTS. NOW THAT'S A DUMB THING TO TELL YOU TO DO, RIGHT?

BUT YOU DO IT, RIGHT?

WELL, SOMEDAY I'LL BE TELLING YOU MAGGOTS TO JUMP OUT OF AN AIRPLANE...

AND THAT'S THE DUMMEST THING ANYBODY CAN DO.

MAYBE IT'S A GOOD IDEA NOT TO ASK YOUR SERGEANT ANY LOGICAL QUESTIONS.
A FEW MORE DAYS AND WE'RE OUT FOR THE SUMMER...

NO MORE SCHOOL, NO MORE HOMEWORK, SLEEPING LATE... SUMMER CAMP...

REQUEST PERMISSION TO EXTEND MY TOUR OF DUTY IN SIXTH GRADE...

I THINK CAMP WOULD BE A NICE IDEA FOR YOU THIS SUMMER...

OH, SURE! YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS TO ME EVERY SUMMER— I'D LOVE TO GO TO CAMP LIKE OTHER KIDS...

BUT, NO, I ALWAYS END UP AT CAMP HELL GETTING MY CHARACTER BUILT BY SOME GUY WITH NO NECK... NO THANKS!

I PROMISE THIS SUMMER WILL BE DIFFERENT.

THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT MY DRILL INSTRUCTOR SAID LAST SUMMER...
SO YOU DON'T WANT TO GO BACK TO SUMMER CAMP?
I WON'T HAVE TIME... I'LL BE WORKING FULL-TIME...
WORKING?
I'VE VOLUNTEERED MY BODY TO MEDICAL SCIENCE...
.. TO STUDY THE EFFECTS OF TOO MUCH SLEEP, TOO MUCH T.V. AND TOO MUCH PIZZA ON THE HUMAN BODY...

LISTEN, I FOUND A NEW SUMMER CAMP FOR YOU...
OH NO YOU DON'T. I'VE HAD IT WITH SWEATY SLIME, MOSQUITOES, SWAMP CREATURES AND, AT THE RISK OF BEING REDUNDANT, CAMP COUNSELORS...
RIGHT, I DON'T BLAME YOU... THIS ISN'T CAMP LETHEUNE OR PARRIS ISLAND.
THIS ONE'S NEAR OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA.
I HOPE I CAN CHECK THE WINDSURFER THROUGH TO L.A....
NOT INTERESTED.
SO TELL ME MORE ABOUT THIS CAMP IN CALIFORNIA...

WELL, IT'S CALLED CAMP PENDLETON...

GREAT! NONE OF THOSE SILLY FAKE INDIAN NAMES...

YOU'RE A TAD OLD FOR THE FEATHERS AND THE TEEPEES AND THAT STUFF...

I THINK I'LL GO FOR THE TANNING MERIT BADGE WITH A MINOR IN BACKGAMMON...

SO, LET'S HIT THE AIRPORT AND CATCH THE SILVER BIRD FOR THE COAST.

I'M AFRAID YOU WON'T BE FLYING.

THAT'S COOL... I CAN DO A BUS TRIP... I GOT MY BEACH SOUNDS...

WELL, YOU WON'T EXACTLY BE IN A BUS EITHER...

HEY! A WOODIE! I LIKE IT...

A WOODIE! I LIKE IT...

A NICE VINTAGE SURFING TOUCH...

AWFUL BIG WHEELS THOUGH.
Dear Uncle Cosmo,
Camp Pendleton is okay, I guess...

but California isn't exactly what I expected.

There's more to hanging around the pool than you would think.

Yo! Fellow campers! This must be my wheels to camp Pendleton, am I right?

You got it...

In the truck, maggot... I mean now...

Something tells me I won't be needing the water skis again this summer...
I FINALLY GOT MY BOOTS POLISHED JUST RIGHT...

BUT INSPECTION IS THREE DAYS AWAY...

I'D LIKE TO RENT A SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX.

INK

I KNOW CHIN-UPS BUILD UPPER-BODY STRENGTH...

BUT IF I HAVE TO HANG HERE MUCH LONGER...

I'LL JUST BE BUILDING UPPER BODY LENGTH.
COME ON, MAGGOT, GIMME JUST ONE SIMPLE CHIN-UP...

IT'S JUST A CASE OF MIND OVER MATTER...

ACTUALLY, THE MIND HAS VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH A CHIN-UP.

SARGE? WHY DO I HAVE TO BE ABLE TO DO CHIN-UPS?...

I MEAN, WHERE ON EARTH WOULD A LOUSY CHIN-UP SAVE MY LIFE?

BESIDES HERE, OF COURSE...
I HATE THESE INSPECTIONS...

WHAT'S THAT UGLY CRUD ALL OVER YOUR GLASSES MAGGOT?

I BELIEVE IT'S YOUR SALIVA, SERGEANT!

I WILL NOW SHUT MY EYES AND BECOME COMPLETELY INVISIBLE...

THE MARINES WILL BECOME A PART OF YOUR LIFE.

YOU WILL LIVE, EAT, BREATHE...

AND OCCASIONALLY THROW UP...

THE MARINE CORPS!!
Dear Uncle Cosmo,
Thanks very much for sending me those chocolate chip cookies.

It means a lot to get extra food here at Camp Pendleton.

And a box of cookies keeps the sergeant occupied for almost half an hour.

Aright, you maggots, fall out! It's 4 A.M....

"Fall out." I always wondered where that term originated?

Probably right here in the good old U.S. Marine Corps.
AWRIGHT, LISTEN UP!! I WANT YOU MAGGOTS TO FALL OUT IN FIVE MINUTES— UNIFORM OF THE DAY WILL BE YOUR M-19 FULL-COMBAT CAMOUFLAGE FATIGUES... OR "CAN'T-SEE-ME SUITS" TO THOSE IN THE KNOW.

I FEEL LIKE A REAL DOOPUS IN THE CAMOUFLAGE STUFF... I MEAN, DOES THIS STUFF REALLY MAKE YOU INVISIBLE? OKAY, IT'S PROBABLY VERY EFFECTIVE IF WE HAVE TO SNEAK AROUND IN A COMBAT SITUATION... INSIDE AN ARMY-NAVY STORE.
Aright, maggots! You're about to start out on your three-day survival test...

In which you will be issued nothing but your Kabar knife... three matches, and a piece of string!

No peanut butter?

Your three-day survival test will teach you many things about yourselves...

For one thing, you will find that you can eat anything if you have to...

I think the cooks at Camp Pendleton have already proved that.
During your survival training you will be in a situation where you will eat things you have never eaten before...

Oh, no...

We're going to a Thai restaurant?

During your survival training you will learn to eat anything to survive...

Leaves, bark, even insects...

That does it.

I'm sneaking some Louisiana hot sauce along this trip.
Okay, here I am alone in the middle of nowhere on survival training...

With nothing but my Kabar knife, three matches and a piece of string...

I'll have to depend on my wits to survive...

Which will be difficult, since I am currently scared out of them.

---

The things you need to survive alone in the woods are: water, food and shelter...

So first I need to locate a reliable source of drinking water...

Or work on a good rain dance.
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL WITH THIS SURVIVAL TRAINING ANYWAY?

I'M ALL SET! I'M WARM AND DRY... I'VE GOT A NICE PLACE TO SLEEP... I DON'T REALLY NEED A THING.

IN FACT, THIS IS A PIECE OF CAKE...

GORKLE

I WISH I HADN'T SAID THAT.

THE SECOND DAY OF SURVIVAL TRAINING YOU REALIZE THAT YOU REALLY WILL NEED TO EAT SOMETHING.

SO, EQUIPPED WITH JUST A KNIFE AND A LENGTH OF STRING, YOU STRIKE OUT...

SOON YOU MAKE AN AMAZING DISCOVERY ABOUT THE ADAPTABILITY OF YOUR BODY TO ADVERSE CONDITIONS:

THIS STRING TASTES PRETTY GOOD WITH A LITTLE LOUISIANA HOT SAUCE...
Here I am alone in the woods on my survival test...

I guess I'll have to chop some boughs out of this pine tree...

For shelter from all the elements...

Rowf!

Of course, wolves aren't elements...

This survival stuff isn't so awful...

I'm snug and warm and it's a clear night.

In fact, looking up at all those stars up there makes me realize that I am just a small insignificant link in the food chain.
Now that I've chopped down all these pine boughs, I'll be perfectly safe...

Unless, of course, wild animals are threatening...

In which case I can always climb a tree...

I'd like to go home now, Sarge.

What?

Yes, of course I like California.

It's the Marine Corps version of California I have problems with.
LISTEN, SARGE... DON'T TAKE THIS PERSONALLY.

I HAVE TO GO HOME.

I KNOW THE MARINE CORPS IS HOME TO YOU, SARGE...

BUT I NEED A DIFFERENT KIND OF HOME...

SOMETHING IN MORE OF AN OFF-WHITE.

LISTEN, SARGE, I'M NOT QUITTING THE CORPS BECAUSE I'M CHICKEN.

I'M JUST GOING BACK TO SCHOOL.

YOU DON'T THINK THAT'S TOUGH ENOUGH?

I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU MAKE IT THROUGH MISS FISHBREATH'S ALGEBRA II.
SO I'LL BE SEEING YOU,
SARGE... IT'S BEEN AN
INTERESTING SUMMER...

Yeah, Camp Pendleton
has been a real kick.

Pun intended.

Most kids come home
from summer camp with
all kinds of stories.

The same is true
with me and Camp
Pendleton—especially
the story part.

And I'll really have to
come up with a good one
to explain the tattoo.
I just can't spit shine this boot...

Maybe my spit isn't shiny enough.

All we ever do around here is shine boots.

LISTEN UP, MAGGOTS!

You have the rest of the afternoon off.

You can do anything you feel like.

--bearing in mind that inspection is at 0500 tomorrow.
Skyler's T-shirts are available at your local Marine Corps Exchange, or contact Comic Collectibles 5446 Highway 290 west Austin, Texas 78735.
Shoe® (and Skyler) creator Jeff MACNELLY has won three Pulitzers for his political cartooning with The Richmond News Leader and Chicago Tribune, and has twice won the National Cartoonists Society’s Reuben. He was never in the Marine Corps, but did work for Camp Monadnock in New Hampshire, where he learned that summer camp is a lot more fun if you’re a counselor.

Shoe is syndicated in over 900 newspapers by Tribune Media Services.