



alpha two



From the distant realms of Freedom, Liberal Thought, and Individuality, the twenty-three men destined for Alpha-Two thundered through the gates of legendary RTC. Armed with long hair, college ideas, and slouches perfected through years of leaning over the fraternity bar to draw another beer, the Magnificent Twenty-Three stood ready for battle. The enemy awaited—pushups on the left of us, the grinder to the right of us, and Mr. Fox balefully glaring in front of us. We had heard about the rigors of OCS. The tortures were many and cruel: laps around the grinder “ad nauseum” (just ask Prindiville and Thorndike who first met and chatted amiably, between violent convulsions, draped over the toilets in Building 55), the pleasant ritual of hitting the bench, and the relaxing eight-count body bust, to cite a few of the OCS perversions. We slouched boldly, Redwoods in a forest of withered pine, flowers blossoming in a desert of mesquite plants. Then the bombs fell. The shock waves pulverized our brains. The fireball singed bushy heads into our balls. And when the smoke finally cleared, we stood dazed and daunted—23 cut, chopped, dried, washed, sliced, diced, and frozen OCS.

The dust finally settled, most noticeably underneath the radiator, and the platoon rose Phoenix-like from the ashes of our civilian funeral pyre. Our

friendly platoon officer, Mr. Fox, quickly gave himself away for what he is by shooting derisive comments at our assumed college educations and, even worse, liberal thought. He slyly impressed upon us the impeccable record of the previous Alpha-Two, suggesting that it would be nice if we could equal their achievements. The men of Alpha-Two braced themselves for the challenge.

Drilling is an important part of the OCS experience, if you happen to be interested in dentistry. The early commendable efforts of platoon commanders Dobbs and Bell turned a loose-knit group into a crack drill team that would make the Blue Angels look like four drunken goony birds. Individual platoon competition proved to be keen, but we managed to march away with several first places and a strong overall record. Alpha-Two further distinguished itself as the Honor Platoon for the Merchant Marine Safety School Graduation. In company competition, we joined our sister platoons, and the marching became a mere formality prior to the announcement that Alpha Company had once again taken first place. Our own Wild Bill Stromsen led the company to an early victory, apologizing all the way for subjecting us to the rigors of right-shoulder-arms and left-flanks.