



DEAN WISNIEWSKI "Wizzer" attracted the attention of the OCS staff early in the program with a very unusual five-button reef. Even after that difficulty was straightened out, he continued to rack up demerits because his name was on wanted posters all over RTC. While collecting a couple of nicknames of his own, Dean dished out a few, too, tabbing George "Penguin" Carmichael and Phil "Dolly" Dixon. Another of Dean's avocations involved getting as many laughs while on liberty as possible. Means to this end included such things as golf carts, houses in Virginia beach, and the like.

Bravo One derived its identity from two main sources. The first was its unique collection of individual personalities, facing the daily rigors of the OCS experience together. The second was Mr. Cragin, who shaped the collection into 23 officers in a way all his own. As the 17 weeks slipped by, we learned more and more about each other, by watching each person reacting to the rest of the platoon and to developments in the program. Every day, new incidents occurred that added to the shape of our group. The personalities, incidents, and Mr. Cragin are what we will each remember first and best about RTC; these are the things we've tried to summarize in the class book.

Our first "incident" at OCS was Mr. Cragin erupting from Barracks 94. The second, immediately thereafter, was a sprint to the parking lot in front of the barracks. In a sense, the rest of INDOC week was one giant incident. The calisthenics, the marching, the double-timing, those beautiful old M-1's, Kurt Muto's haircut, our haircuts, dungarees, leggings, guard belts, khakis, the selection of Bob Ruckel as our first platoon commander, merged into one incident.

While the platoon drew together, and INDOC week drew to a close, Mr. Cragin emerged, from under his cap and from behind his dark glasses, as an officer, and a personality, to be dealt with. We owed Mr. Cragin time, to be paid off at a poor rate of exchange, in the gym and on the drill field. But that was only one aspect of the mental war which raged for 17 weeks.

Our first off-base activity as Officer Candidates, the Norfolk-Portsmouth tour of the fourth week, was a Cragin-directed introduction to the real Guard. The stop at RCC in Fifth District Headquarters was marked by a race between one group

in an elevator commanded by Mr. Cragin, and the other half who didn't get the word.

Don McDaniels' disenrollment in the ninth week, while a disappointment to all of us, was the occasion for a get-together with Mac and Mr. Cragin at the Wharf. The farewell gathering was tempered by Mac's and Mr. Cragin's experiences in and perspectives on, the Guard.

When the platoon reported to Wormley Creek for small boat handling, neither rain, nor wind, nor even "Crash" Dickey could persuade Mr. Cragin and his troops to forfeit their three hours in the forty-footers. An unforgettable sight was Mr. Cragin, hatless and soaking wet, his head barely visible over the windscreen, showing the group how to execute man-overboard maneuvers.

What with inspections when we didn't expect them, and no inspections when we thought they were a sure thing, we didn't ever truly "psych" Mr. Cragin until the final days of the program, when we discovered a uniform discrepancy—Navy buttons on his cap. The coup was preceded by a two-week build-up and "capped" by a mess hall presentation—appropriately made by Mr. Dickey—of a set of Coast Guard buttons.

Although the mental battles between the platoon and Mr. Cragin, were fought throughout the program, it became evident that this was exactly his plan—to keep us sharp and on the defensive. However, the "madness" of his methods paid off in the end when we found how willing he was to help us out and go to bat for us when the pressure was on. His sense of humor and concern sent us out of OCS with a genuine respect for the Coast Guard and a willingness to do a good job at our next assignments.

