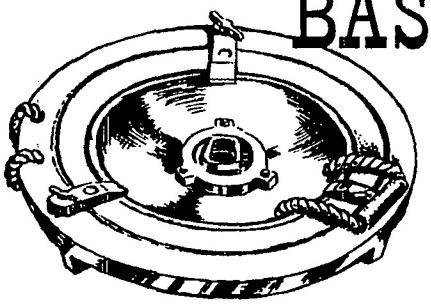

BASEPLATE Mc GURK

Baseplate is shook no end when Bertram-the-bar-keep suggests his platoon may be slipping back into civilian habits

BERTRAM KERNOODLE HAS FEW PEERS AS A BAR TENDer. He is melancholy, homely, and normally minds his own business. Just to look at him gives your morale a charge. You say to yourself, "Yourself, at least you're better off than Bertram-the-bar-keep."

And with that and a couple of deep sighs, you very much enjoy your first quaff. But there are days. And today was one of them.

"Mr. Kernoodle," I said (I am formal when displeased), "I've had a hard day and that uncomely smirk lurking around the corners of that sad puss displeases me more than somewhat. Although I know better than to ask, go ahead and tell me what is so funny. Then, please, kindly revert with alacrity to your old dear, unpleasant self."

"Well, Mr. Baseplate," answers Bertram-the-bar-keep, "I chortle because it looks as if 'The Man' has finally caught up with you. I suppose you'll not be patronizing this restful retreat as regularly forthwith and from now on?"

"Mar Corps Order 6100.3B?" I guessed.

"Mr. Rhodes showed it to me at noon," Bertram said.

Slipping a side look at my profile in the mirror, I resentfully opined, "Well, maybe my hip pockets are farther apart than some, but it isn't because of that watery beer you serve."

"Not you, Mr. Baseplate," he quickly assured me, "But I got a stern view of that platoon of yours on my way to work today. My, oh, my! 'The Man' says 'Commanding officers are responsible for Marines under their command being physically fit.' The next time I.G. comes by you'll be out selling hush-puppies."

"Oh, relax," I said, suddenly enjoying this rare bull-fest with Bertram. "Maybe my men are a little pudgy. However, I'll have them in shape by the time I.G. comes around next spring."

"That's just the point!" Bertram replied, dramatically jabbing his finger in the air and displaying the first agitation he has shown since the time he overheard a WM E-7 referred to as 'Gunny.' "The order concerns physical fitness and weight control not just one time a year but all the time. Now you're not doing your job, Lieutenant! You're letting those people slip back into their civilian bad habits. You let them sit around all day and spend every night in some Slop-chute filling up on geedunk and goodies."

"You're right," I admitted, "but higher headquarters hasn't spelled out anything. If my people are a bunch of blubber-butts it's battalion's fault, not mine."

"Their only fault is figuring that maybe some people down the line use their heads once in awhile," Bertram growled. "Now here's what you do. Weigh every man every day in whatever uniform you choose so long as it's the same for all weighings. Make a deal with the mess sergeant or whoever has a scale. Arrange to have them checked by a doctor and determine what their weight should be. Enter both figures on a platoon chart—where they are and where they're going to be. After that enter their daily weights—in red if they're not making progress! Institute daily exercise periods twice daily, 20 minutes each time. Run all men through all five tests once weekly without fail. Make a game out of it! Once they get into it they'll think it's 'number one'!"

"Anything else, sir?" I asked sarcastically.

"Yes, sir, there is," he replied unabashed as he turned away." When you get a man down to weight, note it as a temporary entry in his service record book. Whether the man is transferred or you are, his next CO will know that you carried out the spirit and not just the letter of the order." USMC

Baseplate McGurk, an old favorite, returns to the GAZETTE with this issue. With him is the same crew of spirited sages who delighted readers a dozen or more years ago. Time has been kind to McGurk and his friends, Mr. Kernoodle, Tex O'Reilly, Dusty Rhodes, and many more. We hope you'll make the Ale and Quail Club your favorite hangout.

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