1965 NAS Jacksonville Sick Bay Call

In September and October 1965. I was in Basic Aviation Classes at NAS Jacksonville. About ten days before completion, I came down with allergy caused severe bronchitis. My very loud coughing was keeping the rest of the squad bay from sleeping. On the third night, about one in the morning the Duty Sgt came to my bunk and told me to put on my clothes. He took me to the base infirmary.

At the infirmary, there was a medic on duty. He quickly checked me out and said he would give me some aspirin and I should come back in the morning. This did not sit well with the Duty Sgt. When the medic went get the aspirin, the Sgt told me to play deaf. After the medic returned, the Sgt demanded that I see a doctor. That led to a heated discussion about my need to see a doctor with the medic repeating saying no.

At this point, the Sgt said to me “can you hear me," and repeats it. I stand mute. He then turns to the medic and said: "either my Marine sees a doctor or you will see a doctor." The medic can't believe his ears and he said "what?" The Sgt repeats it and saying he will not say it a third time. About twenty minutes later, a doctor came in and examined me. He said I was very sick. He gave me a bag of medicines, a light duty chit for two weeks. I was also instructed to return the next afternoon if not improving.

On the way back to the barracks, I told the Duty Sgt that he just confirmed everything I had been taught at Paris Island about NCOs taking care of their Marines. A lesson that I have never forgotten!

Old Corps stuff.

Brian Putney