

Marine Tells of Shooting by DI

'I Wasn't Proficient Enough'

By Michael Ball
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PARRIS ISLAND, S.C. - "To this day, I still don't know why they picked me out, but I'm not the first and I won't be the last," said the Marine recruit who was wounded by a drill instructor.

The recruit, Pvt. Harry W. Hiscock, 25, of Rochester, N.Y., was shot in the hand Jan. 3 by Sgt. Robert F. Henson, 26, in front of numerous recruits and drill instructors. The DI was court martialed on Feb. 19 and 20 for the shooting, for previous hazing of Hiscock, and for attempting to cover up the incident.

Although the prosecution at Henson's trial recommended a dishonorable discharge, 14 years and three months in jail, loss of all pay and allowances, and reduction to the lowest rank, the judge, Col. Paul F. Henderson Jr., sentenced him to 15 months with loss of pay and allowances and a bad conduct discharge.

Also, in a pretrial agreement, commanding officer Maj. Gen. Arthur Poillon and Henson plea bargained. Poillon agreed in exchange for a guilty plea that, if a punitive discharge was ordered, the maximum jail sentence would be one year, with all but two months "deferred or suspended."

Base Assistant Staff Judge Advocate Maj. Jerry Crow said, "Henson is now on probation, if you want to compare it to civilian life. If he commits any other offenses, he will be sent to jail to serve the rest of the sentence. He has that 10 months hanging over his head," he added.

Crow's office has advised Poillon not to comment on the case until he has made his review. "He'll do that in about a week, and should remain impartial until then," Crow said.

However, Henson may face a civil suit brought by Hiscock's parents. Ward Whipple, the family attorney in Rochester, said, "No civil case has been started, but we're in the process of deciding if there will be one."

He added that while federal law forbids a soldier from suing his service, "he can, of course, sue those individuals who willfully caused the injury. He said he would wait until the extent of injury to the hand is known before filing suit.



**POINT OF ENTRY
Between Fingers**

The bullet fired at Hiscock entered his left hand between his index and second fingers, shattering bones and leaving through the fleshy side of the palm. Hiscock said, "the doctor cannot determine the extent of damage until I finish physical therapy, in about a month."

Hiscock is having therapy twice a day with "a rubber gadget that blows air into the hand to take the pressure off." He said that since he had been transferred to a medical rehabilitation section, "My situation has more or less changed: I've been treated very well.

"There has been no problem with the other recruits and they have asked a lot of questions," he added.

Hiscock said he entered the Marine Corps as a reservist and "came in here to better myself, to get an education." He had been an assembly line worker in a factory.

"I came here on Nov. 28, and the hazing started after the next week," he said. "I was a little slow and evidently wasn't quick enough for them."

He said that when he was not proficient at learning certain rifle movements, "they (the DIs) would all jump on me about it. In December, I was called in twice to the DI's office, grabbed by the collar, lifted off the ground, and slammed against the metal wall.

"I have always tried to do the best I could, but for them, it evidently wasn't good enough."

According to the trial transcript, the day before the shooting Hiscock was the subject of unusual hazing. Henson testified that two other DIs lifted Hiscock to the roof of a 10-foot high rifle range shed.

Hiscock was also made to jump from the roof. He was not injured.

He also testified that the three DIs made Hiscock chant degrading things, and that he had made him say things about sleeping with "his mother and brother."

The transcript states that the actual shooting took place from 50 yards away with Henson holding the rifle in his lap and aiming "in the general direction" with no sight used. "I thought I shook the powder out (of the shell), but made no effort to check," Hansen testified.

Before the incident, Henson threatened to kill Hiscock, according to his testimony. He said he made the threat in jest, which is permissible during training.

At the trial, Henson commented that it was "bad judgment on my part."

After the incident, Henson and another DI ran to Hiscock and examined the wound. On the way to the ambulance, Henson told Hiscock to tell anyone who asked that he had slipped in the toilet and cut the hand on a bolt.

When a captain in Hiscock's company heard that something had happened on the range, he "began an informal inquiry," according to Crow of the Judge Advocate's office. The captain apparently doubted the toilet story.

Crow said that the ensuing investigation showed that several DIs had filed false reports on the incident, saying they were not sure they had seen or heard anything unusual. It also showed that Henson told the recruits who witnessed the incident not to say anything.

Eight other Marines were finally charged in the cover-up attempt. Three were found not guilty. Four received "non-judicial punishment" from a written reprimand to demotion by one rank and a fine. One was found guilty and fined \$1,200 and demoted by two ranks.



RECRUIT HARRY HISCOCK WITH SWOLLEN HAND
Bullet Exited in Darkened Fleshy Area

"I was afraid of some type of reprisal if I told the truth at the beginning," Hiscock said. He is now seeking a discharge, he said.

At the sentencing procedure, Henson said. "I seem them (the recruits) start from really nothing and ending up looking like something, sir ... looking like Marines, and I enjoyed that." He said he wanted to remain in the military: