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WHEN SUPERVISOR TALKS, this boy listens -- but how much does he learn? (Times-News Photo --- Earl Carter)

A Tough School For Tough Guys

Continued From Page 1

Three supervisors who struck each boy in turn.

Other boys were whipped while bending forward touching their toes, he said, and once several youths caught stealing were stripped naked, spread-eagled on a table, and walloped with "Big Bertha", a large wooden paddle with a taped handle.

One boy said a youth named "Goosh" was struck with a broom with such force that it broke. Another time, he said, supervisors captured one of two escapees and beat him until he told where the other was going.

← A young man from Kingsport who now has his own family and a steady job said a supervisor elbowed him in the stomach and hit him again when he doubled up looking at him wrong".

He told of seeing a teacher throw a sharp blackboard pointer at a boy in the rear of a classroom, putting a deep gash in the boy's arm.

Another day, he said, a supervisor discovered a hypodermic needle in the possession of a small boy and felled him with a blow to the neck. The man picked up the boy and struck him with his fists again and again, he said. The boy was taken to a dispensary for treatment; the supervisor claimed he hit the youth because he was a "dope addict", the graduate said.

Youths who violate school rules sometimes are shaved bald in lieu of whippings, boys claim. One said he was whipped for shielding his shaven head from the sun while standing in formation.

All boys are paddled once a week for "general principles" (GP's), said several youths, and some offenders are ordered to stand with their arms outstretched for long periods of time (Another said "GP's" applied only to beatings given for no reason to individuals, not groups, and that he had never heard of everyone being whipped at the same time).

All platoons aren't given equal treatment, said. Boys in the "Honor Platoon" get special

privileges and fewer beatings while those in the "Outlaw Platoon" — made up of thieves, etc. — are treated worse of all.

Bigger boys beat smaller ones, and the youngsters don't tell because they'd get a second whipping from a supervisor for "fighting", said one boy.

Smoking is limited to two short breaks a day, at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., but boys can smoke at night in dormitories before lights out. Youths complained that they couldn't go to the bathroom during school hours because they were given only two minutes between classes.

Food was "awful," according to a Kingsport boy.

"It's dirty," he said, "the boys spit in it and everything else. Once I was peeling potatoes and saw two guys spilling in some rice."

"The boys in the cafeteria told me on some days not to eat certain foods," said another. "They said other boys had dropped food on the dirty floor and then picked it up, or had returned from the bathroom without washing their hands."

Several said food was dished out in unequal portions, with the amount depending upon the recipients current standing with the server. A boy who described himself as a "PC" ("privileged character") admitted he was lucky enough to have a friend on the chow line and received double the usual amount.

A 19-year-old boy from Kingsport said youths were "trimmed" (refused meals) for minor offenses and had to stand in a "trim line" outside the cafeteria watching other boys eat. He said boys who had to go to the bathroom during school hours sometimes lost two meals.

Clothing is also a problem, they said. Clean clothes are distributed irregularly and standard gear is insufficient for winter wear. One boy said he had only a pair of torn, baggy thin blue jeans and a thin undershirt for outside work and was always cold.

"Going to Pikeville is like going to Hell," he said.

NEXT — A Visit to Jordanias.

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