



Guy talks about an important story that provided him with some vital character traits as a young man. Log training is not for the weak – which is probably why it is typically used in the military to push their training to a higher level.

Smitty

The Diesel Crew



Pain is Weakness Leaving the Body

Guy Jones Dip Pt. Nlc1

‘Pain is weakness leaving the body’ bawled the army physical training instructor, ‘and believe me you will all be free of f***** weakness by tonight’.

The above statement was my introduction to log training at the tender age of 16, I had some how managed to volunteer my young skinny mostly hair free body when I joined her majesty’s army back in 1984. At this point it was just more shouting in a world of scary men who, it seemed to me were unable to converse below a bellow. But I had grown used to this and now viewed it as almost normal behaviour from a long list of evil torturers who, it seemed to me at the time just wanted to crush us all and stand over our twitching bodies laughing. We formed up in teams of ten and were given the brief on what was to occur next on the blast of the whistle.

The warm up consisted of a quick jog around the parade square only $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, followed by a quicker run, ‘last man in gets a dig’ to motivate a good effort (a dig is a punch to the head or gut, ‘your choice boys we aren’t commies’). This was followed

by sprints up and down the parade square, at some point the regimental sergeant major (Rsm) wandered past and then became apoplectic because we were defiling his 'perfect square' and so we were all to report to the jail for punishment when and if we made it back from the coming master class in misery. (Incidentally he also jailed his dog for taking a dump on the square and he jailed his bike for falling over when it was supposed to be leant against a wall... 'Who told you, you could lie down, you bastard').



At this point I thought it just couldn't get any worse, how wrong could I be? Once the preliminaries were completed, and by that I mean we were all fairly toasted from the warm up sprints, we were advised to move over to the big pile of telegraph poles lying next to the parade square. I had

spied them earlier and wondered who had been crazy enough to leave them lying around when the Rsm would see them, now with creeping dread the realisation that I was going to have to do something unpleasant with one or more of them was beginning to dawn on me. The P.T.I. gave us the log specific safety brief as a light rain began to soak us to the skin. The teams were further broken down from ten men into two squads of four and two alternates per log; the first four picked up the log and adjusted it so that it sat uncomfortably on their shoulders. The first man was right marker the second man took it on his left, the next man right the last man left. The other six of which I was one fell in behind and we marched off the square and out of the camp gates. It is at this point that my recollection begins to blur and I am sure that my mind has protected me from these painful memories, but it goes something like this. As we swung out of the gate we could have gone down hill towards the river and a fairly scenic route, but how much more fun would it be to run up hill for about a mile with a log on your shoulder that has to be big, strong and heavy enough to support high tension electric cables in a high wind.

After running up hill for about 400 metres the first squad was fully blown and it was now time for my squad to step up and shoulder the log, as we hoisted it to our respective shoulders I felt my lumbar spine, diaphragm and intercostals compress laterally, my breathing became laboured as we quick marched up the hill. If memory serves me my first thought was ‘oh god’ my next came some time later in my microcosm of suffering which was along the lines of ‘sod this for a game of soldiers’.

We ran on and off the log for about eight miles with a brief sojourn where we lined up in parallel teams. The next order was to pick up your log! Then we were instructed to throw the log across to the other team, one team throwing up and over the other team throwing under, to be caught as a team. This may sound like fun to many of you, but as a callow youth with little in the way of any dental problems I for one found this to be less than enjoyable. Then we had to lie down and as a team manhandle the log onto our feet and leg press the log, which isn’t easy when we were all of differing heights. The leg length issue also caused a lot of pain to those of us who were taller because we tended to bear the majority of the weight and were unable to extend to lockout and therefore didn’t even get a brief respite. The rest of the run passed into a blur of left shoulder press, lower to the right and repeat ad nauseum. Followed by two log teams come together and the instructors are carried aloft, further exacerbating the misery. Then we all got down and performed a million sit ups with the log, deadlifts and clean and press, press ups with hands on the log.

When the camp gates came into view we were exhorted to suck in our guts and be proud of a good effort, there was one last big effort left as we broke out of formation and raced as teams towards the promised land and the security of knowing the



next lesson was a light lecture and a practical session of weapon handling. Once we were through the gates everybody relaxed, morale went up and the usual tired but happy banter permeated the damp air. It was then that confusion began to reign, because instead of breaking into a quick march, coming to a halt and putting the cursed logs down we kept on going. Back around the parade square not once, not twice but three times, guys were dropping with exhaustion and puking their guts out, my eyes blurred from lack of oxygenated blood getting to my brain and nausea undulating in my stomach. 'Breaking into a quick march, quiiiiick maaaarch.....squaaad haaalt'!! at this point I could have kissed the evil bastard because I was about to pass out, a serious lesson in Stockholm syndrome, only to be deflated yet again because we were now to perform team relay sprints and the loser team would be suitably punished, after two hours it seemed that they must have been bored because they called a halt to the proceedings and we all filed down to the jail for instruction on how we could appease the Rsm, this turned out to be a respirator run at 19:00 hours, it was only a five miler so nothing to write home about, except that it was to be performed wearing our personal gas masks. But that is a story for another time

After about a year of this type of cruel and unusual punishment I can honestly say that I became bullet proof, none of my school yard bullies could touch me and when on leave I found I had gained the respect of one who tried to push me around as he had prior to my enlistment only to come back to consciousness and a new found understanding of his real place in the food chain, this of course was preceded by a tap on the chin and a short nap of course. I was robust in a way that the usual three sets of ten exercises on the multi-gym could never duplicate. Now I am not suggesting that you should train as hard as that because it was horrible. The log gives you no opportunities to hide, when you are on the log you are wishing that you weren't and when you are off the log you are dreading the command to change. In spite of how horrible it all is I do have to say that for team building and weak link elimination, the log run has to come out on top because those who are full of hot air become deflated very rapidly and those who are willing to dig deep come to the foreground. It was quite enlightening to see some of the supposedly weak men pushing the hard men off the log and sending them scuttling off to lag at the back with the lame and lazy.

This was written for trainers of teams who don't have a lot of time to devote to the separate endeavours of fitness, strength, morale and team building because the log does all of this in one ugly, miserable and painful package. So if your team is losing give them a kick in the pants and at the same time find out who has the stones to fight to the finish and who is a gutless wind bag. Supplemental exercises can include team lunges, forwards and back for distance, repetitions or time. Overhead lunges, which are very challenging when you are all different heights as are Squats and overhead squats. Another team builder is the flag pole which consists of pushing the log into a supported upright position and then taking it in turns to climb to the top and flatten out over the perpendicular end whilst impersonating a crow....(combat recruit of war) crawl, crawl! All you need is a long pole that can accommodate at least four bodies and weighs enough to require at least four bodies to haul it. For a variation on the shouldered log you can also tie rope loops to the log for carrying at arms length. This is a real forearm killer.

I would say enjoy, but that is most unlikely; so instead I shall just say learn from it and please don't hate me. But if you do want to curse me out then Email me at phasiclife@hotmail.com and I will pretend to care, oh yeah watch out for splinters.

Guy Jones Dip Pt. Nlc1

My next offering will be something to do with respirator or gas mask training... not ,r the asthmatic!!