



**I**t is 0645, and the relentless din of my alarm echoes across the walls of room 1331. Both my roommates are already awake, finishing their early routine of showering and shaving. Much to my initial disdain, they have always been morning people. I live in one of the largest rooms on campus with the first battalion commander. He and I had become friends the previous year, and so when he offered a spot in his veritable palace, I jumped at the chance. Room 1331 is about the size of two full barracks rooms put together. Most people would still consider this to be small, but they have not lived as a cadet for nearly four years now. If there is one thing that this institution leaves you with, it is an appreciation for the little things—things that most people overlook and do not respect.

In room 1331, there exists an interesting blend of cadets. My roommates, Pat and Brett, are originally from Bravo and Delta companies respectively, but both now serve on first battalion staff. Pat is battalion commander and Brett is the executive officer, while I myself am just a simple Alpha Company boy, trying to do what I

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There is something about roommates at The Citadel that transcends much of what we do here. I do not know where this bond originates, but I do know that if I need anything I could ask either of my roommates, and they would help me, regardless of the fact that we are from different companies and regardless of the fact that we have less than a week until graduation.

My clock just ticked over—0656—and the rollout horn is bellowing its long distinctive note. I quickly grab my cover and head to the door. Reminiscent of knob year, we all leave the room together. Old habits just die hard, I guess. Our room is located between Alpha and Bravo companies. I have always gone down Alpha stairs, so I peel off to the left and shuffle down them. Pat and Brett go right, down Bravo's. More old habits that die hard.

We get back to the room after breakfast mess and the result is predictable. Pat is playing his music and is just being loud in general, Brett is getting ready for the day, and I am sleepy. For me, as a senior, this is what barracks life is all about. This moment, right here, right now is what I will remember in the years to come. It is also the moment I will miss the most, not because of its significance or poignancy, but exactly because it is not these things. The very ordinariness of it all has a way of sneaking into your soul without you even realizing.

Sometimes you have to remind yourself that this military school life has become normal and realize that this is not the way that the rest of civilization lives. Most of the world does not do what we do every day, and to their detriment, most of the world has not forged the kind of bond cadets have with one another.

In the end, only time will tell if The Citadel experience has truly prepared me for the world that I am so close to entering. Countless alumni have assured me that it will and more, so I will put my anxiety aside, turn my eyes to the horizon, my heart to the heavens and eagerly anticipate what is to come.



can. Actually, this meeting of the companies is a very unusual occurrence. Most cadets are extraordinarily loyal to their companies, and rooming with other companies is uncommon and even discouraged. But here in staff-land, rules change a bit and allowances are made.

With cadets from three different companies living together, there has emerged an ultra-competitive, and therefore, ultra-critical environment. Any action by one member is subject to review by the remaining pair. The offense can be anything from an argument to just staring at someone awkwardly. But strangely enough, it is some of the most fun I have ever had. It is true, we tease, cajole and insult, but nothing is ever done out of hate or actual dislike. If I ever need to be serious or really talk, I know I can.