

Aren't You Supposed To Sweat?

I am working on an article about John Forbes Kerry. As old anger welled up, it became difficult to remain objective and factual. I had to take a break from it lest I turn something that should be informative into an epic rant. Fortunately, according to my training schedule, Friday mornings are gym mornings. At about half past 6:00 AM I arrived at the gym door. My membership allows me to enter the gym anytime between 4:00 AM and midnight. While I was fumbling with the key chain for the key fob that opens the gym door, I read the sign that said apologetically "we are working diligently to fix the air conditioning." I thought that explains why the parking lot is empty. It has been an unusually warm and muggy week.

I had water. The lack of air conditioning was not going to hinder my exercise time. Aren't you supposed to sweat? Isn't that a part of exercise? My mind made it back to Fort McClellan, Alabama where I spent almost three years as an Army Drill Sergeant. In the summer my feet would get so hot moving troops on the hard ball that I'd think they were on fire. It was always refreshing to look out ahead and see the heat mirage rising from the road experienced with the ambience of a couple hundred sweating stinking trainees. It was almost worth it though to see the Senior Drill Sergeant pop a smelling salts cap in the nose of a chubby female Second Lieutenant right after she went belly up. "Get in the truck EL Tee. We can't have you passing out in front of the troops. And no bangs hanging out the front of your headgear please." I've been hot before, I didn't need no stinkin' air conditioning.

There was at least a half-dozen fans scattered around the weight room swirling thick air. Without air recirculation the stink was building up. It was not quite as bad as an outhouse. Imagine a several days-old sweat socks stuck to

your face with just a hint of armpit.

I tossed my Army Retired ball-cap, keys and water bottle into one of the bins near the door. I pulled on my work out gloves. The ones that let my fingers stick out. It's one of the accouterments that makes me look like I know what I'm doing. It also makes my pose in front of the mirrored wall look better. Figured I better water up before I got started so I grabbed my water bottle and took a bid swig. My eyes settled on the drink machine over by the door. There's a sign on it that says no outside drinks please. I could buy their water for a dollar. There's a big red sign on the wall just above the door advising me that I was under video surveillance. So, I posed, looked directly at the camera and took another drink. I felt rebellious.

I was alone in the sauna filled with weight machines. First things first. I grabbed the television remote and set all the TVs except one to the Fox News channel. I like to watch the liberals grimace and nearly injure themselves in their haste to plug in the ear buds. The other I put on the food channel. People can get anal about TVs in the weight room. There is this one OCD guy that comes in and picks up any weight room equipment someone may have left on the floor and puts it on the racks. Then he goes to the dumbbell rack and puts them all in order. After that, without asking anyone, he'll put every TV on Good Morning America. He does inspire me to put a little more effort into my workout. Good Morning America? Really? Yes, when he's there, I do intentionally put dumbbells back in the wrong place.

I must tell you about this one guy. Big dude. NFL tight end size. He does some intense weight training. He had a big beard and looked killer serious. One day he showed up without the beard. He had no chin. I asked why he shaved off the beard. Can you imagine how painful it was for me to not bust out laughing before a man that was foot taller than me and had arms as big as my waist when that girlish voice came out of

his mouth.

Still alone as I was leaving the gym, I put one TV on the Hallmark channel and the other on C-Span.

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E-Mail JD Pendry: jd@jdpendry.com