

MACV Army "A" Photo Team Films The GOER

While stranded, for lack of a better term, in Pleiku, awaiting a mobile dental lab to become functional, the concept was to take the dentist and lab to the remotely stationed needy troops, that was impossible to make routine dental appointments back in base camp. Whether the dental lab required equipment, parts or repairs and/or lack of helicopters to transport the portable dental facility to isolated artillery fire support bases was uncertain.

For three weeks the photo team waited for the dental lab to become operational. For a consolation, the photographer asked other units in the Pleiku area for other potential photo assignments. A transportation unit said, they had a new truck in country, that could travel anywhere. The unit boasted of the superior aspects of the new truck, over anything currently in the army's vehicle inventory, that the army nicknamed the new truck, "The GOER."

Immediately adjacent to the transportation unit possessing the new GOER trucks, the photo team crossed a small creek with steep banks, but shallow water. At the GOER Unit, the officers and enlisted personnel all touted and expounded the virtues of the new truck. Telling the photo team, it could travel over boulders, through sand, climb up rough hilly terrain, glorifying all the capabilities of the GOER had over other trucks in the motor pool. The unit had two versions of the GOER truck, a tanker and general cargo GOER Truck. The unit said, the GOER was intended to replace the 5 ton standard truck. After hearing all the accolades being bestowed upon the new truck, the photo team asked to film a demonstration of the GOER's capability.

The motor pool was filled with vehicles and cramped for space. The flat gravel surface was certainly unsuitable to demonstrate the capabilities of an diverse terrain vehicle. Both versions of the GOER were filmed, outside the motor pool area.

At the motor pool gate, the photo team asked if the GOER could traverse the creek? The motor officer and sergeant both exclaimed, Sure--no sweat! Easy to do! I sent the assistance cameraman across the bridge to get a head-on of the GOER emerging from the creek. I would film the GOER entering the creek as a Tail-Away position. The motor sergeant gave the driver some instructions, with both cameras rolling, the tanker GOER entered the creek. The driver nearly got the GOER up the other side, but failed and the truck slid back into the creek. See photos at this web-site. Several more attempts by the driver were to no avail.

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The motor sergeant changed places with the driver, for the Serge to get the GOER out of this embarrassing situation. The motor sergeants attempts to get the GOER out of the creek also failed. In horror and disbelief, the motor pool personnel dumped several hundred gallons of fuel into the stream to lighten the load. I knew full well somewhere down stream Vietnamese or Montagnard villages depended on this clear creek for drinking water and wash clothes. Even with less weight, the go anywhere new all terrain truck was STUCK. Calling back to the motor pool from the gate guard booth, the unit's tow truck soon appeared on the scene. The combined power of the tow truck and the GOER, couldn't extract the new truck from the creek.

This episode definitely greatly embarrassed the GOER unit, putting egg on their faces, shaking confidence in the merits of the new equipment's real ability as an all terrain utility vehicle. The photo team as outside observers weren't impressed with the GOER, certainly not myself. The motor pool personnel that a half hour earlier had heaped praise on the new truck, now looked in disbelief with long silent faces, that the GOER was stuck in that little stream.

Other vehicles larger than the tow truck were used to try and free the GOER. Pushing two hours into the ordeal a tank retriever came rumbling down the road. The brute strength and massive engine of the tank retriever eased the GOER from its confines of the creek. However the grossly bruised egos and tarnished bragging of the GOER Unit's personnel, too ashamed of themselves, restricted further filming maneuvering of the new trucks to travelling on grassy fields (see attached slides.)

I wondered why nobody hadn't tried to cross that stream, with a GOER before us? Totally unimpressed with the GOER, I'm not sure we ever submitted the film to Washington for processing and eventual release to T.V. News. Luckily the GOER story wasn't the only add-on, pick-up or consolation story the film team found in Pleiku.

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Written Oct 2004