

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF CHARLES E. HUTTO

I was born in Delhi, La. on December 17, 1948. I don't remember much while I was young. But my first day of school was unforgettable. Boy was I scared and very shy. When my sister left me at my room I started crying thinking that she would come back to get me. There was so many people it scared me because all I was ever used to seeing was my family and a few relatives. Well I didn't like it one bit because I wasn't used to being cooped up in a small room. When I finally realized that I couldn't go home, I settled down to my studying. My first, second, and third grade passed without much happening. It wasn't the best thing going to my school because we were very poor and sometimes I would go to school without shoes and my clothes would be torn and ragged. I guess I really began hating it when a girl in my third grade class accused me of taking her nickel. I don't know what happened to it, but I did not take it. When the teacher started talking to me and telling me not to do it again, I started crying. Everytime I said I didn't take it she told me to stop lying. Finally, to get her to stop I told her I did it and gave that little girl my nickel for milk. I never did like arguing and fighting.

I didn't like being poor and being laughed at because I wasn't dressed as good as the rest of the kids. Every year I kept begging to quit school because I didn't like it but they wouldn't let me. Until I failed the eighth grade and told them I would get a job to help support them.

After I quit school, I got a job working on the farm, the pay was very low. At the time I was only 16, so all they trusted me with was a hoe for hoeing grass out of bean field and cotton fields. I did this for about 5 months. The older I got they began trusting me with bigger equipment.

Finally they put me on a tractor. On a farm, to be put on your first tractor is a great thrill because It means you are growing into a man and usually make your father proud of you. It is the same with killing your first deer. If you haven't killed one by the age of 14 you are laughed at.

About a year later we moved because my father thought he was getting a better job, but it turned out not to be. There was not position for me at this new job, so I and the rest of my brothers and sisters were forced to pick cotton by hand to help support the family. My mother was pregnant with my sister Dolly at the time. This work was rough, hot, tiring, and the pay was little.

One day I began thinking about the life outside of the farm. Things weren't easy here, because my father didn't seem to want to help me at anything. The only person that seemed to care was my Uncle Jack. He took me to get my driver license and made me think about being free.

I was working for my own money and giving it all to my father to use on the bills and food, so I thought maybe I could give them half of it and use the other half for new clothes and maybe a car. My father had different ideas. He felt since I was his child and he brought me into the world that I owed him everything I made. So loving my parents and believing everything they said as true, I didn't argue.

One Christmas I got a bonus of \$500. I gave my father part of it and with the rest I bought an old truck. Well, he would only let me use it to hunt with and then I had to beg to go anywhere else. He used the truck more than I did and made it seem like it belonged to him.

One day at home I started talking to my parents about joining the Army. They thought it was a good idea. My cousin John and I decided to go in as Buddies, so we took the test together. I passed the test but my cousin failed because he had been into trouble with the police. The day I left for Shreveport was a very sad and lonely one for me. All of my relatives were there to see me off as the time I was going to be leaving home. When I arrived at Shreveport

I took my physical and passed with flying colors. They took me to a small room with a big flag and gave me the oath. I was officially in the Army. That afternoon I found out I would be going to Fort Polk, La. to complete my Basic training. I really thought I would get the red carpet treatment when I got there, but as I stepped off the bus there was a great big Drill Sergeant standing there. He started yelling out orders telling everyone to get off the bus in a hurry and to get on the cattle bus. It was terribly crowded there. From there we went to the Induction center to be given our shots. I got 7. We were standing outside in formation when I got dizzy and began seeing pink spots in front of me. When I woke up there was a Corporal holding both my legs up making blood run into my head. The next day we took I.Q. test to see where we would best fit. I didn't try because it reminded me too much of school and I didn't think it would be important. I was placed in the Infantry, E. C., 1st Bat, 2nd Training Brigade, Basic Training Co. I got issued my uniform. That steel pot was so heavy that I thought I wouldn't be able to wear it. In basic training I learned to take orders and obey them without thought.

On March 17, 1967 I graduated from basic training and learned that I and 21 other men in this company would be going to Scofield Barracks, Hawaii for jungle training. I was scared because I heard that it was a stop off the one way to Viet Nam. Before leaving Fort Polk, I was given a 17 day leave that I spent at home visiting with my family.

At Scofield Barracks I was assigned to C Co., 1st Bat., 20th Inf., 11th Bde. This is where I was to receive A.I.T. training. There I learned how to operate the M16, M60, M79, and many others. We also learned all about booby traps and land mines because a lot of those were used. During one of our sessions we were supposed to learn how to live off the land. The Sergeant got up before the men with a chicken. Slowly he rang the chickens neck and then turned it up and drank the blood. Afterwards he told us we had to catch a chicken and do the same thing

you up and dump you into a big 55 gallon drum full of manure and other kind of unforgetable liquids. The training was tough but it had to be because we were going to Viet Nam and stay in the field most of the time so we had to learn how to survive without any of the conviences. By the time we left we had been there 8 months and the men had become close, almost like brothers.

I landed in Chu-Li, Viet Nam. It was hot and dusty there. From there we were convoyed to LZ Carantan. This is where we got a week or two of training in Viet Nam conditions. From there we were sent to a new location that was supposed to be full of Viet Cong. It was, and we were in our first fire fight. This is where I earned my C.I.B. Viet Nam was rought, I spent most of my time in the field dogging mines, bobby traps, and snipper fire. A lot of my buddies got hit and many got killed. I left Viet Nam for Japan because of a Cis on my leg that had to be cut out. It interfered with my marching and was causing considerable pain. I stayed in Japan a couple of weeks then came back to Tallulah, La. for a 60 day leave.

My stay home this time was quite different because I had missed a lot of good food and rest while in Viet Nam. During my stay at home I met Brenda S. Hires, the girl I was to marry a week later. We got married on Jan. 6, 1969, three weeks later I was shipped to Fort Lewis, Washington. I spent 1 year there and was then shipped to Fort McPherson, Ga., where I am at this moment. During my off duty hours at post I am Manager of a Dairy Queen in Atlanta. My Army record has been spotless (except for a speeding ticket in Fort Lewis) and I have no police record.

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