

I entered the service knowing that I was gay. I was accepted into the Army's ASA (Army Security Assoc.) and obtained a **Top Secret** clearance because I filled out all the paperwork with references to my rural childhood years while avoiding drawing any attention to the single year at Ohio State at which I had finally started to explore my homosexuality. I firmly believed that my sexual orientation was of no business to the Army or the Department of Defense and I saw no conflict between my personal life and fulfilling my patriotic duty.

After eight weeks of basic training at Ft. Dix, NJ and a year of Vietnamese language training at the Defense Language Institute, South West (DLISW) Fort Bliss, El Paso, TX and three months of radio intercept training at Goodfellow A.F.B., San Angelo, TX; plus several off-base romances in the two Texas cities and a couple whirlwind, sexy trips on my 2-week-off periods, I found myself departing Oakland on a plane to Viet Nam.

In the three exciting days exploring San Francisco, prior to departing for oversea duty, I caught a case of the crabs, so I had to suffer through that during the 23-hour flight to Tan San Nuit Airport. But what made the flight more uncomfortable was my fellow passengers. The conversations of the other men were heavy with speculation of what was coming. I have ~~always~~ been one to not waste a lot of time *gossiping* speculating on what's to come. I have ~~always~~ been comfortable waiting until the time comes that I will know what is happening. The flight was so exasperating because everyone else wanted to talk about what to expect. Of course, most of them had reason to experience anxiety because they would be going into much more dangerous situations that I was expecting.

We landed at Tan San Nuit and were bused to processing areas at MACV late in the afternoon that 15th day of April 1970. By evening I had had a chance to go to a field medical facility and had been given a tube of cream to apply to my crotch problem. I was so thankful not to have to deal with an oily product that only worked in conjunction with a hot shower. I did not know where I would find a hot shower.

For two days I stayed at the ASA compound at MACV, but by my 22nd birthday on 4/18, I was flown to Da Nang, miles north of Saigon. I spent my birthday watching an outdoor movie at the Radio Research compound that night.

The next morning I was trucked further north. The only place in South Viet Nam where the mountains (generally in the west) extend to the sea coast (the east) is in the area north of Da Nang. The coast highway has to climb considerably to get over those mountains. It is a beautiful, scenic drive. It was the first time that I realized how beautiful parts of the country were. As we drove along, I could look down to the blue, South China Sea or on the other side, I could watch the wonderfully forested cliffs and canyons go by. Sometimes, if I looked up a canyon, I would see a shimmering waterfall.

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