

LCDR Jack Graf: Vignettes from the 3rd Coastal Zone Intelligence Team



Bob Melka remembers Jack this way:

Shrimp on the Barbie

Jack collected "people" the way some collect stray dogs or cats. He met several Aussie NCOs in a bar one night, and they introduced us into the Vung Tau Aussie community. We got to know the EOD gang, and they had a clubhouse/bar up at the top of one of the two mountains at the foot of Vung Tau. They had a party/cookout every Sunday to "throw a few shrimp on the Barbie."

This is a shot of Jack relaxing as the food cooked.



Jack and I became regulars.

We got spoiled, since the beer available to the Americans was the low-dose 3.2 variety, and usually skunked from lack of refrigeration. We got into Aussie beer as a habit, and would get loaded with the Aussies and, regardless of who drove the Jeep back down the mountain, the return trip was always an adventure.



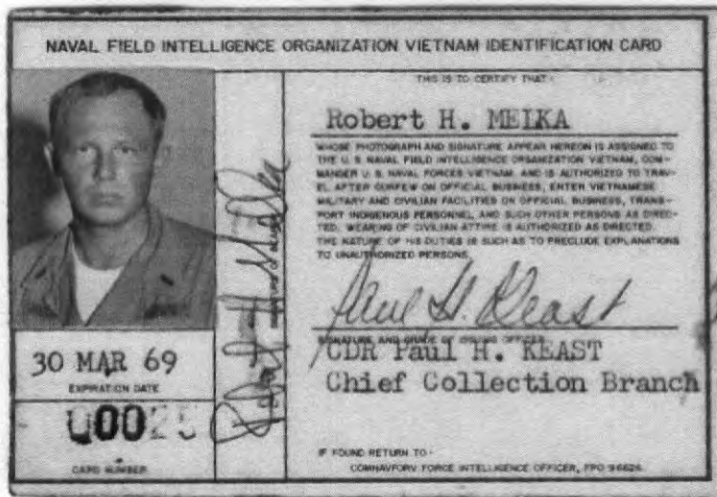
The thing to remember was that our identification included a “get out of jail free” card and the ability to motor about at any hour of the night.

Get out of Jail Free

Here are the words from the ID of a Naval Intelligence Liaison Officer, or NILO:

“Whose photograph and signature appear herein is assigned to the U.S. Naval Field Intelligence Organization Vietnam, Command U.S. naval Forces Vietnam, and is authorized to travel, after curfew, on official business, enter Vietnamese military and civilian facilities on official business, transport indigenous personnel and such other persons as directed, wearing of civilian attire is authorized as directed. The nature of his duties is such as to preclude explanations to unauthorized persons.”

In other words, “Get out of Jail, Free.”



Courage



There was a bad guy in our province we'd been trying to neutralize for months. Kind of the Robin Hood of the local VC crowd. I'd made a deal with the local advisory group (Coastal Group 33) buddies, LTJG Tom Green and his gunner and bosun mate, that I'd give them a pallet of Aussie beer if they'd nail this guy.

Jack's Aussie Pork-chop buddies traded him 80 cases for something--a couple cases of Jack Daniel's I think, and that pallet of beer was the payoff after they got the guy in an ambush one night. I got some intel that he'd be coming down a canal for a meeting, and Tom, his gunner, and a couple of VNs went out and waited in the weeds. They killed

everybody in the boat, or so we thought. I paid off, but the guy turns up *alive* a couple weeks later. He'd been gut-shot but managed to hide in the mangroves and escape. We figured he sank dead. We took the beer back--the 70-or-so cases remaining, and used it for other trades--whatever we didn't drink.

The Lady in Black



The Lady in black was somebody Jack found along the way. We called her Agent 99. I was Max and Jack was Chief.

Her parents had been killed by the VC in a northern province, and our VN counterparts used her as a spy/observer/agent handler. Jack met her through the Aussie G2. Her English was perfect, as was her French, her T&A, and everything else about her. She used to like to hang with Jack and me, because she was a bit wild and crazy and we always showed her a good time.

Vung Tau



Les Moore was another guy that Jack found. Les was a young first-tour Air Force O-2 Skymaster driver out of Vung Tau. He flew with Jack from that base three or four times because Jack liked to fly in an observation role looking for signs in the Rung Sat area, or the north part of the Delta. Les was quartered in a hotel housing C-7 drivers transport pilots, but did know where Jack hung his hat. He saw him at the Navy chow hall on base as it was ten times better than the Air Force chow hall.

He took the young officer under his wing, and they went to movies and evening meals in downtown Vung Tau at an all-ranks facility.