

## MILK AND COOKIES

By Gair Anderson

In less than one hour after landing for my very first mission, the reality of war introduced itself to me in the form of a loud explosion and the pain of hot metal in my back. I turned and looked around, without going into details; **Miller** and **Elias** were down, Larry **Curtis** was on one knee with his hand over his eye. I could hear **Parker**'s voice over the buzz in my ear "help Elias, Andy, help Elias." I pulled my medic bag from my pack and knelt over Elias, I would glance up from time to time to look for any possible danger. I looked up at one point and remember to this day a vision of Larry; it was if a Dutch Master painter had placed him in a pose before he turned to his paints and canvas. A most powerful man standing upright with his weapon at the ready. A small stream of blood and tears ran from his eye down to his chin. He saw and was ready for anything, I returned to the task at hand and I never again looked up because I knew that anything that moved, Larry would put in a permanent state of stillness.

After we returned, Parker and I were waiting for another team to be formed, we rotated on the base radio with teams in the field. During the long nights I would wonder about where I would go next. "Carr's team, please don't let me go to Carr's team". Carr's team was getting shot out every time. Not just now and then but every time. He always got everyone back and great stories followed, but it was still more than what I wanted at that time. It was about my 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> night on the radio and Carr called up from the field; this is where we're at, all is well but "we're running low on milk and cookies". I had never before heard that phrase and wanted to make sure I had the message right, "I understand you're running short of food and water" says I.

A louder voice with just a touch of anger came back, "No! milk and cookies".

You, the reader need to understand than I'm talking to SSgt. Carr, the badist boy in the bush, and in no uncertain terms, I have to get the is message right. I reply, "I understand that milk and cookies is not food and water". "No God damn it, who is this?" came from the other end of the radio. And then it hit me. "Code, this is a code". At that very instant, two very dynamic scenarios came to mind, one being a V.C. radio intercept operator running to command post shouting "the code, we've broken the American code, it's just a matter of time now" and then the other one, the one that would have a far more personal and destructive nature about it. In a few days Carr would be back, and this 131 pounds, heart pumping of pure nitroglycerin, individual was going to leave pieces of my butt all over L.Z. Betty. And then he did come back and I made myself small. Later that night I resigned myself to take whatever hit was coming my way.

All I got from Carr was a look, no to anger or malice but in my mind a statement of "Son, get your shit together, get it so tight it will fit in a corner of your match box."

All other things aside and in a very personal nature, my first week was the most important for me. I had seen the effects and results of war. I saw in Larry the warrior I needed to become, and in Carr, the mindset and way of thinking necessary to attain such.

My personal gratitude to you both, and my hat off to all others.

Andy