

SURGERY IN THE FIELD

From Doc Gilchrest

Leo Corey's whining essay of his visit to the prostate doctor was really heart-warming, and brought back some fond memories our time in VN.

The training on LRRP Hill in An Khe was especially intense and difficult to say the least. A few of us managed to get passes for some downtown passes and afternoon R&R. We made our way from one bar to the next, having a grand ole time, celebrating our enthusiasm for the next weeks training schedule.

At the last bar, a young but experienced bar maid began to stare and point at the huge black mole on Leo's face. In her defense I will have to admit that the mole was really large and protruding from Leo's right upper cheekbone. Leo's feelings were hurt and a few words were said between Leo and the young woman, which brings us to the story of Leo's ruggedly handsome good looks. He was not born with it.

Leo asked me if there was anything I could do about his demoralizing mole. We sipped a few more shots of our favorite drinks while I thought about a medical procedure that would make Leo a better looking person. I finally told Leo that I had seen Drs in the VA burn off moles with a cautery. This controlled the bleeding that comes from this procedure. I told him that the 15th Med guys could probably do it in a jiffy.

Leo was and probably still is an impatient person of sorts, and wanted to know why we couldn't do it right here, right now, in the An khe Bar with a dirt floor.

Jesse McConnell, David Dickinson, Johnnie Webb and a couple of others lrrps could not think of any good reason not to. A conference was held and we decided to burn the mole off with Cigarettes and use whiskey as an antiseptic, to which we all agreed. We worked in shifts lighting cigarettes and passing them to the person doing the burning. The mole bled profusely, which in turn put out the cigarettes. To overcome this obstacle we learned not to hold the cigarette to the mole, but to hold it as close as possible without getting it in the blood. This slowed down our operational time and accordingly went through three or four packs of cigarettes.

Not one LRRP complained about using up our own cigarettes, after all this was "our black swan". I am sure we drank as much of the antiseptic as Leo did. It was a very tedious and time consuming procedure. Days later when the bandages were removed and we waited in anticipation to see if the mole would return, we were rewarded with our "Swan".

Leo was born again. A more beautiful specimen than before and an ego to go with it. To this day the mole has not returned and Leo's good looks have taken him far and wide in this world we call home. By the way Leo, how did your prostate Dr know which end to stick the barrel?????

Doc Gilchrest
True Story.