

STOCKTON STORIES

I COULD SPEND AN HOUR OR TWO TALKING ABOUT THE MEN AND OFFICERS WHO CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE FIRST TEAM AND HOW WELL THEY WERE TRAINED; BUT IN THE INTEREST OF TIME LET ME JUST FOCUS ON A CHARACTER THAT MANY OF YOU WILL REMEMBER BACK AT FORT BENNING, IN THE CAROLINAS, AND IN THE EARLY DAYS OF VIETNAM.

COL JOHN STOCKTON, CALLED BY MANY "THE MAD GENIUS", THE "YUL BRENNER" OF THE 1ST CAV. A COLORFUL AND HUMOROUS CHARACTER, TO PUT IT MILDLY, HE WAS ALSO AN IMAGINATIVE INNOVATOR AND A SUPERB TRAINER. HE COMMANDED THE 3RD SQUAD OF THE 17TH CAV AND LATER THE 1ST SQUAD OF THE 9TH CAV.

WE ~~HAD~~ SENT ~~HIM~~ ^{HIS UNIT} DOWN TO FLORIDA TO GET SOME EXPERIENCE IN ~~REAL~~ JUNGLE TRAINING, AND WHILE HE WAS DOWN THERE HE PICKED UP AN ORANGUTAN AND BROUGHT ~~HIM~~ ^{TO FT BENNING} BACK. HE USED TO WALK AROUND AND GO TO BRIEFINGS WITH THIS ORANGUTAN HAND IN HAND. HE SHOWED UP ONE TIME IN THE 1ST BRIGADE CP AREA, GEORGE BEATY'S BRIGADE. AS HE WAS WALKING UP TO THE ~~TENT~~ ^{CP} ONE SOLDIER SAID, "HERE COMES STOCKTON WITH HIS ORANGUTAN." ANOTHER SOLDIER SAID, "WHICH ONE IS STOCKTON?" ANYWAY, THEY ^{WENT} GOT INSIDE THE ~~TENT~~ ^{CP}, AND BIG JOHN HENESSY WAS THERE. HE HAD HAD A RUN-IN WITH THE ORANGUTAN EARLIER, AND HE WASN'T TOO FOND OF IT. ~~ANYWAY~~, HE ^{JUMPED} STOOD UP AND TOLD ~~JOHN~~ ^{STOCKTON} IN FRONT OF THE ~~STAFF~~ ^{CP} AND COMMANDERS, "JOHN STOCKTON, YOU GET THAT DAMN ORANGUTAN OUT OF HERE, OR I'LL THROW YOU BOTH THROUGH THE WALL!" AND HE COULD HAVE DONE IT.

AT ^{ABOUT} THAT TIME I ~~WAS ASSISTANT DIVISION COMMANDER,~~ AND STOCKTON SENT AND OFFICER TO PHILADELPHIA TO ONE OF THE QUATERMASTER DEPOTS AND BOUGHT ^{UP} A BUNCH OF THE OLD CAMPAIGN HATS. HE BROUGHT THEM BACK, AND THEY HAD THEM DIED BLACK. ~~IN~~ ^{ADDITION} ~~TO THAT~~ ^{ALLY} STOCKTON HAD HIS OFFICERS RAISE MUSTACHES AND BEARDS. WITH THOSE HATS AND THOSE BEARDS THEY LOOKED LIKE GENERAL SHERMAN'S STAFF AS THEY MARCHED THROUGH GEORGIA. A PICTURE OF STOCKTON'S

UNIT WITH BLACK HATS SHOWED UP IN THE ARMY TIMES. HAROLD K. JOHNSON SAW
IT AND LET GEN KINNARD KNOW THAT HE TOOK A DIM VIEW OF UNAUTHORIZED UNIFORMS.
SINCE WE WERE WEARING AN UNAUTHORIZED ^{AIR} ASSUALT BADGE, AND THAT WAS A LITTLE
~~BIT~~ IN JEAPARDY, GEN KINNARD FELT IT WAS ONLY PRUDENT TO TAKE CARE OF THOSE
BLACK HATS, SO HE GAVE ME SOME CLEAR CUT INSTRUCTIONS. I CALLED STOCKTON UP
AND TOLD HIM TO TAKE THOSE "COTTON-PICKIN'" HATS OFF AND PUT THEM AWAY.

WELL, STOCKTON ALWAYS ACCEPTED THE CHALLENGE; AND ANY ORDER, NO MATTER
HOW CLEAR IT WAS NOR HOW TIGHT IT WAS, HE ^{SEARCHED} FOUND A WAY TO FINAGLE OUT OF IT.
HE ROSE TO THE CHALLENGE THIS TIME TOO. HE SAID, "GENERAL, HOW ABOUT SPECIAL
OCCASIONS?" WELL, RECOGNIZING THE IMPACT ON MORALE, AND HE REALLY HAD A UNIT
WITH A HIGH "ESPRIT DE CORP", I SAID, "OK, ON VERY SPECIAL OCCASIONS BUT
ONLY AFTER YOU GET MY PERSONAL PERMISSION." ~~THAT'S THE WAY WE LEFT IT.~~

IT WASN'T TOO LONG AFTER THAT THAT WE SENT STOCKTON UP TO FORT KNOX TO
PARTICIPATE IN MANEUVERS WITH SOME ~~OF THE ARMORED UNITS UP THERE.~~ ^{AND HIS UNIT} WHEN HE CAME
BACK HE CAME UP TO SEE ME IN MY OFFICE, AND HE STARTED OUT WITH HIS ~~USUAL~~ PITCH,
"GENERAL, I HAVE SOME BAD NEWS." MY USUAL RESPONSE WAS, "JOHN, GET TO THE
BOTTOM LINE. JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU DID." HE LIKED TO BUILD UP THE STORY,
STARTING AT SQUARE ONE. I FINALLY GOT IT OUT OF HIM THAT HE HAD HAD WHAT HE
CALLED A "SPECIAL OCCASION" ~~UP THERE,~~ AND SINCE HE COULDN'T REACH ME HE HAD
MADE A COMMAND DECISION AND LET HIS MEN WEAR THOSE BLACK HATS IN A PARADE.
LOW AND BEHOLD, SOMEONE TOOK A PICTURE; AND IT WAS PUBLISHED IN THE ARMY TIMES.
WELL, WE BRACED FOR A BLAST FROM THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, BUT IT NEVER CAME.
I GUESS THE ^{CHIEF} GENERAL DIDN'T SEE IT, OR MAYBE SOMEONE INTERVENED ON OUR BEHALF.
~~BUT WE RODE THAT ONE OUT.~~

THE ARMY CHIEF
OF
STAFF

ANOTHER THING JOHN DID, IN ADDITION TO PUTTING HIS PEOPLE IN BLACK HATS, HE ORDERED HIS UNIT TO ACTUALLY FLY A GARRISON FLAG. OF COURSE, THAT'S AGAINST REGULATIONS. YOU CAN ONLY FLY ONE GARRISON FLAG AT A POST. I GOT A CALL FROM THE FORT BENNING CHIEF OF STAFF WHO TOLD ME THAT HE TOOK A DIM VIEW OF THE SITUATION. I GOT IT STRAIGHTENED OUT.

~~ONE DAY I RECEIVED AN EFFICIENCY REPORT.~~ JOHN STOCKTON HAD INSTRUCTED ALL HIS OFFICERS AND ALL THE ATTACHED PEOPLE THAT THEY HAD TO WEAR CROSSED SABERS. WELL, HE HAD A MEDICAL OFFICER WITH HIM WHO REFUSED TO TAKE OF HIS AUTHORIZED INSIGNIA. SO WHEN JOHN FILLED OUT HIS EFFICIENCY REPORT HE GAVE HIM 0.00. WELL, I TALKED TO HIM. I COUNSELED HIM AS AN ENDORSOR SHOULD. AND, IN ORDER TO MAKE IT AIR-TIGHT, I SENT HIM A LETTER. IN ESSENCE, I ^{STATED} SAID THAT NO OFFICER COULD BE 0.00. HE MUST HAVE A CERTAIN DEGREE OF LOYALTY OR SOMETHING THAT THE RATING OFFICER COULD COMMENT ON FAVORABLY. HE REPLIED BY ENDORSEMENT, AND HE REDID THE EFFICIENCY REPORT. THE TOTAL CHANGE THAT HE GAVE THIS OFFICER WAS 0.01. I SENT THAT INTO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY WITH A COMMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT THIS WAS A BETTER ^{INDICATION} REFLECTION OF THE CALIBER OF THE RATING OFFICER THAN THE OFFICER THAT WAS BEING RATED AND THREW IT INTO THE HOPPER AND NEVER HEARD ANOTHER WORD.

MY FAVORITE STORY ABOUT JOHN STOCKTON — ALL THE OLD TIMERS WHO WERE THERE AT FORT BENNING WILL REMEMBER THIS — HE LIKED TO DO SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR THE OFFICERS, ESPECIALLY SENIOR OFFICERS, ^{ON THEIR} WHO HAD A BIRTHDAY. FOR INSTANCE, THE NIGHT OF ~~THE~~ (BIRTHDAY) OF COL PHIP SENEFF, ¹⁵² WHO ~~COMMANDS~~ THE AVIATION GROUP AND WHO LIVED ~~(ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE GOLF COURSE,~~ STOCKTON SHOWED UP IN A ^{NIS} HELICOPTER, COMMAND CHOPPER, LANDED ON THE GOLF COURSE, ^{FROM SENEFF'S} AND WITH ^{THEY} ONE OF HIS FIRE TEAMS WENT IN AND BROKE UP THE PARTY, GRABBED PHIP SENEFF, ^{OVER HIS HEAD} PUT HIM IN A SACK, TOOK HIM OUT, AND DROPPED HIM IN A SWAMP. OF COURSE,

SENEFF WAS PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE AS AN OLD FRIEND OF STOCKTON WHO HAD HELPED GET HIM INTO THE DIVISION. ^{SINCE} ~~SO WE RODE WITH ONE OUT.~~ ^{HE}

I GOT WIND THAT STOCKTON HAD PLANNED SOME SORT OF EVENT FOR ME, A SURPRISE ABOUT 4 O'CLOCK EARLY ON THE MORNING OF MY BIRTHDAY. ELVY ROBERTS FOUND OUT ABOUT IT, TIPPED ME OFF, AND WANTED TO KNOW IF I WANTED A BIRTHDAY PARTY. OF COURSE I SAID, "HELL, NO!" AND ~~SO~~, ELVY ROBERTS SAVED ME FROM WHATEVER STOCKTON HAD IN MIND.

THE DIVISION
CHIEF
JA
STAFF

WITH ALL THESE SPECIAL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS STOCKTON INITIATED, WHEN IT CAME TIME FOR HIS BIRTHDAY WHEN WE WERE OUT IN THE CAROLINAS, HIS OFFICERS WANTED TO DO SOMETHING SPECIAL, SO THEY WENT OUT AND FOUND A FARMER WHO HAD AN OLD BEAT-UP GRAY MULE - AND, BOY, I MEAN BEAT-UP. THEY BROUGHT THAT MULE BACK IN A TRUCK AND PRESENTED IT TO STOCKTON AS A BIRTHDAY PRESENT. WELL, ~~THE WAY I HEARD IT~~, THEY HAD BORROWED THIS MULE AND FULLY EXPECTED STOCKTON TO LAUGH, AND EVERYBODY TO GET A CHARGE OUT OF IT; AND THE NEXT DAY THEY WERE GOING TO RETURN THE MULE. BUT STOCKTON FOOLED THEM. HE SAID, "THANK YOU VERY MUCH" AND GAVE THEM A DIRECT ORDER TO SEE THAT THAT MULE GOT BACK TO FORT BENNING SAFE AND SOUND. HE WAS GOING TO MAKE IT THE 1ST OF THE 9TH MASCOT. WELL, THE OFFICERS INVOLVED HAD TO GO OUT AND PAY OFF THE FARMER. THEY GOT THE MULE BACK TO FORT BENNING BUT ONE OTHER THING THAT STOCKTON DID THAT I WILL NEVER FORGET - HE NAMED THE MULE "MAGGIE" AFTER HIS WIFE, WHICH WAS A NICE TOUCH.

AFTER WE HAD ORDERS TO GO TO VIETNAM, GEN KINNARD ISSUED IN WRITING AN ORDER THAT NO PETS WOULD GO TO VIETNAM. I COULD JUST SEE THE ~~HOW~~ WRITING BETWEEN THE LINES, AND TO ME IT READ, "DICK KNOWLES, DON'T YOU DARE LET STOCKTON TAKE THAT MULE TO VIETNAM." WELL, AS SOON AS MY AIDE BROUGHT IN THIS LETTER, I GOT A HOLD OF STOCKTON'S SERGEANT MAJOR AND SAID, "HEY, DO YOU HAVE THIS LETTER THAT GEN KINNARD HAS PUT OUT ON PETS?" HE SAID THAT THEY DID. AND I SAID, "WELL, ALL RIGHT. TAKE A COPY OF IT, GIVE IT TO COL. STOCKTON AND HAVE HIM READ IT. I'LL HOLD ON THE PHONE HERE; AND MY AIDE

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IS LISTENING IN; SO I'VE GOT A WITNESS. AFTER HE HAS READ IT YOU PUT HIM ON THE PHONE. TELL HIM I AM WAITING TO HEAR HIS RESPONSE." WELL, THE SERGEANT MAJOY COMPLIED, AND FINALLY STOCKTON CAME ON THE ^{LIVE} PHONE. I SAID, "STOCKTON, HAVE YOU READ THIS DIRECTIVE FROM THE DIVISION COMMANDER? DO YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS?" HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAD READ IT, AND HE UNDERSTOOD EXACTLY WHAT IT MEANT AND WOULD ^{COMPLY.} ~~CARRY IT OUT.~~

WELL, I THOUGHT THAT THAT WAS FINE; BUT A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER HE BEAT A PATH INTO MY OFFICE; AND HE SAID, "GENERAL, I HAVE SOME BAD NEWS." I SAID, "OK, GET TO THE BOTTOM LINE." WE GOT TO IT VERY QUICKLY. HE SAID, "GENERAL, YOU KNOW I SENT CAPT STEIN TO PHILADELPHIA TO HELP LOAD THOSE HELICOPTERS." (ACTUALLY, WE HAD A FEW PEOPLE IN AN ADVANCE PARTY WHO WERE NOT ONLY GOING TO LOAD THE HELICOPTERS BUT WERE GOING TO ACCOMPANY THEM ALL THE WAY TO VIETNAM, ^{ALTHOUGH} AT THAT POINT IN TIME ^{THIS ACTIVITY} ~~IT~~ WAS CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.) AND HE SAID, "AN UNFORTUNATE THING HAPPENED." I SAID, "JUST GET TO THE BOTTOM LINE, STOCKTON." HE SAID, "WELL, CAPT STEIN TOOK THE SKIPPER OF THAT SMALL AIRCRAFT CARRIER OUT FOR DINNER AND ^{BOUGIED} ~~FEW~~ HIM A FEW DRINKS; AND WHEN THEY GOT BACK TO THE SHIPSIDE AND WERE READY TO GO ON BOARD, SOME REPORTER GOT A HOLD OF THE SKIPPER; AND THE SKIPPER, FEELING NO PAIN AT THIS POINT IN TIME, WHEN ASKED, "WHAT'S YOUR MISSION?" RESPONDED, 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL MY MISSION IS. ALL I KNOW IS I'M TAKING THE 1ST CAV'S MULE TO VIETNAM.'" ^{THAT STORY MADE THE HEADLINES IN THE PHILADELPHIA NEWS PAPER.} WELL, I BEAT A PATH OVER TO SEE GEN KINNARD; AND I ~~ALREADY~~ HAD MY FIRST

LINE READY, "GENERAL, I'VE GOT SOME BAD NEWS." WELL, WE KICKED ~~IT AROUND A~~ ^{THE PROBLEM AROUND} ^{SOLUTIONS} LITTLE BIT AND DISCUSSED SOME ALTERNATIVES. WE COULD LET IT GO. WE COULD HAVE THE MULE TAKEN OFF AS ^{THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER} ~~IT~~ WENT THROUGH THE PANAMA CANAL. THEN, AS I RECALL, ^{THE INCIDENT} I SUGGESTED TO THE GENERAL, ^{TO} ~~JUST MAKE THIS~~ ONE EXCEPTION AND DESIGNATE "MAGGIE THE MULE" AS A DIVISION MASCOT. THE MEN WILL GET A KICK OUT OF IT. ^o IN ANY EVENT, THAT IS WHAT THE GENERAL DID. I THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE THE END OF THE STORY, BUT IT WAS NOT.

CAPT STEIN TOLD THE SKIPPER THAT IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO "MAGGIE" ON THE WAY TO VIETNAM THAT STOCKTON WOULD HANG HIM TO THE HIGHEST TREE. SO THE SKIPPER PUT OUT AN ORDER THAT NO HARM WOULD COME TO THAT MULE, YOU KNOW, IT'S A LONG WAY ACROSS THE PACIFIC, AND A COUPLE OF ENSIGNS JUST COULD NOT STAND IT. SO ONE NIGHT, WITH A COUPLE OF SEAMEN, THEY WENT DOWN, AND THEY BRANDED THE MULE "BEAT ARMY". IN THE BOOK J.D. COLEMAN SAID THEY BRANDED HIM "U.S. NAVY", BUT I'M PRETTY SURE IT WAS "BEAT ARMY." ANYWAY, THE SKIPPER FOUND OUT ABOUT IT, AND HE THREW THESE TWO ENSIGNS IN THE BRIG.

WHEN WE WERE UNLOADING ON THE COAST OF VIETNAM I HEARD ABOUT IT, AND I WENT TO KINNARD AND SUGGESTED HE FLY OUT TO THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER AND PLEAD WITH THE SKIPPER TO LET THOSE TWO ENSIGNS OUT OF THE BRIG. WE NEEDED THE SUPPORT OF THE NAVY, AND WE WANTED TO BE IN GOOD GRACES WITH THEM BECAUSE IT WAS GOING TO BE A LONG HARD WAR, AND ~~THAT WASN'T A VERY GOOD WAY TO START OFF FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW.~~ ^{WE DIDN'T WANT ANY BAD BLOOD WITH THE NAVY.} GEN KINNARD AGREED THAT HE WOULD FLY OUT THERE AND MAKE A PLEA FOR THEIR CASE. AND I SAID, "ALSO, WHEN YOU ARE OUT THERE PLEASE BRING BACK ALL THE ICE YOU CAN CARRY." WELL, HE DID. HE GOT THE ENSIGNS OUT OF THE BRIG AND ALL WAS FORGIVEN. I THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE THE END OF THE STORY, BUT IT WAS NOT.

WE WERE ON THE BEACH THERE OFF-LOADING ~~AND UNLOADING EVERYTHING;~~ ^{OUR EQUIPMENT} AND ALL OF A SUDDEN, JUST LIKE A LIGHT, I GOT A FLASH! HOW WAS STOCKTON GOING TO GET THAT MULE UP TO AN KHE? OVER HIGHWAY 19? NO, THAT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE STOCKTON'S WAY. I GOT MY AIDE, PETE BOSTWICK, AND I SAID, "GET A HOLD OF STOCKTON AND GET HIM DOWN HERE. I WANT TO TALK TO HIM ON THE BEACH." SO STOCKTON REPORTED IN, AND I SAID, "STOCKTON, HOW DO YOU PLAN TO GET THAT DAMN MULE UP TO AN KHE?" HE STARTED OUT, "SIR, I'VE ALREADY TALKED TO BEN SILVER, AND IT'S ALL SET." AND I STOPPED HIM RIGHT THERE. I SAID, "STOCKTON, I AM GOING TO GIVE YOU AN ORDER HERE AND NOW, IN THE PRESENCE OF WITNESSES. YOU WILL NOT TAKE THAT MULE UP TO AN KHE IN A CHINOOK!" I COULD JUST SEE "MAGGIE" ~~GOING~~ UP THERE INSIDE A CHINOOK, GETTING

THE LOSE OF AN

EXCITED AND KICKING OUT THE SIDE, AND LOSING THE AIRCRAFT AND THE CREW, ~~WHAT~~
^{UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES,}
~~WOULD MAKE A TERRIBLE HEADLINE, THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN!~~ SO I MADE IT CRYSTAL CLEAR TO HIM,
NO! IN NO WAY WOULD HE ~~TAKE~~ ^{GO} THAT MULE UP TO AN KHE IN A CHINOOK. I THOUGHT
THAT WOULD BE THE END OF THE STORY, BUT IT WAS NOT.

ABOUT THIRTY MINUTES LATER I HEARD A CHOPPER FLYING OVER MY LITTLE CP
THAT ~~I HAD THERE~~ ON THE BEACH (AND I AM SURE STOCKTON DID IT DILIBERATELY),
~~BUT~~ I LOOKED UP, AND THERE SLUNG UNDER STOCKTON'S COMMAND SHIP WAS "MAGGIE THE
MULE", NOT IN THE CHINOOK. HE WAS NOT VIOLATING MY ORDER. AND HE TOOK THAT
DAMN MULE UP TO AN KHE UNDERNEATH HIS COMMAND SHIP. I THOUGHT THAT WAS THE
END OF THE STORY, BUT IT WASN'T.

STOCKTON'S OUTFIT, THE 1ST OF THE 9TH, ^{WAS LOCATED} ~~HAD PUT IN~~ NEXT TO AN AIRBORNE
^{UNIT} ~~OUTFIT~~. ONE NIGHT "MAGGIE THE MULE" GOT LOOSE AND STUMBLER, INTO THE AIRBORNE
PERIMETER, WAS CHALLENGED, AND, NOT KNOWING THE PASSWORD, WAS SHOT. SOME TROOPER
SHOT AND KILLED "MAGGIE THE MULE." AND I THOUGHT THAT WAS THE END OF THE STORY,
BUT IT WAS NOT. A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER THE LOCAL VIETNAMESE, HAVING HEARD THAT
WE HAD LOST OUR DIVISION MASCOT, ^{PRESENTED} ~~PRESENTED~~ GEN KINNARD WITH A BEAT-UP OLD HORSE
TO REPLACE "MAGGIE THE MULE." ~~(I MIGHT SAY AT THIS POINT THAT AFTER I MADE
THIS PRESENTATION HAL MOORE GAVE ANOTHER VERSION OF HOW "MAGGIE THE MULE" MET
HER END, BUT I WILL LEAVE THAT UP TO HAL. THAT'S ANOTHER STORY.)~~