

1 April 1969

EAGLE

DUSTOFF

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Platoon Sergeant: SFC Thomas L. Ross, Jr.

Air Ambulance Platoon
326th Medical Battalion
101st Airborne Division

Getting to go on R&R or leave after six or seven months in Vietnam is normally a pleasant experience, due to the fact that you get a short vacation from work, and you get to visit a foreign country (unless you go to Hawaii to meet your wife) which is for most people a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

But going through all the trouble of taking a leave and then not getting out of the country is a very frustrating experience. That's what happened to one fellow this month.

FIRST OF ALL, to go on an R&R or a leave, you get to take a ride on a C-130 airplane, an Air Force plane that will never be mistaken for a civilian plane because of its comfort. If you've ever wondered what your baggage feels like riding in the baggage hold of a normal plane, you find out during a trip in a C-130. Maximum capacity is the word, so you find yourself squeezed on all sides, sitting on a metal pallet, in a hot compartment. You're so close together even Ben doesn't take the worry out. After you're airborne, it is about a 2 hour flight to Bien Hoa, where you board the ever familiar cattle trucks for SERTS, an establishment not to be confused with either a candy or a breath mint. It is the 101st's Replacement School and therein you process for your out-of-country R&R. The time spent there isn't boring, if you like to sit around. Or, you can rest in the shade from 90 degree weather by taking a steam bath. Or, you can swim in the pool, free of charge.

A NIGHT THERE and you're off to Camp Alpha, with a fresh haircut to show you're airborne. There you wait another night, most likely, before departing to your out-of-country destination.

If you like to walk around in an approximately two block area, you can have fun at Camp Alpha, too. Some of the exciting things to do there are: have your boots/shoes shined; stand in line to check your baggage at a Korean

shop; put your fatigues in the laundry; and stand in line in the Club, waiting to find a seat at a table, no mean feat considering the amount of people in Camp Alpha at any hour of the day.

FINALLY THE MOMENT ARRIVES. You go into the briefing room at the appointed hour, and sit through a 20 minute briefing telling you what you need to know about customs, the time of your flight, etc. And, of course, you fill out a few forms. Then, you line up to change your MPC back into good old American GREENBACKS! That is, all the R&R people do that. The leave people must wait in suspense to find out if they made the flight. This is determined by a priority process, based on your time in country.

Our friend was on a flight with about 20 empty seats, about 50 people wanting them. He was number 47. So, his trip ended right there.

IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS, the thing to do is to try to get but to another destination. But if you have your heart set on going to just one place, you're out of luck. Since he was so low on priority on the flight to his particular city of choice, chances are the same results would apply to the same city for the following day.

Our friend didn't want to spend his money anywhere else, so he came back after two long days of trying to get out at Camp Alpha. Maybe he'll try again later on.

CPT James Danby got some orders this past week that he didn't want. So he turned them back to the dismay of some people in the unit that would have liked to have had the orders themselves.

CPT Danby, who is in the Reserves and who doesn't DEROS until September, got orders to be released from active duty in May. The orders turned out to be illegal because CPT Danby still has almost three years left on a commitment from going to flight school.

With great trepidation we approach the month of April. After all, what are you to expect from a month that starts off with a self-proclaimed "Fool's Day?"

March finished off the first quarter of the year in grand style. A 2½ ton truck parked on the hill above our unit slipped the grip of its brakes and merrily rammed into the Battalion Supply building moving it toward the heliport a good six or seven inches and generally scrambling everything inside.

Fortunately, the truck first hit a metal Conex outside the building which considerably lessened the shattering effect. As it is, though, the building will have to be torn down and another built because the foundations are beyond repair.

From the looks of that shack, entering it for any reason would be considered an act above and beyond the call of duty and make one highly eligible for an award of valor.

SP5 Roy M. Mayberry was shot in the foot during a hoist mission Sunday, the first combat injury this unit has had since last August. The bullet grazed the back of his heel, missing the bone, and doctors expect Roy to be back from the hospital in a few weeks. Nothing really serious, for which we are grateful.

Eight more people moved in with us this month (maybe it is the cheap rent that attracts them), so we're that much closer to being crowded to the limit.

1LT Jerry T Lee, CWO Stanley R Paden, WO1 Orval A Baldwin and Jose R Villarta filled us to the brim with pilots.

PFC Lowell W Bell extended for six months to get his assignment as a replacement for SFC Ross, coming from the 2/327th Infantry.

SP4's James R Walters and Martin R Barnett moved from the maintenance crew to fly with us, and PFC Lloyd L Auxien, a Crash Rescue Specialist, came from the States.

We were getting so crowded we had to kick out a couple of guys to make room, so CWO William T Dillard and SP5 Thomas E Reils left for the States.

SP4 Rick McCurdy transferred to C Co, 326th Med Bn, and SP5 Michael P McIane, home on an emergency leave after the death of his father, was reassigned to the States.

MONTHLY STATISTICS

Patients Evacuated:

US	595
VN Civ	110
MED CAP	31
ARVN	27
POW/SUSP	10
CANINE	0
TOTAL	773

DAY/NIGHT PATIENTS:

Day	715
Night	58
TOTAL	773

MISSIONS:

Day	637
Night	40
TOTAL	677

MEDICAL RESUPPLY TOTAL LBS. 525

HOIST UTILIZATION:

Missions	83
Patients	155
Hours	93

FLIGHT TIME:

Day	478
Night	24
Hoist	93
TOTAL	

AVG NO AVIATORS PSNT FOR DUTY 24

ACFT COMBAT DAMAGE 3

RLO's*, by training are prepared to deal in strange encounters. But this one incident didn't have an answer anywhere in the book. After all, what do you do when a Mamasan attacks you?

It started innocently enough. Our RLO, who shall remain nameless, wanted his Mamasan to wash his clothes, a request normal enough. One shirt smelled a bit of liquor, because he had accidentally spilled a drink on himself at a party the night before.

Mamasan was to have no part of that shirt, however. She separated it from the pile of clothes to be washed, waved it at him, and said firmly, "No WASH! You number ten. You go into Phu Bai and see Cyclo Girl. No wash."

Now, we have here one astounded man, who is being accused of God knows what, and happens to need his shirt washed; and, one defiant woman, convinced her employer has been fooling around, and who's determined not to wash any clothes messed up in any such actions. But leadership training takes hold, and our RLO faces up to adversity bravely. "Mamasan, you wash," he commands. "No wash, you finis." So saying, he handed the shirt to her once more.

Mamasan grabbed it and threw it down. "NO WASH! You Number TEN THOU!"**

How do you control the situation, our RLO must have been thinking. A threat might do it. So our RLO picked up the shirt, shoved it at Mamasan, drew his face up into a terrible grimace, and made a "slicing the throat" action with his finger. "Mamasan. You wash or I Crocodile you!"

She wavered. Was the battle won...

* REAL LIVE OFFICER—a term used to distinguish the inhabitants of a local hooch, most of whom are First Lieutenants.

**THOUSAND—A Vietnamese expression ranking degrees of pleasure/displeasure. The higher the number, the more displeasure. EX: Number One is very good. Number ten thousand is very poor.

who was bluffing? Time simply stopped.

Then, in a flash, Mamasan, who had just delivered birth and whose body was making milk, yanked up the right side of her blouse, grabbed her brassiere and pulled, exposing her right breast, which she then squeezed while lunging toward our RLO, squirting milk haphazardly over her path of action, trying to shoot him.

Certainly, he was amazed, and quite unprepared. He had never been attacked by a breast before.

But uncertainty gave way to action, and he moved out of her path, and out of the room. The situation had gotten out of hand altogether.

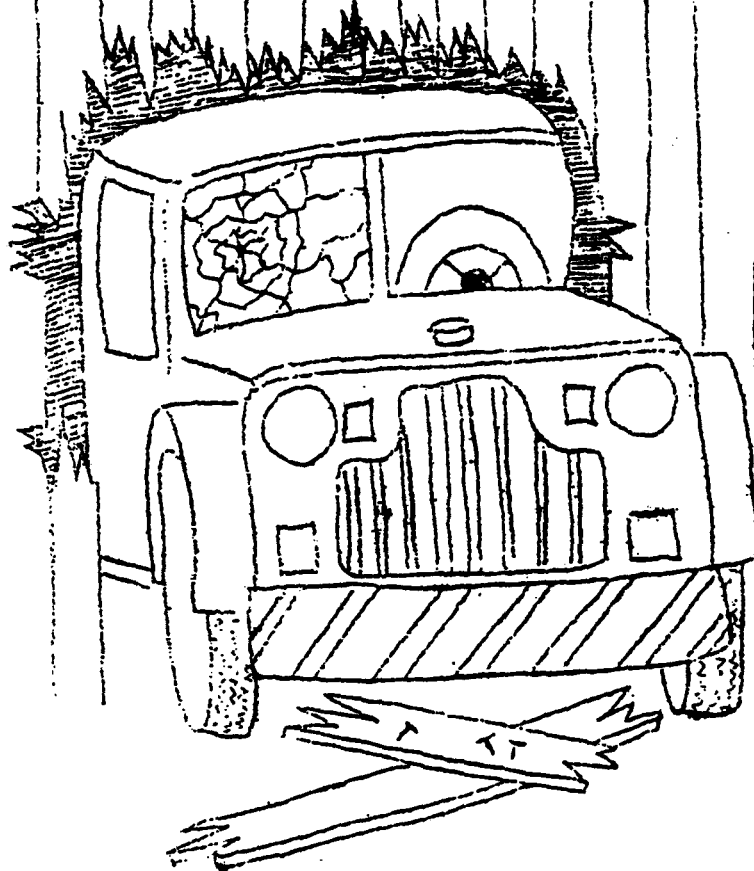
In the end, Mamasan relented and washed the shirt, perhaps secure in the knowledge that at least her honor was protected, her pride intact, even if she did have to wash the shirt.

A FEW WORDS FROM DUSTOFF 96

The beautiful scenery of the A Shien Valley, further arranged from numerous B-52 strikes, has been the topic of conversation this month, with all our crews getting frequent opportunities to check on the day-to-day changes in the bomb craters. Flight crews have taken such a liking to the scenery that we no longer land for medevacs but instead use hoists that are overtaxed by use in 83 missions for 155 patients and are rapidly wearing out.

With typical "No Slack" enthusiasm LTC Charles Dyke's 2/327th Infantry Battalion has built us a field standby helipad at his CP on Fire Base Fury, our only available helipad in the western area of operation. Through this undertaking we are able to swoop from our lofty mountain peak evacuating patients from the Valley in true "Eagle" Dustoff fashion.

Distinguished Flying Crosses have been awarded to 1LT Otis D Evans by the 44th Medical Brigade and WO1 Richard W Obrecht from the Commanding General, 9th Infantry Division, for efforts while supporting combat operations in the south



We can always use a promotion or two, and this month we had eight or nine, depending on how you count them.

Jerry T. Lee was promoted to 1LT, and William T. Dillard and Stanley R. [unclear] were promoted to CWO.

Brian R. Fox and Karl T. White were promoted to SP5, and Steven E. Arnold, James A. Margro, and Thomas T. Lounsberry were promoted to SP4.

As far as the ninth promotion goes, we found out that SP4 Joseph H. Campbell had been a SP4 a good while. There had been a mixup on his promotion orders which was not discovered until this month.

* * * *

Going on R2R this past month were:

WO1 Michael L. McKenna—Bangkok

WO1 Max E. Tucker—Tokyo

SP5 Stephen B Francis—Sydney

SP5 Clement G Grillo—Tokyo

SP5 Larry E Wagoner—Hong Kong

SP5 Thomas E. Collins—Tokyo

EAGLE DUSTOFF

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