

## LATRINE ARSONY

From Howard Shute

Event in question was early "69" in what the Cav called "P" training which consisted of 3 days adjusting to the heat, smell, lack of water and the bodies adjustment to the life of being in a war zone. Like all of us arriving in country we had to make adjustments to the new life style. Part of my personal endeavor was the task of learning to dispose of the waste material that the human body naturally creates.

For those that recall the bathroom facilities being a wooden shed ranging four-seat Econo models to sometimes the large six to eight deluxe models. On my second day in country I was given the mission (with 3 other volunteers) to dispose of the semi-solid and mostly liquid waste material. The Army being run by NCO's that assume that most soldiers are born knowing just how this complex operation is completed!

So the shake and bake who's main goal in life is to please the butter bar just out of OCS! Our instructions we as follows: 1. Open rear doors of the outhouse. 2. Secure the door with a 4 foot long stick. 3. Put gloves on and remove the cut-in-half 55 gallon drum. 4. Take diesel fuel and fill can to cover the contents. 5. Take toilet paper and ignite the diesel fuel. When burning, stir the concoction until all contents are gone!

Instructions were easy to follow, with the exception of some question arising during fulfillment of said instructions. Like how far does one have to slide the almost full half of a 55 gallon drum with the contents spilling everywhere? Answer not far! Next how does one ignite diesel fuel diluted with waste material and the toilet paper gets wet? So the assigned soldiers including myself discovered that several rolls of toilet paper soaked in gas helped us accomplish this task!

Well we got the cans burning and could not get close enough to stir the mixture. Discovering that the containers were simply not far enough from the wooden facilities we found that through the dense black smoke that the sheds had also caught fire.

The resulting visual bellowing smoke and the wooden structure were well involved, possibly even called a three alarm fire. Thank goodness those crappers were located far from any other structure because of the fragrance that was standard to all such facilities!

The Army in its way just let it burn, which meant a new model had to be requested. It only took 24 hours to get a new one, I believe there was a stock pile of these somewhere in Vietnam.

The only two good things came out of the destruction of the shi\_house. First a nice new came for which I was not allowed to use and the best is I NEVER HAD TO BURN SHI--- AGAIN!!!!

This was also one main reason I joined the Company and you might wonder why the Army did not send the four FNG's to Long Bin jail; remember there was a war going on and they needed us in the field! I guess that was worth an outhouse!

This is the reason several of my pals ( Lt. Brennan) decided to write the following letter from the President!

THE WHITE HOUSE  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20307-0000  
August 12th 1995

Mr. Howard Shute  
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Shute:

Greetings from the President of the United States. (Gee, I love to hear the sound of that title, but the sentence itself never did thrill me.)

As your President and your Commander-in-Chief, I regret to inform you that a special investigating committee, chaired by former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, has found you liable and culpable for destroying government property shortly after your arrival in Vietnam in 1969. As described by Secretary McNamara, a man who, like me, always tells the truth, you intentionally and with malice aforethought, committed the crime of arson. To wit, you criminally burned down a Personnel Evacuation Disposal Device, Field Expedient, more commonly known as a "shitter".

I must inform you that not all of the members of my cabinet wanted to hold you liable. The Attorney General, MS Janet Reno, herself an expert at setting buildings on fire, feels that you didn't do anything worse than she did at Waco. Of course, since I have always held the military to a higher standard than I did civilians like myself, I have decided to hold you accountable for your actions back then in 1969. Therefore, although the voters forgave me my failings of courage in 1969 and 1970, I have chosen not to forgive you your heinous crime.

The Secretary of the Treasury, Robert Reich, has totaled up the bill for your arson in 1969. Accounting for the original cost of the outhouse, interest compounded daily for 26 years, and a fudge factor to allow for all of my unkept campaign promises, you now owe your government the sum total of \$367,483,794,236.47. Just by coincidence, that is the sum of the increase in the national debt since I took office two years ago.

I recognize that this action may be viewed by you as another example of your government being unfair to Vietnam veterans. On the contrary, I am very proud of all the good things I've done for veterans since I came into office. Just look what I've done for the Veterans Administration. Just as in 1969, there's nothing that's too good for the Vietnam vet, and that's exactly what you're going to get.

It's always nice for me to keep in touch with our Vietnam vets. Hope to see you at The Wall on Veterans Day. In case you have trouble recognizing me, I'll be the person on the VIP platform who won't be wearing a military unit pin.

Bill Clinton  
President and Commander-in-Chief