

## Vietnam

I had flown to Oakland Army Depot, California, and processed for my flight to Vietnam. The plane was a charter, and packed full with equipment and personnel. I was talking a young sergeant sitting next to me about not being able to bring a hand-gun that I owned, as the Army said, leave it at home. He got a funny look on his face and pulled out of his waist a Colt Revolver, one of those big, Caliber 45. It looked like it weight 10 pounds. It probably took a pack to carry it around in. The flight seem like it took 18 hours to arrive in Bien Hoa Airbase, outside Saigon. The planes would fly in and unload, then immediately reload and take off. The first night in the Replacement Company, we were given a welcome by the local Vietcon as they fired mortar rounds into our base camp and we had to run into bunkers.

After four days my new unit, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division sent a convoy of gun jeeps, buses and trucks to transport us to our base camp. We were delay some and almost didn't get to Cu Chi until after dark. In that part of Vietnam, it was very dangerous to be on the road after dark. Senior NCO's were told to get on the buses and junior personnel were put on trucks. The bus windows were cover with wire mast, so grenades couldn't be thrown in. I was thinking if we were attacked it would be more difficult to get out of the bus, then an open truck. None of us new personnel were given a weapon.

The 25th Infantry Division main base camp was in Cu Chi, about 20 mile west of Saigon. All newly assigned division personnel had to go to reinforcement school that lasted about a week. We were given booby trap recognition training, ambush and weapons familiarization. The JAG officer explained the Geneva Convention, all the guys booed. My name was called out and I was escorted to the division headquarters G-2 section and was interviewed by a major for a job on the G-2 staff. The interview went well and he said I got the assignment. If I didn't, I would have been assigned to one of the brigade headquarter S-2 staff. I told the major I didn't want the job, if I couldn't get promoted and he said that was not a problem.

The division G-2 operations staff has two shifts that worked 12 hours each. Since I was new, I initially worked the night shift from 7:PM to 7:AM.

It was explained to me that the little red markings on the map were very serious and I better not let them fall through the crack. They were locations of the division's LRRP team (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol), consisting of six men, who we put into the jungle by helicopter and they reported on enemy movement. If their position were attacked we only had minutes to get them extracted. This team was also used to capture or kill enemy soldiers and collect intelligence. We always had helicopter on stand-by waiting to extract them. As soon as it got dark the VC would fire mortar or rockets into our base camp, so we moved into the command bunker at night. It was our job to set the siren off to warn of incoming and the attack helicopter would be notified which direction the fire came from in an attempt to kill the responsible VC.

In the division Tactical Operation Center (DTC) the G-2 Operations receives all enemy information, which is logs into the staff G-2 journal and disseminated to whatever unit that could act on it. I worked with a major who also had to give the G-2 briefing to the CG and other commanders and the division staff the following morning at 0700 hrs. He reported on all enemy activity that happened in our AO that night. I worked on the night shift for two months.

Short Story: One of the South Vietnamese base camps close to ours came under a ground attack one night. Since we always had American Liaison Officers at these camps, I called to find out what was going on and if they needed any assistance. An American Army Captain (LNO) answered the phone and said he didn't have time to talk, as they were under attack. I told him "he better give me the information, as we were the only help that would come to his aid in the middle of the night if thing got serous." He realized I was right and furnished me the information. Another night, a communication center the division had on top of a mountain called NUI BA DEN (Black Widow Mountain) came under attack. It was raining hard and our helicopters could not come to their assistance and it was over run by the VC. It was dark inside our bunker and we were listening to the battle on our radio. A radio operator at the camp was keeping us informed as to the situation they were experiencing. He said and I'll always remember it "It is raining, the wind is blowing, people are dying and there is nothing I can do". Hell, there wasn't anything we could do either.

The site was maintained by signal personnel and cooks. Our division controlled the top and bottom of the mountain and the VC controlled the middle. The mountain was covered like a jungle and had many caves in which to hide. I don't remember how many US personnel were killed or wounded, but I remember the VC took 5 American POW's. After that battle, the division put an infantry platoon up there to help protect the site.

I worked the night shift for approximately two months. It was very hot and difficult to sleep during the day. Also when I first got to Cu Chi, they had the artillery guns close to my barrack's, and it was nearly impossible to sleep with those big guns firing all the time. After a short while they moved the artillery unit to a fire support base and my sleeping improved some.

Since my enlistment was up, I had twelve years (1968) in the army and went over to the reenlistment office to reenlist. After I raise my hand, said the oath and signed the enlistment papers, I started to leave. The reenlistment sergeant said just a minute and told me for reenlisting in Vietnam I could spend thirty days at Army expense any place in the world. Since the wife and daughter were in Germany, the Army flew me on commercial jet there and my thirty days started when I got there. Anita was in Munich, Germany living with her mother.

We decided to vacation in a US military resort that was in Garmisch, Germany. We took the military bus and stay about one week. It must have been a good vacation, because my son Marc was born nine months later.

When my thirty days was up, I had to fly commercial airlines three-quarters of a way around the world to get back to Vietnam. When I arrived in Saigon, I called the division and they sent a helicopter to get me. It pays to work on the division staff. I probably would have had to fly back on an Air Force C-130 (a small cargo plane), that has propellers, with turbo-jets to get it off the ground.

Upon my arrival back in the division, the deputy G-2 told me I was going to the day shift and be the G-2 Operations Sergeant. That mean I would supervise all the enlisted men that worked in G-2 Operation Section. The major also told me that my new boss, Major Larry Quinn, was a (blank) and for me not to worry, as he would take care of him.

Larry was just as descript. But we worked well together, because he needed me. (Short Story) One day a captain came in to review our maps and set his hat on Larry's desk. When Larry came in and noticed the hat, he threw it into the trash can. When the captain came to retrieve his hat and noticed it missing, I pointed to the trash can. He was mad, but I told him to forget it, as the Major was a (blank) so he left). His boss, the major gave him so much work to do, that he wasn't getting much sleep.

During the day shift, with all the work we had to do, we also received hundreds of intelligence reports. I would read them and disseminate those that would be of value. At the end of my shift 1900 hrs, I put them in Larry in-box and he was required to read them. One day he pleaded for me to just put his initials on them, as it was effecting his sleeping time trying to read them all. The G-2 Operations was co-located with the G-3 Operations. There was a big horseshoe desk with maybe ten telephones (micro-wave) where all the information from the brigades and other units would come over. In front of the big desk was a huge map, which was used to plot the locations of all the division units, areas of operations (AO), and enemy units. There would be one captain and maybe up to four enlistment men on either side of the desks taking reports over the telephones and radios. G-3 Operations received all reports about US forces, including US KIA, WIA and missing in action. They also directed the operations of the division forces. G-2 Operations would receive all information concerning enemy forces, KIA, WIA's and directed the collection effort. afternoon intelligence briefing from all that information collected during that shift.

My desk and the major's was location behind the horseshoe desk. It seemed like I had a million jobs, so I stayed pretty busy. One of my main jobs was controlling something called the sniff mission. We had a machine that was carried by a helicopter that could smell humans.

I had to select the areas where the helicopter would fly. Arrange to have artillery cut off in the areas, collect the map where the data had been plotted and then notify the artillery where I wanted them to fire H/I that night. The mission would consist of three helicopters. One helicopter carrying the machine and two that provided protection. The one with the machine would fly close to the ground and would be fired upon by the VC or NVA soldiers in the area. The helicopter pilot would be very happy if I sent him into an area and his ship received fire, especially having to fly so close to the ground.

It was good that I was in combat arms all those year and knew the capabilities of most division units. Most military intelligence analyst never served in a line unit and couldn't comprehend how all these units worked together.

(Short Story) After I been in Vietnam six month, I was notified by the Deputy G-2, Major Richardson that the G-2 Sergeant Major was leaving and his replacement would not arrive for another six weeks and that I would be the G-2 Acting Sergeant Major and would perform all his duties. I am still a E-6 and really didn't know what Sergeant Major' did at the division level. But it was mostly administrative stuff. One of the things I did was to sign for all the secret document, which totaled over twelve hundred, which had to be inventoried. At the end of my ~~MAJOR~~ inventory, I was missing eight document. The Sergeant, told me they were over at the G-1 message center and I believed him (silly me). After the Sergeant Major departed Vietnam, I visited the G-1 message center to check on my missing documents. Of course they didn't know what I was talking about. (Lesson learned). When our new G-2 Sergeant major finally arrived, I told him about the lost document and he said not to worry, he would take care of the problem by indicating that they had been destroyed, which is what you do to documents no longer needed and that was probably what had haven't to my missing documents.

The G-2 (LTC Stubblebine) was a tall man, gray hair and a nice person to work for. Our Counterintelligence unit, based on intelligence received, would raid villages in the division AO and round up the local Vietcon. The colonel liked to participate in these raid and would tell me to get his gun. He had a special build automatic with a silencer. I was required to keep track of his flying time so he would

be awarded an Air Medal. We had of special weapons for our snipers, and the Browning company salesman would travel all the way to Vietnam to sell them.

I had a lot power, in that all I had to do to place artillery fire anywhere in the division AO, was to tell them when and how much fire I wanted. The Air Force would call me for targets, in our division area, as they didn't like their jets to return to base with unspent ordnance (bombs).

When the LRRP were extracted from a mission, they turned over to me all the document and equipments they had collected. They would ambush the VC and collect anything they were carrying and bring it back. Sometimes the material would be still dripping in blood. I notice these young guys would be in a euphoric high after these killing. The area they were working in contained a trail along the Saigon River that the VC used to ship arms and materials to Saigon. They also would kill VC tax collectors and confiscate the money that they had collected. All I ever took was the collection records, and let the guys keep the South Vietnamese money.

The LRRP also kept detail reports plotted on maps about rifle shots they hear and sounds of ox cart movement. One day I had some free time and took about thirty days of these reports and plotted the times the LRRP hear the rifle shot and locations.

A pattern developed, that indicated that the VC was using the rifle shots as signals. They were bring supplies down the Saigon River by boat and unloading them onto ox cart at a certain location on the river, because the boats were being ambushed from the other side of the river by US forces.

They did this transfer at midnight, every night. I arranged with the Air Force to do a bombing run on that area at midnight, which resulted in a number of boats and large amount of ox carts and supplies being destroyed.

Our LRRP were highly effective because they could count on the division to get them out of trouble if needed. The 1st Infantry Division on our right flank lost 12 of their LRRP one night. One problem I had with our LRRP was trying to get them to bring back a prisoner. That way we had someone to interrogate and get value information. They felt it was to big a risk, because they would be under fire

most of the time and had to run and jump into the helicopters. One map turned in that was found on a dead VC contained little round circles with a dot in the middle.

I notified one of our division recon units to check what was at the location of these dots.

But I never got the results back. Now I believe that they were entrances to those famous Cu Chi tunnels. I don't think those tunnels ran into our base camp.

Short Story: I lived with seven or eight other senior staff NCOs' and at one end of our building was a little day room. The walls were cover with Playboy Pin-Ups plus the rooms had a refrigerator for beer and soda, a small television set, a couch and some easy chair. There were some color plastic strips for a door to our sleeping area.

One night the base-camp was attack by a large enemy force. Since we all worked on the division staffs, we didn't have any responsibility for the defense of the base camp. As we sat there listening to the battle raging outside it dawned on me that I had any ammunition for my M-16 rifle, which was hanging in my wallocker and none of the other guys did either. The first thing the next day we went and got shotguns and ammunition. The area where our base-camp was located contained all sand. So any bunkers and tunnels would wash out when the heavy rains came.

Our building didn't even have a bunker, so we built one of fifty-five gallon drums, pieces of metal runway stripping and sandbags.

When the monsoon rains came they flood our barracks one day and the water was about 2 feet high. We all worked to get everything up off the floor and try to push the water out.

I was standing in the middle of our barrack in 2 feet of water when a large plastic bag came flooding by. So I reached down and picked it up and found it was full of marijuana. I held it up to see if any of my fellow NCOs' wanted to claim it, but none did.

We had a senior medical NCO who worked in the division Surgeons office living with us, who also managed the medical officer's club at night. His name was Doc Finley.

Old doc was an alcoholic who would return late from his club job, throw all the clubs money he collected on the

floor next to his bunk, take all his cloths off and go to bed. When I got up the next morning old doc would be laying there without a stitch on. One morning our base camp got hit with mortar and rocket fire.

I was in the mess hall eating breakfast when the alarm was sounded and you could hear the explosions of the mortar and rockets going off all around. Everybody panic, with food going every where, trying to get out of the mess hall and into the closes bunker. I ran into the one next to our barracks, owned by the Chemical Company. Already there were four or five Red Cross donut dollies (ladies working for the Red Cross that would entertain the soldiers with donuts, coffee and other drinks). Then in comes old Doc Finley, without a stitch on. That was funny.

In war time things can get very serious in a split second, but at the same time, incident happen that can be hilarious. I was soundly sleeping one night, when the camp got hit by those rockets and mortar rounds. The will to live is strong in most all of us, so before I could wake up my body had thrown itself out of bed and onto the concrete floor. My bed was located next to the day room at the end of the barracks and there were only plastic colored strips for a door. As I lay on the floor, I looked into the day room and there lay Andy Anderson, who was a black sergeant that I worked with.

Andy suffered from a sever case of hemorrhoids and the treatment requirement him to soak them in a bucket of warm water each night prior to going to bed. So he must have waited until everyone else went to bed, before he soaked the old hemorrhoids. He was lying on the floor in a pool of water, stark naked.

I guess he was treating his hemorrhoids when the attack started and it was really a funny sight.

I can remember my first real close call when we were attacked by the mortar and rockets. I immediately got on the floor, until I noticed that the general and others acted like it didn't bother them. They walk around like it was no big deal. So I had to pull myself together and play the game, show no fear. After that I just calmly walked into our command bunker. One of the closest times I almost bought the farm, I was on duty at night and a 122mm rocket landed on the general desk in the tin building next to ours. The explosion blew me out of my chair, but



fortunately I didn't get hurt. It did result in the General's Office and associated offices having to be rebuilt, as they burn down.

Some other significant event I remember:

The 65<sup>th</sup> Engineer unit on our compound suffered a high loss of men when a number ten can full of C-4 plastic explosives detonated. The soldiers were in line waiting for their mess hall to open for lunch. The explosives were placed in the metal tray rack. When detonated the metal tray parts and the explosives killed and wounded a lot of soldiers in that incident.

In another episode our division would bring combat units in from the jungle for a stand down, where they could rest for a week, get clean cloth and recuperate from the stresses of war. When they came in, all their weapons and ammunition would be taken from them. One unit was being entertained by the division band, when one of their soldiers who had received a dear john, walked up on the stage and detonated two claymore mines that he had in his jungle fatigue pockets. They blast took off his legs, and killed members of the band and those soldiers close to the stage. Incidents like these never seem to reach the light of day.

Other incident: Four or five division soldiers were killed when they got ready to move from their night fighting position the next morning and place all their claymore mines on top of their Personnel Carrier (PC), without disarming them. The mines went off and killed all the soldiers setting on top of the PC. Other soldiers were killed when they fell asleep on top of their PC at a road block and the VC drove up and opened fire on them, killing them all.

I would estimate that maybe half the soldiers deaths in Vietnam was from something other than being killed by the enemy. Helicopter crashes resulted in huge losses, plus friendly fire, illegal drug, etc. We even had one of the Red Cross ladies murdered while I was there.

I finally got promoted to Sergeant First Class in December 1968, after twelve years of service. Promotions were easy

in Vietnam, and would get harder once it ended. Officers could make Major with only five years in the Army.

One of my biggest thrills was attending BOB HOPE'S Christmas show when he came to Cu Chi in December 1968. Of course it was a hot day and they gave out free warm Pepsi by the case. I took two cases to make a seat.

My seat was about thirty rows back of the stage, with soldiers from other units being flown in for the show.

Hope has Les Brown's Band with him, Rosie Greer (Pro-Football player), Ms World, the Golden Girls, Angie Dickens (that is all I can remember). When he first came out to start his show all the people in the front stood up and those of us in the rear couldn't see very well, so we toss full cans of Pepsi toward the front rolls. A lot of wounded soldiers also were brought over from the 12<sup>th</sup> Evacuation Hospital to see the show.

Since Anita was in Germany with Diane and Marc on the way, it was difficult to communicate with her and letters took three weeks. Marc was born in the Army Hospital in Munich on 23 April the same day I was notified that my father had died. My tour of duty was ending, and I received orders for Montpelier, Vermont. I had request an assignment to Germany, since my family was already there, but the Army responded that the assignment in Vermont was special and I had to report there.

Since my father had died, I departed Vietnam a few days earlier than my full tour. I was flown to Bien Hoa, the military airport near Saigon to catch a charter flight home. To get a seat on the plane, they bumped the last guy in line and I took his place. When I arrived in the departure area, I immediately noticed that my fellow military passengers were still in their jungle fatigues, many with the look of fear still on their faces and muddy boots. I became apprehensive at this sight and worried what these folks might do once we became airborne. I was somewhat relieved, when we started boarding the United Airlines flight. As most all the flight Stewarts were large Hawaiian males, dressed in bright flowered shirts, who I figured were large enough to hold anyone down that became crazy in flight. We were also each given a bag, stuff full of little games and a deck of cards. When our flight took off, everyone on board the aircraft clapped, and I immediately thought the plane was coming apart. Since I

was almost the last one on, my seat was in the rear of the plane, between two Sergeant's who worked in the mortuary field. They were stationed in Saigon, preparing remains of those servicemen killed in-action (KIA). They talked shop all the way home.

One observation is that the military did not bring these guys down before discharging them back into society. They were out killing people one day and back on the street in their hometowns the next.

When my plane landed at Travis AFB, California we were bused us to Oakland Army base for a porterhouse steak and a new class A uniform. From there we caught buses or cabs to the Los Angeles Airport. Plus we were giving paper orders for our next assignments or discharged if your enlistment was up.

#### RETURN TO THE STATES

In April 1968 I flew back to Louisville for my father funeral, and then flew to Munich, Germany to pick up my family and return to Vermont. Marc was new born and Diane was three, so traveling was difficult with the luggage etc. In those days they have charter companies that arranged flight for military personnel and their families out of Frankfurt, Germany at a fair price. The charter flew into JFK, New York where we caught a connecting flight to Louisville.

We visited my mom and picked up the car I had purchased prior to heading for Germany. When we go to Montpelier all that was there militarily was an Army Reserve Center.

I talked to the Sergeant working at the center and he called his headquarters in Fort Devens, Massachusetts who said I should report there. I with the family headed for Fort Devens and they gave me orders for a Military Intelligence Reserve assignment in Hartford, Connecticut. In reality, it was a holding slot for Vietnam, as I would be back in Vietnam in two years. The job, although wasn't anything special, it was away from the regular army and only required that I attend meetings with the unit and write a report. I also reviewed the payroll for correctness (never found a mistake favoring the army). The

first year the Reserve Center was located in Hartford at the same location of the Colt Arms company. You could hear them test firing their guns. The second year we moved the Reserve center to Cromwell, Connecticut that formerly housed a Nike Missile unit.

There were five full time Reservists working at the unit. I worked with another activity duty sergeant who liked to work in the morning, so he would cover the office in the morning in case headquarters called and I would work from twelve to around four in the afternoon. There was suppose to be a regular army Major working with me, but none was assigned. When I was leaving to go back to Vietnam, I was replaced by a Military Intelligence Captain. It was a nice two years and we lived in old Army Nike site housing. They were single homes that any military personnel could live in that worked in the area. We had military recruiters from all the services and even citizens working for the military living in the houses. I also applied for a position as a Military Intelligence Warrant Officer while there, but didn't get selected. One day we had a Reserve Colonel visit from Fort Meade, Maryland, First Army Headquarters. I told him about my Warrant Officers application and he told me to reapply and he would see that I got selected. But I decided not to go to all the trouble of resubmitting the paper work again, as Army E-8's at that time made as much money as Warrant officers did.

#### BACK TO VIETNAM

While in Connecticut I was in discussion with my branch assignment personnel in the Pentagon about my future assignment. I was hoping for a different assignment then Vietnam.

They offered South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam. I selected Thailand. When I received my orders Christmas week, they read Vietnam. What a Christmas present. My report date was in April, 1971. The family would head back to Germany and wait my return.

I want to make it clear that I was a professional soldier and believed in what we were trying to accomplish in Vietnam. I also believed in destiny and if I should get hurt or killed than that was already preordained.

Fortunately, my number never came up and I have lived a long and mostly happy life.

Fear is good, but I seen too many men with no physical scars, but deep mental ones.

When I was on the night shift in the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, we has a Lieutenant Colonel, the division logistic officer, who came to the command bunker and spend the night, acting like he was working.

Being, one of the division key staff officers, he had his own personal house trailer, but never spent a night there.

Afraid of those mortar and rocket attacks we got almost every night.

Prior to heading back to Vietnam, I traveled with the family to Germany and spend a relaxing couple of weeks, prior to flying back to the states and heading to California for my onward flight to Vietnam. Just before taking the family to Germany we visited my mother and sister in Louisville and I left my new Ford station wagon with a friend to keep for me while I was overseas.

This time I had orders to catch my charter plane at Travis AFB without having to process through Oakland Army Terminal. My military assignment was to a Transportation Command in Qui Nhon. Our charter landed in Cameron Bay and I spend a few days in the replace detachment before being bused to my new duty station.

Landing in Vietnam, I immediately notice sometime has changed within the Army. Black soldiers were wearing black risk band and black necklaces. They were also wearing AFRO haircuts and doing a greeting to each other called the DAP. They would go out of their way to block lines with their dapping.

We had a lot of black soldiers in my new unit. I was assigned as a security NCO and would work in the unit S-2 section. There was the smell of marijuana everywhere and the soldiers were snoring heroin. I really didn't have a job as the S-2 section, as it already has to many personnel and I didn't even have a seat to sit down, so I chose to work the night shift. I also went to personnel and applied for a new assignment, since I didn't really have a job. Our transportation unit has some LST's and many trucks. Unit personnel unloaded ships and transported the supplies to their destinations. You could visit other military

units in the area and the PX camp area, but everything else was off limits and you could not stop in town. The Merchant seamen, who came in with the ships, could go anywhere and did, mostly for the girls, drugs and alcohol.

I was really disappointed with my Army and the situation that I was in. It was like the military was scared to handle the situation, so the officers did nothing.

Thank god my new assigned came through and I was assigned to another Transportation Command located in Da Nang.

I thought if I keep going any further north, I would wind up in North Vietnam. The situation in Da Dang was more of the same, accept on a larger scale. Our unit operated a large pier, unloading ammunition and loading large pieces of military equipment that was being returned to the states. I guess the military knew we were going to get out of Vietnam and starting the process by drawing down units and shipping their equipment home. This time I was the S-2 NCO for the command. I immediately got a gun, which I and the other NCO's wore all the time for protection from our own soldiers. We had a lot of soldiers, mostly black, that didn't have that much to do. Why the Army didn't ship them home and discharge them I will never know. Our command was located on the camp that was a former Navy military hospital. The billets were mostly made of tin and built on sand. There was little threat at that time from the VC, I guess John Kerry had told them we would be abandoning Vietnam and to wait us out.

Lying on the ground outside many of the enlisted billets was little round plastic cap that had a top that unscrewed. The caps had contained heroin that the soldiers snored through their nose to get high. When the caps became empty, they were thrown outside the barracks. I noticed that white soldiers using heroin, would have very white skin, as all other white soldiers would have a sun tan, being stationed in that part of the world. The soldier could purchase these cap containing heroin anytime.

The Vietnamese drug dealers would sit on their motor bikes outside the camp perimeter day and night, seven days a week. They would sell them taped together like a Hershey bar containing 20 caps for one hundred dollars. Many of our soldiers during this period became addicted to heroin. The military apparently never published any reports that I know of, that covered this situation.

The black soldiers would riot and cause as much trouble as they could.

We learned to deal with the rioting by locking all the camp gates and keeping other black soldiers out so they could not support the riot.

Since the senior officers didn't want to deal with the problem, we would identify the black leaders and give them orders for other units. This was all happening in 1971 and this will always be a sad chapter in my military careers.

The S-2 jeep assigned to my office was stolen one day when the driver forgot to put the chain around the steering wheel when he left it unattended. Jeeps were being stolen all over the place and if you didn't lock yours, someone would take it.

I had to laterally buy one from an ordinance unit that built one from several old jeeps and installed a new engine. The cost was two cases of hamburger meat, which the mess sergeant gave me.

I would ride around Da Nang in my new jeep doing my job. Several nights a week I would have to drive over to our higher headquarters to pick up a Secret flash message. All these messages ever said was, "Be on extra alert, as it would be darker tonight, because there would be no moon that night." I had to wake up the Colonel and give him this news.

One of my jobs was providing weather information to the command. I didn't know that until a Typhoon hit our pier and blew our ammo barges all over Vietnam. The colonel wasn't very happy that he didn't know about the typhoon.

The marines stationed in Vietnam were all gone from Da Nang by the middle of 1971.

We still were not allowed to visit Vietnamese stores and would get arrested by the MP if caught.

One funny or sad story, on my trips throughout DA Nang, I would notice different characters (Vietnamese men or women dressed funny etc). One old gentleman wore a long heavy military overcoat and old military boots. I would stop and give him Vietnamese money, hopefully it helped.

There was this older Vietnamese lady who would show up at our front gate and dance with no cloth on. I even seen her chase the Vietnamese children, I hope she didn't hurt any.

A sad story, one day a Porte Rican Sergeant First Class who handled civilian hires for our command and who also wore a gun, told me never to call him (Poncho). Since it never crossed my mind to call him a name like that I didn't pay his comment much attention. A week later he killed a young Sergeant who last name was also Johnson for calling him a name. I guess he is still serving his time in Leavenworth.

In late 1971 and early 1972 the Army finally started to send these exceed personnel home and our black problem subsided. The command also was assigned a lot of Captains and one became my boss in the S-2. Right away he wanted my jeep and I told him to go get one like I did and he didn't like that very much. We started moving from camp to camp as they closed them down and everyone was getting a two month drop in their tour.

Before I forget, Anita and the children were in Munich with her mother. Her mother died one night and I received a letter saying she wanted to return to the states. I had to take a fourteen day leave, fly three-quarters around the world on a Pan Am Flight to Germany, pick up the family; take them to the Frankfort Airport by train, purchase plane ticket for all and head for Kentucky.

When I arrived in Germany, I had about twelve hundred dollars, but since it was mid summer, air fairs were high. I was in a real bind, until I contacted a military charter company and the lady on the phone said they had a plane leaving at 3:AM in the morning. She also said it was sold out, but most of the time a small group of people wouldn't show up and for me to bring my family. The flight was to Washington DC and only cost \$84.00 a ticket. With no amount of effort, we got to Frankfort and fifteen people didn't show up for the flight. I purchases four tickets and after drinking my two complimentary free drinks fell asleep and didn't wake up until we were flying into Washington. I purchased airline tickets to Louisville, found a furnished apartment for the family and had to almost immediately start my return trip back to Vietnam.



I flew to Philadelphia for my return flight and sit next to an air-marshals most of the flight back.

We flew into Bangkok Thailand, where the Air-Marshal's took me through customs with them. I flew on into Saigon on Air Thailand, which had British pilots.

My second Vietnam tour ended in February 1972. I had to process out of a Replacement Station in DA NANG. When I arrived there we had to take a urinalysis. Then they had a formation and starting calling names out. I immediately noticed that no one would say anything when their name was called. They were told to report to a certain building. It finally dawned on me that these soldiers had tested positive for drug usage. I guess I wouldn't have identified myself either if I was a drug addict. I hear they were shipped to Japan for drug treatment, prior to sending them home.

This time they also search our possession for drugs and other contraband. I remember they didn't do it the other times I departed Vietnam.

My new assignment was to Fort Hood, Texas to some military intelligence unit that was experimenting on new army concept. I really didn't want to go to Fort Hood and all that heat. Since my family was in Louisville and Fort Knox was just down the road, I decided to go visit the post security office and see if I could get reassigned there. I once had an old soldier tell me to do this if I didn't want to go to a particular assignment. I went and visited a sergeant who I knew from my old armor days and was now a Sergeant Major. He took me over to main post and visited the Sergeant Major (SM) in the Post Security Office. The SM called the Pentagon and they reassigned me to Fort Knox. This was in early 1972, where I stayed until being reassigned to Germany in June 1977.

The Army also got control of the Black problem with sensitive training for everyone. The black soldiers who caused most of the trouble were discharged and the Army returned to the organization that I loved.

Short Story: While in the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division I was able to collect enemy propaganda documents put out by the VC telling our soldiers to desert. They were written by US soldiers held prisoner by the VC. They were required to sign their names on them. When the war was over, the US

prisoners were released and several came to Fort Knox hospital for treatment.

In my collection I had one of these papers signed by a soldier being treated at Fort Knox. Military training forbids soldiers from helping the enemy and I guess they could get court-marshal for doing this.

The man's name was Branch and I told my Colonel that I had this paper and he told post headquarters. Instruction from Post Headquarters was for me to destroy the paper. I am not sure what I really did with it. I figure they were probably right, as this soldier has suffered enough. The US Army is the only army required to follow the Geneva Convention rules anyway.

I arrived at Fort Knox in Feb 1972 as a SFC and would leave in June 1977 as a Master Sergeant. The Army went to the centralized promotion system, managed out of the Pentagon. Since Vietnam was winding down and the military was reducing in size, promotion slowed way down.

The post Directorate of Security, Security of Military Information Division would be my home for the next five and one-half years.

We enforced security regulations (those concerning classified information) and set policy for the Army at Fort Knox. This included a vigorous inspection program of all post activities that held classified defense information. Some offices would only have several documents, to one activity that has thousands.

As the years went by, manpower cuts affected our efforts and our inspection program was vastly diminished.

Colonel Charles Smith was our boss. He was an elderly gentleman, which protected his staff and allowing use to do our jobs. Many times when I inspected another staff office, one of the officers would try to give me a hard time. I would just ask to use his telephone and call Colonel Smith, who would tell me to have the officer talk to him. . When the officer and Col Smith finished their conversation, the officer would be asking how much sugar I wanted in my coffee and had a better understanding as to why as I there.

*MSC MARC R. JOHNSON SA*