

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
C TROOP, 7TH ARMORED SQUADRON, 17TH AIR CAVALRY
APO San Francisco 96262
26 November 1968

(Delivered by CW2 Robert Mitchell at the final party on 25 Nov at the Villa. Written by CW2 R.A. Jones in his finest style. Two great Colts!)

SUBJECT: Last Meeting of The Original Chaparrals

HIGH CHAPARAL

ACT I "In the beginning god created Charlie Troop"

Scene I

(Enter Maj Frost stage right-20 New Warrants stage left plus 5 extras-commissioned types-small walk in parts, no lines) Setting-. Eagle port Ft Campbell, Ky, Crisp Oct day-world war I type hanger complete with aviators, volleyball court, card tables and a barrel full of hopes, rings were rough those next few weeks, 0500 PT formations, superfluous extra duties requiring fictions SOPs and Friday afternoon forced marches. We didn't have any aircraft to raise hell with and so soon discovered the Little "O" with a full complement of second Johns to bear the brunt of our frustrations

Scene II

Enter stage left six ancient OH-23G's and one brand new Charlie model, #245, which was not to be trusted in the hands of the warrants, the only true professionals, in Army Aviation Our carefree arid happy days were soon ended by Lamb famous statement (quite) I've got a bunch of warrants that aren't doing anything. We found ourselves volunteered for police calls, courtesy patrols and operation Eagle Thrust, Eagle Thrust proved to be a brilliant success bringing to an end 101st domination of Ft Campbell. Being the sole heirs to Ft Campbell, we had a big pair of jump boots to fill, but soon found them pinching our feet as we over step .sec our bounds time and again, It was now mid Dec and Christmas leaves were in order so ended 19670

ACT II "The Whole Nine Yards"

Scene I

With the onset of the New year and the intensive training period, came not just volleyball games, ping pong and pinochle but tournaments. Our tight schedule of happy hour, bowling and parties had to be readjusted to allow for Vietnam orientations, weapons qualification and a grueling one or two hours of flight time each week. We were now ready to put our classroom training to the test. Two weeks of artic survival at area 28 intended to prepare us for the tropical adventure that awaited us. We encountered snow, fallen GP mediums and 0530 formations at which we froze our asses off waiting to hear that famous line "This Army's alright" only to be stunned by "Nobody wake me be that as it may, we advanced another step u:.) the ladder of preparation and viciously undertook our first ATT. Bearing in mind our detailed briefing, "One if by land, two if by sea", we mounted our assault from every direction, leaving nothing to chance. Speeding in from the south came our C-119 with its devastating cargo of thirteen airsick paratroopers, each one prepared to abandon his discomfort bag and jump at a seconds notice. From the north, downwind on final approach, came the awesome threat of Phophob flying circus

and in a display of perfect timing, in rolled the remnants of our broken down convoy commander' by Mike Piccone and his flaming two-holer. We certainly set the world on fire that weekend, burning down half the state of Indiana.

On our return to Campbell we experimented in its fine art of popping smoke at night, which greatly contributed to making Clarksville what it is today. The armpit of the nation. Major Frost, who is brilliant with letters, managed to pull us thru by covering our ass with paper work. We were now qualified by DA to go to Vietnam.

ACT III "This Army's Alright!"

Scene I

Several small details remained to be taken care of; updating shot records, loading conexas and flying our aircraft to Atlanta for necessary MWOs.

Atlanta depot had a pitifully small officers' club and by 1700 our small group had cleaned them out of Bud,Schliz, Millers, Falstaff and Black Label in that order. Spraying our flight, suits with Right Guard our mob set out to see Atlanta. Every place in town received the same sob story- "Were going to Vietnam tomorrow". It was a hell of a night-every place welcomed us with open arms. Songs were dedicated to us,, drinks were in such abundance that we could not keep up and from somewhere in the crowd "Who's the rankest man here-this is the most flagrant dross violation I've ever seen in twenty in the service." Pollmann slurred-"We're all pretty rank"-and was immediately pounced upon by a full colonel. We escaped from Atlanta by the skin of our teeth. Speaking of skins, that little old banana fanner Russell still has nightmares about the place.

Scene II

In the three months that followed our ATT, any resemblance between C Troop and a military unit was purely coincidental and fictitious. It became SOP to come to work at 1030 in civics camouflaged by a flight suit, check the mail and hit the links for a- quick 18 before happy hour, On weather days you couldn't beat a friendly bowling match accompanied by stimulating conversation and a few choruses of "Cab Driver". There were also many interesting lessons in social etiquette to be learned from our more formal parties. Who'll ever forget Maj Glover's grand ballroom entrance in his custom made dress blues? Such was life in Charlie Troop during the days when one would chuckle to himself at the twinge of conscience he felt on payday.

Our aircraft finally came out of Atlanta and we embarked on the long trip to San Francisco. A book could be written about the journey as catalogued under "Rape, Pillage, and Plunder" but it would just be the same old Charlie Troop song. "Did they ever return? No they never returned-They were thrown out the first time.

ACT IV "Between a Rock and a Hard Place"

Scene I

Legend has it that there is a ghost ship that flies the skies of Vietnam. According to the story the ship is a Charlie model which was wounded one day in a Ruthless Revetment. The le,-end goes on to say that the ship wanders forlornly somewhere between Kontum and Dak To, along the river, searching untiringly

for its destroyed part. Now I don't know for sure but the story says that the ship is easily identified by a brand new synch elevator with just a primer coat on it. Now the word was out that anyone catching a revetment was in deep shit. How the destroyer of #245 escaped punishment is still a mystery. Any ideas?

Scene II

"Insert the Blues"

There once was a leader of an Air Cav Troop who said to wife "Bruce insert the Blues". All kidding aside, sir, it's been a memorable 14. months and rewarding experience that I'm sure none of us will ever forget. We have all enjoyed serving under you and wish you continued success with your next command. We will never forget you, Sir, and we hope you'll never I'm get Charlie Troop. By the way, Sir, how was that 20 minute quickie at Da Lat.