

## THE EMU (EXPERIMENTAL MILITARY UNIT) AIRCREW

Politics aside, that exciting ride  
Of life and grim expectations,  
Showed me how  
(And even now  
I know) I had limitations.

Twelve long months, and more than once  
I'd sat in the hands of Fate;  
Why was I there?  
Why should I care?  
Just rely on your mate.

Aussies and Yanks, of various ranks,  
We were a mixtured crew;  
From one of each  
We learned to teach  
Each other of what we knew.

Fear and pride, both taken in stride,  
Humbled me...that's for sure;  
I felt aloof  
And bullet-proof...  
While death hovered right next door.

At times I'd fly, at times I'd cry...  
Frustration reigned supreme;  
Friend or foe...  
'Twas hard to know...  
For both wore black or green.

Back at base, sometimes I'd face  
Questions from a mate;  
"How'd it go?"  
And words would flow  
While drinking beer 'til late.

He also flew, that's how he knew  
The right words so to speak;  
And words so said  
Erased the dread  
Of future flights so bleak.

It made me proud I was allowed  
To call this bloke a mate;  
I knew him well  
And I could tell,  
To me, *he* could relate.

A gentle man from a southern land,  
I got to know him well;  
A willing bloke  
Who loved a joke...  
Who'd fly with you through hell.

At times we flew in a four-man crew  
O'er lands of trees and rice;  
'CHARLIE' would hide  
And our luck would ride  
With 'Death'... and the throw of his dice.

When holes appeared, (then tape adhered),  
Like a badge... our 'ship' was honoured;  
We hadn't heard  
Strikes to our bird...  
"Lucky again!?" ... we pondered.

When we put down in a mud-surround  
'Twas a place not meant to be;  
Miles from home  
And all alone...  
It scared the hell out of me!

When we set down in a dry-surround  
Our choppers numbered ten;  
When mortars rained  
Our engines strained  
To get airborne again.

While six flew on, the rest prolonged  
Their stay upon the ground;  
In injured state  
They could but wait  
With wounded men all round.

“What rotten luck”, for a pilot struck  
In the head while flying high;  
These words you’d think...  
And *dare’d* not sink  
To thinking *your* time was nigh.  
Five ‘ships’ set out and went about  
Their duties for the day;  
Four ‘ships’ returned  
That’s when we learned  
That one was not okay.

’Twas a mission ‘hot’, and CHARLIE ’d shot  
A crew and a ‘ship’ that day;  
In an old bomb crater  
I learned much later....  
That upside-down they lay.

The daily plan for ‘ship’ and man  
Was making a safe return;  
But then again,  
“of mice and men”  
The “best laid” takes a turn.

Should someone say, “a quiet day,”  
And, “missions should be short;”  
’Twould often play  
The other way...  
And peacefulness abort.

Some daily flights stretched into nights...  
The “quiet day” was wrong;  
And in a bind  
Our crews would find  
Their strengths and carry on.

I’ll not repent the whole year spent  
At war in a foreign land;  
I’m *proud* I flew  
As an EMU crew...  
And I’m *proud* of the EMU man.

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