

VIETNAM I WAS THERE ~ by Terry Brooks ~ ex R.A.N. R57441

IT WAS 1967 AND I DIDN'T WANT TO GO,
I WAS "VOLUNTEERED" LIKE OTHERS IN THAT POLITICIANS' SHOW;
WHEN I HAD JOINED THE R.A.N. SOME SEVEN YEARS AGO
'T WAS JUST A JOB TO TRAVEL...FOREIGN PLACES SO TO GO.

KITTED OUT IN UNIFORM AND SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD,
THE WORLD WAS ONE BIG OYSTER THAT WAS WHAT I HAD BEEN TOLD;
HONG KONG, JAPAN AND OTHER PORTS IN CLIMATES HOT AND COLD,
GOOD MATES, GOOD FUN, AND TRAVELLING...ON THESE I HAD BEEN SOLD.

CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW I FELT TO HEAR MY NAME CALLED OUT?
TO THIS I SAID, "FAIR DINKUM, MATE..WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?
I DIDN'T JOIN TO FIGHT OR PUT AN ENEMY TO ROUT!?"
THEN "BLOODY 'ELL!" IT DAWNED ON ME..I'M OFF TO WAR NO DOUBT.

OTHER BLOKES WERE ALSO TOLD, I WASN'T ON MY OWN,
AND STOICALLY THEY HID THEIR THOUGHTS THEIR FACES WERE LIKE STONE;
I TOLD MYSELF, "THIS CAN'T BE TRUE, AMIDST THIS SAFETY ZONE
I'M MARRIED AND I'VE GOT ONE KID. THEY CAN'T BE LEFT ALONE."

ONE DIDN'T WHINGE OR WHINE, YOU KNOW, WE TOOK IT IN OUR STRIDE...
I'LL TELL YOU THOUGH MY HEART BEAT FAST..I FOUND THAT HARD TO HIDE;
I SUFFERED FROM ANXIETY FROM FEARFULNESS AND PRIDE;
WE'LL SOON BE THERE..YOU BETCHA LIFE..WE'LL TURN THE BLOODY TIDE!

A MONTH TO TRAIN AND TO SURVIVE AND SECRETS NOT TO LEAK,
IN JUNGLE AND IN ARID LAND I LEARNT TO HIDE-AND-SEEK;
AND I WAS TOLD THAT WE WERE RIGHT AND 'COMMIES' RAPED THE MEEK...
SO, LET'S GET OVER THERE AND SO PROTECT THE FLAMIN' WEAK.

NEXT THING I KNEW I HAD ARRIVED, SWEET THOUGHTS HAD I OF HOME,
AND WONDERED WOULD I LAST THIS TOUR OF 12 WHOLE MONTHS OR SOME;
AND BIG BLACK CLOUDS, WHICH SOON I LEARNED FROM BIG BLACK BOMBS HAD COME,
THEN TO A BASE IN *FUNNY LAND* A FIXTURE I'D BECOME.

AND FROM THAT BASE I THEN ENGAGED IN FLYING OPERATIONS,
SO MANY FLIGHTS THAT I LOST COUNT OF LOW AND HIGH ELATIONS;
I SAW SOME MATES AND ENEMY IN DEATHLY SITUATIONS...
I BLESSED MY GOOD LUCK CHARM I HAD AND PRAYED FOR MY SALVATION.

AND THERE WERE TIMES WHEN I'D FORGET THE REASON I HAD GONE THERE,
AND THERE WERE TIMES THAT I WOULD CURSE THE LOCALS WHO WERE SO SCARED;
TO ME THEY DIDN'T WANT TO FIGHT AND COULDN'T GIVE A DAMNED CARE...
BECAUSE OF THIS SOME BITTERNESS WAS BORN INTO ME SOMEWHERE.

I FOUND IT VERY DIFFICULT ACCEPTING LIFE WAS CHEAP,
AND ONCE I STRUGGLED DEEP WITHIN WITH MEMORIES I STILL KEEP;
BUT COMMON SENSE AND HUMOUR AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT I REAPED
SOON OVERCAME THE AWSOMENESS UPON MY SHOULDERS HEAPED.

I LOST SOME MATES AND SAW A LOT OF THINGS I WON'T FORGET,
I DID SOME THINGS, I DON'T KNOW WHY, SOME THINGS I STILL REGRET;
I FEEL I AM EXPERIENCED IN LIFE AND WHAT YOU GET...
BELIEVE ME..I AM JUST THE SAME AS ANY **NORMAL VET.**