

David Firey - In His Own Words

SEPTEMBER - 2021

By: Sp/4 David Firey
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Chu Lai, So. Vietnam

MY YEAR IN VIETNAM

About one year ago I stepped off the first plane on which I'd ever flown,
I placed my trembling feet on the strangest land I've ever known.

A newly-trained recruit,
I'd been taught how to march and shoot.

I found myself in S.E. Asia, a place called Long Binh,
So. Vietnam,
To be a participant in a war 10,000 miles from home.

I was still a kid, not fully "grewed",
Not ready to carry a man's load.

How to pray and trust in God, I just didn't know,
My will-power must increase and my faith would have to grow.

My first assignment wasn't what I'd planned,
For it was humping the boonies in Vietnam.

I'd been in country a week or two,
And they said, "This is what you'll do."

It's a job we know you can do,
We'll make a pointman out of you.

Then I replied, "Sorry sport,"
"But for that job, I'm just too short."

"Then we've another job that's lots of fun,"
"You'll be the man to hump the machine gun."

To this one I had a quick reply,
"Are you crazy? I don't want to die."

But they worked me into the plan,
By making me their radio man.

In those spooky old jungles; let me give you a clue,
I was so darn scared I didn't know what to do.

So I turned to the dearest friend I had,
"Please help this scared young lad?"

"Lord, hold my trembling hand and give me courage to stand,"
"For I'm so afraid, please take command."

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Each night we'd stop our weary hike,
And set up camp and eat a bite.

The "C" rations were such a delight,
I was so hungry I "wolfed down" every bite.

Then at night I took my turn at the guard position,
And, let me tell you, I was never once bothered with constipation.

The strage noises of a jungle night,
Added to my intense fright.

Giant lizards were cursing loudly everywhere,
While the mosquitoes circled like fighter bombers in the air.

The enemy is not easy to define,
Whether it be N.V.A., V.C., a booby trap, or a mine.

But for sure you'll get a raw deal,
Because the mosquitoes will eat your blood for every meal.

With mortar all around and bullets cracking over-head,
You realize you might come home dead.

Then again I'd ask God to protect me,
"Lord, help us to defeat the enemy."

And that's what I'd do,
A little prayer always pulled us through.

Then we'd get the word: "Birds in bound!"
And we'd pop smoke and secure the pad all around.

There they came like angels through the air,
To carry us back to base camp in the rear.

There we'd get clean clothes, a shower, and some hot grub,
Then off to the PX and EM club.

After three or four days of rest and retrain,
It was back to the helipad for another combat mission.

Finally came my R&R,
The week I'd been looking for.

I had lots of fun,
But it had just began.

When the precious time had fled,
And I was wishing I was dead.

Back to Vietnam I had to go,
What lay ahead?....I didn't know.

By the help of God I got rear position,
And that really brightened my disposition.

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By now I'd moved northward slightly,
To Chu Lai on the So. China Sea.

As I watch the tides come and go,
And one happy day I know.

I'll span that mighty ocean in a big silver freedom bird,
It's roaring engines will be the sweetest sound I've ever heard.

And it will be a one-way trip and that's for sure,
Not just a visit like I went on before.

A leave is fine for a week or two,
But going back's sure to leave you blue.

Well, now, only 50 days remain,
Of my tour in So. Vietnam.

So now I'm a short-timer at last,
Watching the days slowly pass.

Just around the corner is the monsoon,
So my home coming won't be none too soon.

You say what have I learned, What have I to show?
I'm not sure, but this one thing I know.

Vietnam has been a valuable tool,
It's taught me things not taught in school.

Life never goes according to plan,
For a guy in Vietnam.

But I didn't waste my time in this land,
For I'll go home a better man.

With drugs and booze I had no part,
I kept God's peace in my heart.

Yes, one year in a foreign land,
In this strange place called Vietnam.

But here I stand,
That same scared kid is now a man.

I often question what's happened here,
Such little progress for a price so dear.

I've seen my comrades give their life and fall,
Because they were man enough to answer their country's call.

In war, all give some and some give all,
When Uncle Sam speaks, you must heed his call.

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But no war is ever won when for your country, your life
you give,
Victory comes when your enemy gives his life for his.

So I promised my sweat, but my blood I'll keep,
For this you may call me cowardly and weak.

But back home when I arrive,
Don't call me hero, just call me alive.

A purple heart will buy a cup of coffee any time,
That is, if you can shell out a dime.

No matter how noble the cause may be,
If I lose my life the war is over for me.

Now you living-room patriots may see,
It all narrated on your own color TV.

But this one thing you may fail to see,
Is the soldier's individual philosophy.

So I've used the things I've learned,
To protect myself and those concerned.

Because of present politics and tactics you see,
There's only one hope for my buddies and me.

To finish out our year,
And keep our health records clear.

I read about the protestors too,
And I wonder what our country's coming to.

I see those we are fighting for,
They sell you souvenirs, dope, and a whore.

There's traitors, the black-market, and thieves,
And they hate to see the Americans leave.

Many have become fat and rich from a war we lost,
They padded their hip-pocket at a terrible cost.

Lost this war? Oh yes, we've lost it,
Thousands have died but no end yet.
Think of
The broken hearts and painful tears,
This war has caused through the years.

Oh when will man ever realize,
Peace only comes from the man in the skies.

So my part is almost done and this story I tell,
I'm ready to go home and bid Vietnam a final farewell.