

The Rain of Hanoi Hannah

Second Battalion First Marine Division positioned to implement another notch in Marine Corps history. It seems everyone remembers the beachhead assaults, but so very few the first withdrawals. Second Battalion, designated to pull out of Vietnam intact, prepared in military readiness. This means every field platoon, every relay communication post, every helicopter, and every piece of artillery, even the transport vehicles: inventoried, tagged, and logged. Some of the larger equipment, such as tanks and Hueys, ship directly to Qui Nhon Harbor under heavy escort. As in all operations of this magnitude, the best and the worse in men leech to the surface. Some of the baser types become dealers, distributors of dangerous substances to their comrades oblivious of the consequences. Black Market Exchange based on personal greed, representing an enormous challenge in the war against communism. The way it works deviously simple: so simple that only a few seem to notice. Soldiers have family members and friends send them cash hidden in personal letters or in care packages. These they trade to the local Vietnamese for MPC Military currency at a ratio of ten to one. These bills sophisticated counterfeits, nearly perfect in every detail, representing denominations from five cents, up to one dollar. Those participating entrepreneurs in turn buy a money order using the bogus bills and mail the certificate back home. Rumors are that enlisted men, as well as a few officers, L.A. Espriux 255 accumulate thousands of dollars in this way. The U.S. Treasury wages its own war, even here in this distant battlefield. Every so often, and without warning, we receive instruction to bring all of our MPC bills to the Adjutants office to exchange them for a new generation of currency. I still have some worthless bills to this day because I failed to exchange them within the prescribed period. There are also scavengers of every rank. I learn to be diligent when it comes to protecting the integrity of my final count. I remember particularly well a hot afternoon when a Major from the armory drops by and begins rummaging through containers as though at a flea market. Everyone else at the chow hall having lunch, I decide to remain here and open a can of cold rations, taking opportunity to update some paperwork. "Can I help you, Sir?" I ask politely. "Looks like you boys are packed and ready to go," he states in a friendly Tennessee accent. "Yelp, this war is coming to an end." In one hand a field compass taken from an open container near the door as he walked in. I do not say anything, at least not immediately. He next steps to a box marked "classified." The top, although placed, has not yet been nailed shut and banded. Nonchalantly, he lifts the cover to peek at the contents. I forcefully stomp my boot on the lid, snapping it shut as he quickly pulls his fingers to safety. "What the hell is your problem, Corporal? I want to see your warehouse Sergeant." "I am the warehouse Sergeant, Sir!" Judging by the smirk on his face, I know already what he is thinking. He arrogantly reaches down to raise the lid again, and again I apply pressure with my boot shifting all of my weight forward. We stare at each other eyeball to eyeball, like two gunfighters preparing for a duel. "You will remove your g-damned boot and let me see what's in this box!" He commands firmly. "Sir—this is classified inventory. It is my duty to inform the Major that his request cannot be fulfilled without special permission—Sir!" "Corporal, I'm warning you. I am a ranking officer, and I'll see to it that you are busted down to private before the sun sets! Now, I am giving you an order—open that box!" Reflections in a Paper Moon: Beginning Passage 256 "I must respectfully decline the Major's order—Sir! If you

like, the Captain and Gunny will be back in half an hour. You can make your request to them—Sir!” “By God, you have been warned Corporal!” As he turns to leave, I quickly grab his hand and remove the compass from his grasp. “This is inventoried and secured property, Sir!” I say without politeness. He stands there in shock, altogether dumbfounded. I have added injury to insult. I know he will take his complaint straight to the Colonel. I have refused a direct order from a superior, and therefore in violation Marine Corps protocol. In fact, there are few infractions of greater consequence, other than stealing or desertion. However, I am the only ranking personnel in the warehouse on this day, recognizing my prime responsibility to protect my inventory, even against a scavenger of superior rank. How the Colonel might see things is an altogether another matter. When Gunny and the Captain return from noon chow, I provide a detailed report of the event. “You snatched something out of a Major’s hand—a Major?” The Captain jumps up in defense of a fellow officer. “He had no business being in our warehouse.” Gunny defends. “You did good, Corporal. I hope that jack-leg learned a lesson today!” When it comes to military politics, Gunnery Sergeants have a lot of pull. Even though out-ranked by attending officers, very rarely their edits challenged. “All I can say is good luck, Corporal...a Major...” The Captain turns and saunters into the lair of his office. Just after evening chow, I receive the expected summons to the Colonel’s office. There is the glimmer of a smile on the Captain’s face; Gunny just looks down and shakes his head. Upon entering the lion’s den, I see the Major seated in a chair across from the Colonel smoking a cigarette. Judging by the butts in the ashtray, I determine he has been here for some time presenting his case. “Reporting as ordered, Sir,” I state loudly, snapping to attention. L.A. Espriux 257 “Do you recognize this United States Marine Corps Major, Corporal?” The Colonel growls in his usual distemper. “Yes sir,” I reply, surveying the petty grimace of the officer, who hours earlier had invaded my warehouse. “Did you disobey a direct order from this officer?” “Yes, sir, but it was because-” The Colonel leaps to his haunches like an enraged bulldog. “No excuses, Corporal—you will apologize to the Major now—is that understood?” “Yes, sir--I apologize, Major, for disobeying a direct order, Sir!” The Colonel then turns to the other officer. “Okay Major, you have your apology. I will deal with this Marine myself. In the future, you will stay out of the warehouse, and away from supply operations—dismissed.” The Major, although not completely happy with this arrangement, stands up and dismisses himself. He is after all only a Major. What can he say more to influence the decision of a full-bird Colonel? Once he is gone, the Colonel smiles approvingly. “Good work, Corporal—that hyena has been under my skin since we have arrived here. —But by God, you put him in his place.” With unprecedented gentleness, he pats me on the shoulder and shows me to the door. “You let me know personally if he comes within fifty feet of your warehouse.” My attitude toward the Colonel changes after this. I do not tell the Captain, or Gunny, or anyone else the events of that meeting. This night the Colonel and I reach an understanding of mutual respect, which will remain our profound secret. Real R&R comes as a surprise to us all. The Captain calls Supply Company to fall in and reads a special bulletin issued from Battalion headquarters. “Tomorrow at 06:00 hours all Supply and Motor Transport personnel are to report to the tarmac and board a waiting transport for embarkation on a 12 hour R&R to Gun Fighter Hill--courtesy of the Marine Corps!” Reflections in a Paper Moon: Beginning Passage 258 Gun Fighter Hill is a controlled area on the outskirts of a local village called Tam Ky in

Quang Tin Province located a few miles south-east of our position. This area has been the entrenchment of an armored cavalry division of M113 Sheridan tanks ever since its liberation from VC control. A decisive battle inscribed in the history books demonstrating the most effective tank deployment in the Vietnam conflict. This American victory establishes dominate strategic presence, creating an ideal location for an in-country R & R. As in all battles, there are certain names, times, and dates describing actions and counter offensives leading up to the exchange of territories and shifting of power. In those early years, Hill 34 one a strategically vital area of occupied territory, lost once to the enemy in a terrible massacre, and then recaptured, with the province of Quang Tin spoil to the victor. To some Tam Ky and Gun Fighter Hill represents terrible reminders of human cost exacted on bloodied battlefields. It will become to me, a place of unexpected pleasant memories. Particularly unforgettable is the sequestered fantasy island of Tam Ky: a place of beautiful prostitutes, exotic foods, steam houses, and tropical wonders that remain rich tapestries of adventure like few experienced in my life since. Next morning we board the waiting trucks clean, shaved, our hair slicked-- almost the appearance of being civilized men again. Less than an hour later, we pass under the arched main gate of Gun Fighter Hill, a checkpoint resembling the entrance to an arcade, with two larger than life rifles crisscrossing the familiar Marine Corps emblem. Less than an hour later we arrive at the guarded outskirts of Tam Ky; and from here escorted to a designated portion of the village cordoned off for our protection. We are provided just enough accessibility to create the allusion of actually roaming free through an exotic city, complete with shops and an economically thriving local population. From what I can see, Tam Ky village equivalent to any small town in the world, by definition not quite a city, yet more than the small poor farming districts surrounded by terraces of rice paddies. The first activity on our agenda is to eat --compliments of the Colonel-- authentically prepared Vietnamese dishes served inside the L.A. Espriux 259 Commissary, a controlled restaurant that also serves alcoholic beverages. My southern pallet in the beginning not accustomed to this alien array of hot spiced food, I soon begins to appreciate the many unpronounceable courses with a wash of cold beer. I have little idea how even to pronounce the many culinary presentations, except that the serving waitresses lovely. Some of it taste like seafood--or at least I think it is seafood--only I do not know if it even possible to find a restaurant using these same ingredients today. Nevertheless, I eat everything on my plate without question and no worse for the experience. After our authentic in-country meal, all allowed to go our separate ways. I have yet to see Disney Land, and will later be reminded a similarity of experience. The primary objective of most is to find a bar and a whorehouse, activities both plentiful and usually under the same roof. I am one of the less fortunate. I have brought little money, thinking for some reason that everything would be free. Of course, these girls cheaper than one might find anywhere else; nevertheless, they remain out of my price range. I might have been able to afford one or two that even a keg of beer unable to make attractive. Even these would leave me penniless; therefore, I exorcise practical sense by avoiding personal temptation. I spend much of the day walking around, sucking down beers, and observing the local artisans weaving hats or making jewelry from crustacean shells. I enjoy watching the women, who I think not prostitutes, many wearing delicate white and black smocks that move nearly transparent when the wind blows just right. Conversation impossible, since none speak English-- or at least I do not believe they

do. Military Police escorts begin rounding us up at around 17:00 hours. After returning to the Commissary for an all-American steak dinner, the officer in charge announces that we are going to a local bathhouse. At the time, this sounds little exciting to me. The idea of taking a hot bath, though appealing, not exactly the stuff of an R&R adventure, especially considering this is to be our last event before returning to base. At 19:00 hours, a troop truck arrives to carry us into the secret heart of Tam Ky. The bathhouse, a large traditional pagoda-style building, as modern as any spa facility in a capitalist free society, makes all of us Reflections in a Paper Moon: Beginning Passage 260 feel like we really are back in the civilized world. First on the agenda, a forty-minute Turkish sweat, followed by an ice-cold dunk in a cylinder shaped pool, and lastly to run a gauntlet of pretty-- mostly young women possessing wooden switches-- who whip our backs and buttocks. Although, the swishes sting intensely, the pain quickly subsides, leaving the whole body pleasantly warm and relaxed. Lastly, I follow one of the women escorts into a massage room, where she instructs me to lie on an elevated bed. The lights dim, incense of perfumed flowers intoxicating the air, mixed with the scent of a lovely soft lady of Vietnam fills the chamber with exotic pleasure. "Blow-job ten dollars, hand-job five dollars," she negotiates with practiced tenderness. She has the most beautiful almond eyes, her black hair cascading delicately over a partially exposed left breast, leaving me with little desire to escape the delicacy of this temptation. Oh, how I desire to feel those painted luscious lips on my throbbing penis. In the end, however, after a moment of fruitless coaxing, I settle for a hand-job, gladly expending the last five dollars in my pocket. The best five dollars I have ever spent. There is just something chemical about a woman's touch, something that a man simply cannot give himself. I do not remember anything after this wonderful orgasm, until harsh lights stab into my eyes. I am alone, rudely awakened by the bulldog bark of Marine Corps Gunnery. "R & R over, Marine—get dressed and report to your transport—ASAP!" The dream over, I am back in the Marine Corps. I will remember fondly these few hours spent in a small South Vietnamese village made prosperous by U.S. military presence. I cannot help but wonder what happened to it after we left. I wonder about that pretty young girl, which gave me a moment of pleasure in a room of exotic incense. And if the small town of Tam Ky changed for the better or for the worse after Gun Fighter Hill fell for the last time, Already that was so long ago... but still I wonder. L.A. Espriux 261 The following days prove to be the busiest since arriving in Nam. Word is that the LP9 Transport that will take us back stateside already arrived, docked securely in Qui Nhon harbor. This adds a new element of anticipation--proof that we are really going home. However, unknown to any of us at the time, something unthinkable has already happened. An incident involving a USS Battleship, also moored in the harbor for needed repairs, armed with twelve lethal anti-personal nuclear projectiles. Two of these missiles are missing. It is my understanding that these controversial weapons exists as a defensive deterrent only, and considered a subject highly political. On record, therefore, they do not exist at all, and never did exist. How Charlie accomplished this act of espionage remains anyone's guess. We are--after all--playing in his backyard, the rules of the game his own. Then one morning cinders of despair rain from the sky, dropped by a low-flying non-military airplane. The flyers read as follow: "Within 48 hours The Army of the Republic of Vietnam (spelled according to the original designated name given to it by the Qing Emperor before invasion of foreign lands during the last imperial Dynasty

that eventually becomes the present Republic of Communist China). “In days to come the new Republic will launch two of your own nuclear devices completely destroying your position. Those who retreat now, go in peace, or else be consumed in a fire more intense than your rain of Napalms.” Even Hanoi Hanna takes to the air spreading word, likening our position to that of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, laced with graphic adjectives and adverbs describing the worse kind of death. With the sincerity of a pleading mother, she urges us to heed these benevolent warnings from above and escape before it too late. Of all the ways to die I might have considered, this by far the worse. —But what if I should survive? I imagine the script of every horror film I have ever seen. Men made monsters condemned to roam the shadows of the earth terrifying to all that inhabit the light. Even monsters have their tales of redemption. Years later, I will attend an evangelical event in Long Beach, California, and hear the testimony of a young man my age caught in hot phosphorous blast of an incineration grenade. He survives as a monster with human eyes, only Reflections in a Paper Moon: Beginning Passage 262 to lose his wife, his family, and his friends. Nevertheless, by the grace of God, this man finds hope and peace through salvation. I remember thinking how this earth-bound visage could have been me had things happened differently. Command loses no time. A detachment of armed military police posted at every gate; all souls accounted for by Company row call. Regular activities suspended until further notice. Summoned to the LZ, we wait for the Colonel to appear wearing his neatly pressed jungle camouflages, the bright silver bird of his rank stamped defiantly to the crown of his hat. The man has balls. “Damn these Zipper-heads! They think we are a bunch of pussies— by God we will show these Gook bastards that we are Marines—Devil Dogs! Don’t you men worry-- Recon is on their asses like flies on dead meat.” He pauses to clear his throat, eyeing each man like a vulture preparing to dine. The Major of recent encounter pipes in with a timid suggestion. “Sir, maybe we should relocate all vehicles and key personnel to Qui Nhon until the crisis passes.” It is clear that he does not wish to gamble on the cat and mouse stealth of Reconnaissance. Like most of us, he just wants to get back home. We are leaving anyway, what difference might a few weeks make? Let Charlie burn the shit out of this rat-infested hill! It is just another piece of abandoned real estate once we evacuate. “Major--who in hell made your sorry chicken ass God? Marines do not abandon a position! You men will dig perimeter foxholes ten feet apart, and five feet deep. You will sleep, eat, and shit in those holes, until ordered differently--dismissed!” We are now clearly all prisoners to the moment. Without recourse, we do the only thing we can do. We dig the graves of our foxholes. That Major disappears after this public embarrassment by his superior. Probably, he finds a deep hole to his liking, making the decision to stay there until the shit settles or the Colonel dead. It is more likely that he has already prepared special arrangements for himself. Who can blame the selfish bastard? Nothing about this war makes much sense anymore. L.A. Espriux 263 The type of projectile in question is, in appearance, as any conventional small rocket, deployable from a stationary or mobile launcher, except that it contains a nuclear isotope less than the size of a pea with a fusion detonator. It has a lethal dispersion radius of more than 500 meters of incinerating nuclear reaction, and a fallout factor of more than three times this distance. It is minute compared to modern nuclear payloads with multiple warheads, each with enough fusion material capable of devastating several major metropolises. Nevertheless, nuclear is nuclear; Hill 34 the designated

target. In accordance with American Folklore, there is no greater honor given, than to those whose lives lost fighting for a noble cause. Since the battle of Chapultepec, when NCO's and Officers fought side by side to the last man, to remembering Calls at the Alamo, Custard's last stand, and the massacre here on Hill 34--no call to honor rings out more proudly through the hallowed halls of history than these. However, personally I have little desire to join them this day or any day. We are on the threshold of going home--what do a few less days make. This time I fundamentally agree with the Major. Why not just pack-up early and go? Perhaps, this sentiment represents the core reason we could not win the Vietnam conflict. The enemy, on the other hand, possessed with the willingness to send hundreds of unarmed men, women, and children in wave after wave, just to detonate the claymores and die in the coils of barbed wire so that regular soldiers might cross over their sacrificed bodies. I have heard horror stories--stories that continue to give me nightmares--stories of American military outpost over-run by such a human wave assault. Perhaps their demons are greater--or perhaps their willingness to die greater than their demons. Perhaps, because we are from another land armed with superior weaponry that we are unable to comprehend the desperate measures of a people with a history spanning dynasties; a population subject to gods many; divided principalities of warring spirits seated in high places. That lurking beneath the enchanted oriental veneer of this place reflects the face of resolute determination to secure dominance over their own dominion, a reflection similar to our own revolutionary history, except Reflections in a Paper Moon: Beginning Passage 264 for root ideological differences. Nevertheless, this is not our land; nor is it our history. We have little comprehension of what it means to be part of this distant mythical hemisphere. The roots of these mountains resting on a separate plate of tectonic movement; these rivers spawned from another source, representative of a lineage older than the Roman Empire. We imagine ourselves liberators, but perceived by many as conquering invaders from an alien culture. What chance do we have against the brainwash of hundreds of generations... and is it possible, we could have been wrong all along? After this morning briefing, I find a spot on the perimeter nearest my warehouse and begin digging a hole six feet long, three feet wide, and five feet deep. I take with me the worn cover of a Holy Bible. I believe it once belonged to Neider. I must confess that I had never read the bible. I remember hearing about it through Grandmother Bessie, or in passing from a Jehovah Witness named Mrs. Stokes, who drops in to see mother from time to time, often leaving behind stacks of Watchtower literature mostly describing the Apocalyptic end of time. Mrs. Stokes, a stoic presence, never smiles; rarely speaks about anything beyond her religious beliefs; and always leaves Jean sad and doubtful. After one such meeting, Jean decides that Christmas a pagan tradition and that we will no longer celebrate it as a family. Of course, in retrospect, I agree with her reasoning. However, we were all pagan then, only did not realize it. One Christmas we go without a tree or wrapped gifts, our collective reactions less than favorable. Here I am faced with the eminence of a real holocaust. If anything written in this book to save me, I wish desperately to find it now. I spend an entire day and well past dark reading the book of Genesis and part of Exodus. However, I become hopelessly entangled by the laws of Moses. I keep seeing in my mind, an austere portrait of this patriarch holding the tablets of the Ten Commandments, as painted by Rudy during the early years of his marriage. Finally, in a fit of frustration, I fling the cryptic book far from me, and into the surrounding

darkness. "There is no God of salvation!" I proclaim angrily, and shake my fist at the appearing stars. "It's a lie—all of it just lies!" L.A. Espriux 265 What little faith I have, dies this night. I feel even greater emptiness than ever felt before; hopelessly lost and on the brink of eternal damnation-- the emptiness profound. It is one thing to consider the inevitability of death, another to contemplate total oblivion--or worse! I remember the promise of Grandmother Betsy warning often of "the consuming flames of firry judgment to come!" On the other hand, if there is no God, then there is no judgment. Then what more is there to fear or to hope for? This revelation marks the first day and the first night of my eternal damnation. By early morning, tropical heat weighs down, forcing into the narrow crevice of my dug foxhole as a winepress, squeezing my mind of the little remaining sanity. Using my poncho blanket, I erect a makeshift canopy to shelter from the boiling sun. By mid-day, I begin to hallucinate, imagining the glint of a falling projectile, certain that I hear the whining sound of a rocket engine. I wait tensely for the explosion, but no explosion comes. I think I am not alone in this perception, seeing other men in the distance rising from their positions, their heads as emerging prairie dogs, looking about in anxious anticipation. I do not remember a more hellish day since arriving in Nam. Although the canopy protection from direct exposure to the sun, it only intensifies the heat and humidity. Even the mosquitoes refuse to venture more than a few inches above the black bottom of the pit, making them easy to kill—but you can never kill them all! I am a condemned man--barely a man--but condemned all the same. I feel worms in my stomach, eating me slowly from the inside. "Maybe mom right after all--" I say to myself-- "maybe I am being consumed by the hunger of a Tape Worm!" I neither eat, nor do I really sleep. Time becomes a physical presence unbearable, an invisible parasite draining my living soul of vital essence. I can see the crumpled Bible a few meters away, where still it lays as reminder of things lost in a past only vaguely remembered--but no salvation there! Pride and anger prevent me from crawling out to retrieve it. I want to cry—to scream my indignity--to curse a God I have never known and die! Only restrained by acceptance of another kind of death-- death of the soul.

Reflections in a Paper Moon: Beginning Passage 266 Not only am I dead; all of Hill 34 now a camp condemned. The Colonel remains hidden in his command bunker, along with a couple of higher ranking officers, a fueled helicopter ready for immediate takeoff centered on the LZ. At least there is a chance someone might live to tell the tale. I begin to think about all the things I wanted to do in life, and all the things I will never do. I think about Rudy and Jean; about their sometime peaceful life at the Blue Ridge foothills. I think about my brother and two sisters; and how I had taken them all for granted; and complicity I might have continued to share with them. All those potential moments lost in a confused past--nevermore! In truth, I no longer even remember how or why I have ended-up here, or the original source of my discontent. In a daydream, I imagine I can see those blue hills off in the distance, an opal mist crawling up the slopes, slipping over the crest into a heavenly stream of a guardian moon. I wish to vanish with the vision, to become light as air and escape the purgatory of this tortuous waiting. Waiting is the worse! The slow pulse of the universe approaching inevitably, as all of creation waits and waits, expectant of the unknown. It is night. I can tell because of the moistness that seeps from the depths of the earth cool on my back. I do not remember falling asleep, only now I lay at the bottom of this self-dug trench, a corpse in the grave acutely aware. Then I am somewhere else, somewhere in the past, somewhere in this moment just as

real. An inland bay rolls darkly below, like thick motor oil, reflecting sharply shards of broken light. I stand at the edge of an onyx precipice, surrounded by a host of planets and stars in some strange and distant galaxy. It is a place darkly beautiful just as it was then--and what came before, only vaguely recalled. I have stepped through a portal in time and space: once again in the nod of my heroin trip. How can I be here? I know it must be a dream; but at least it is in this moment a pleasant escape. So I continue to linger just a little longer. She appears beside me a queen beautiful in this realm of eternal night, a fluttering wraith etched in the shimmer of a full moon. Adorned in black chiffon, she is as the reflection of a lovely moth transformed. L.A. Espriux 267 I might only describe her as being familiar, the femme fatale of my dreams. She represents the source of my being; and it is through her I find strength of will, a creative purpose in the world of men. She is the sensual in my soul, that part of me transcending time, elevated above the animal groaning of my generation. Softly, she leans forward, her vermilion lips inviting me to passion. Then in an instance, she changes. Sharp fangs pierce deep into my neck, a hunger that cannot be satisfied, as I struggle desperately to awaken from this nightmare. I am back in my foxhole—or so I think! The stench of death and decay continues to press into my nostrils, the walls seeping black blood. In the distance a wailing of human misery spanning every generation since the world first began. The thing still clings to my neck, a large bat-creature with red demon eyes, flopping sickeningly against the moist walls and putrid bottom. I try to scream, but no sound; my body petrified. In this state of half-consciousness, the mind of reason struggles against this half-life demon spawned in a terrifying dream! My heart races against the fury of battle drums in a jungle night. I feel as Faustus lost inside the gates of Hell--trapped in a place of darkness at the edge of eternity from which there is no escape to the souls of men! Fully awake at last, I struggle to my feet. It is early morning, the stars fading into twilight, a sullen glow spreading disarmingly over the jungle. I will not sleep again, not this morning--not ever again the same. This awful dream--if it was a dream--continues to linger in my subconscious, a constant reminder of a dark realm that exists on the fringe of this world comprehended through light and shadow. An hour after sunrise, a siren sounds shrilly. At first we do not comprehend the meaning--thinking perhaps the rockets inbound--this the last audible cry of our humanity! Several minutes pass, and nothing. Then Gunny and the Captain appear, calmly approaching my position. "Recon did it," Gunny pronounces with enthusiasm. "By God it was close—but they killed every one of those Sons-of-Bitches!" The Captain orders a roundup of the men and for supply personnel report immediately to the warehouse. It is pointless to ask if any need a bath and a shave. After more than 48 hours in a fox hole, we all do; Reflections in a Paper Moon: Beginning Passage 268 only daily rations remain short, until the water towers replenished and retreated with iodine. At 13:00 hours, the Colonel calls all squads to the LZ. He gloats, as expected, praises the Recons as true Bull Dogs. He even makes special mention to our bravery, saying that it reflects the highest discipline of the Marine Corps. In truth we are just glad to be alive. One crisis has past, another more deadly still to come, as we prepare for another day in-country