

The Journey of a Life Time

By Joseph Morgan

It's always exciting to start at the front, that is, if one can still remember how it started. I was 17 years old, at that age you think you have an understanding of reality, it's not true. After being sworn in (Date of Entry) I recall boarding a train for basic training at Fort Gordon GA. On arrival I was in awe of its massive size, there were soldiers everywhere and all wearing their green uniforms. Basic was hard, fun, exciting and Indescribable. After Advanced Infantry Training (AIT) I had orders to Korea, with a brief stop at a repo depot in Yokohama, Japan. Japan as I recall felt that one had gone back in time circa 16th century, with cobbler store streets, horse-drawn carriages and of course the local people's dress.

A week later I arrived in Seoul, South Korea, then later assigned to the 76th Engineer Construction Battalion, 4 miles outside of Kimpo air base, where I was assigned to a hawk missile base on top of a hill overlooking the air base. My MOS job was radio communications, the officer in charge was Cpt. McCloud. The missile site itself was relatively small, around 4-5 acres. Duties included, receiving relays, sending communications to I Corps. Oh! Yes let us not forget guard duty, my first usage of the Korean language, meomchugi anh-eumyeon ssonda, Halt or I'll shoot. After weeks passed then the SFC, whose name I've forgotten, said Morgan can you drive? I said not really well here. Then he said, what's going to happen is your going to drive this truck down this hill or we'll not be coming back up, needless to say a couple of days later I was making the chow runs. A few months later I was taking the shift workers down the hill when it started to rain; we all made it down the hill but went into the rice paddy. This is how I became the Lieutenant's driver; this in itself was a great experience.

The Lt. and I traveled all over South Korea, even as far south to Pusan and Osan by the South China Sea. However the trip I remember the most was driving to the DMZ. To see the actual place where north and south sat down at the table to write the ceasefire was an amazing experience. June 1962, I left South Korea from Incheon on the USS Mitchell troop transport ship; it took 26 days to finally reach the United States. After 2 week leave, I was ordered back to Fort Gordon GA. Then on to Ft. Bragg NC, for a 2 year stay with the 101st Airborne, then I reenlisted to go to Germany. In Germany I traveled as much as possible, to list all the places and counties would be too lengthy, however I can say I put 52,000 miles on my little red Volkswagen which I bought when I was in Germany, then I shipped it home and sold it for a profit.

After my 1st tour in Germany I was then stationed temporarily in Texas, Fort Hood, I remember a joint armed forces exercise in the Mojave desert that lasted for a couple of months. Oh yes! Hot driving in the day and cold at night. You were always where on the alert for snakes and scorpions. Then as my luck would have it, I was ordered back to Germany, same division and the same battalion, the 123rd Signal Battalion. This is where my journey really was exciting for me; I made a German friend around my age

named Herbert Müller. I was in a gasthaus, sitting having dinner and drinking some real fine beer, when in his broken English asked me to come over to his table where he and his friends were celebrating his birthday. It was hard to communicate so he left his own party and returned with his sister, who could speak very good English.

However in 1967 I received orders for Vietnam and was stationed in the Mekong delta then to a fishing village called My Tho. My stay was short only being in country for 4 months and 3 weeks, There is a lot more stories to tell when I was in Vietnam but I will cut to the chase, during the Tet Offensive, all hell broke loose, there was so much confusion I was inside a bunker and before I could get out, an RPG rocket came into the bunker and exploded. I was hit; I'll talk more about that some other time. But after I was hit all I remember is being on a motor boat being taken to a hospital ship on the South China Sea.

Well, that's my summary of my time in the military. There are more stories to tell, but this should give you an idea of my story.