

THE PACER

CHAPTER 15

By DAVID PARAMORE

The morning of March 3, 1969, was my mother's 49th birthday. I woke up in the transit barracks at Cam Ranh Bay and said a little prayer of thanks! God had allowed me to survive 364 days in the hell hole that was Vietnam.

I then said another prayer and asked God to see me safely home. I got dressed in my one clean set of jungle fatigues and headed to breakfast, where I enjoyed the best meal ever served to me in Vietnam -- my last! I ate my eggs, hash browns and bacon, finished my coffee and returned to the barracks to claim my duffel bag and my hand carry.

I was leaving Vietnam much as I had arrived, except for being one year older in age and eons older in experience.

I showed the clerk my paperwork at the airport's Army terminal before being assigned a boarding group and given a boarding pass at around 9 a.m.

I waited with a group of other soldiers, all talking about round-eyed women, home, round-eyed women--in that order.

I think this was the happiest group of guys I had ever seen -- happy, for sure and certain, for having survived everything Vietnam could throw at us and being so close to boarding that plane home. I was also a little nostalgic.

I had made close friends in

Vietnam that I knew I would never see again. A short time later, an orderly came over and told us to follow him, leading us to a line of Army buses lined up nose to tail, enough to transport an entire planeload of us plus our gear.

They let us out right next to an American Airlines 707 that was already boarding when my bus arrived. GIs were placing their duffel bags in a large pile and walking up the stairs to board the plane, whose engines were already running.

At the bottom of those stairs was the most beautiful blue-eyed, blonde stewardess in the world. I showed her my boarding pass, and she handed me a magazine before telling me to proceed up the stairs.

At the top, another American Airlines stewardess -- the twin of the girl at the bottom of the stairs -- welcomed me aboard and sent me back to another one of her equally-beautiful sisters to be seated. American Airlines had obviously brought out their most impressive female employees.

Later, I got to thinking about how many times a day this scenario played out and decided that American Airlines must have recruited hundreds of beautiful young ladies to staff all their flights in and out of Vietnam.

Either that or I was just damn lucky -- and I have never been that lucky!

After settling into my seat by the window, I looked at the magazine the stewardess handed me and saw that it was the 1969 edition of the *Tour 365 Magazine*.

It had been put together from news events of my year in Vietnam and mostly contained stories of and about Vietnam written with a positive spin toward our efforts there.

I started flipping through the magazine, mostly as a way to pass time until the airplane was in the air and we were finally free of Vietnam. Much to my surprise, about midway through its 60 or so pages was a quarter-page color print of my infantry company's first squad, including me and most of my squad mates, on a recon by force patrol.

The picture had captured us from the front and showed (front to back) Marvin Williams, me, Rick Sneden, a guy that was only with us a very short time named Bell and Steve Pemberton.

I remembered having an Army photographer with us on one excursion up in the I-Corps and guessed this must have been his work.

I thumbed through the magazine until the jet began its take-off roll, then opened up my carry on and placed it inside for safe keeping. I wanted to see the Vietnamese coastline disappear behind us for the last time.

Everyone on the plane was whooping and yelling, glad to finally have that year in hell behind us. Those blonde triplets soon got busy serving Cokes, coffee and snacks. We were on

our way home! They had the music, (contemporary rock-and-roll), turned up pretty loud. Next stop Japan!

After about four hours in the air, we stopped at an Air Force base in northern Japan, where the airplane was cleaned and refueled. We were fed in an Air Force mess hall, and again, as I had experienced earlier, the food was better in Japan! Better in fact than the best I had ever eaten in Vietnam.

Local time in Japan seemed to be about 7 p.m. as best as I can remember. We reloaded the aircraft, and pretty soon were headed to Anchorage, Alaska.

Flying the great circle route, we crossed the International Dateline and gained a full day. Late day March 3 became late day March 2! Just thinking about it still boggles my mind!

It was late afternoon local time in Alaska when we went through the unloading, refueling and reloading dance again. We did not get fed in Alaska, but the AA stewardesses had been delivering snacks on a regular basis.

One thing about Alaska that sticks in my mind was the temperature! It was downright cold when we had to walk from out on the apron where the plane stopped, up to the terminal, a distance of some 200 yards. It was probably in the upper 40's, but just hours before when we left Vietnam it was at least 100 degrees at the Cam Ranh Bay Airport, where I was wearing jungle fatigues, shirt, pants and no underwear!

We learned in Vietnam that you could not wear underwear of any kind in that kind of heat. I had tried boxers and briefs, but neither worked. Your "boys" just sweated constantly and were rubbed raw within a few hours of

walking. Well, I can tell you my "boys" were not sweating as we walked to that terminal and back to the jet. But, I can also tell you one thing that Vietnam did for me. To this day I would rather be cold than steaming hot!

After we got everyone back on the jet, we headed to Seattle and landed at Fort Lewis at about 2 a.m.

That timing was planned, as those of us coming back from Vietnam had to run one last gauntlet. During the day, the war protesters would be so thick you could not get into the terminal without being spit on or egged.

Not on the Fort Lewis side of the airport, which was military, but over on the civilian side they were a permanent fixture.

Although most of the protestors tended to "work days," there were a few that protested at night because they knew Uncle Sam had started the late-night arrivals to avoid them.

Because I had almost six months remaining to serve before I would be discharged, I had to go through the Fort Lewis processing unit and receive new orders.

During the next few hours I found out I would have 30 days leave and then had to report to a "short timers" unit in Fort Carson, Colo.

There were many such units scattered around the country at that time, as Uncle Sam insisted on everyone serving every last day of his enlistment, be they a draftee or a regular enlistee.

There was already talk about early-out programs where those returning from Vietnam could serve an extra month there, and, if they had five months or less remaining, receive an early release and be discharged.

I had six full months left, so

I would not have qualified even if that program were already in effect.

Sometime around mid-morning I completed my processing and had breakfast in a transit mess hall. I was told we could go to pay call and get whatever money we had coming, as well as receive a standby travel voucher to fly the remaining rest of the way home on a civilian airline.

I was able to receive my last month's pay (\$276). My base pay at that time was \$226 per month and because I had served it in Vietnam, I got a \$50-per-month hazardous duty allowance.

By being stationed stateside, I had just taken a \$50-per-month pay cut.

After finishing up at Fort Lewis, I officially started my 30-day leave. I did get one more benefit out of Uncle Sam.

I caught an Army bus that made regular trips over to the civilian side of the airport -- a distance of about two miles.

(To be continued)

Editor's Note: *The Pacer, An American Story* was written by local author David Paramore as a fundraiser for Point of Grace (POG) Christian School. The Pacer is available for purchase on Amazon as a paperback or Kindle e-book download, with all proceeds going to support the expansion of POG. Kindle Unlimited members can download the book for free and support the POG expansion by way of Amazon paying a "royalty" on each download. Visit www.thepacerstory.com for more information.

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FARM REPORT

WITH DAVID CARLTON



July 24: Uncle Wilbur told me and Pop a story once back in the day.

He oversaw a sugarcane operation down south, and the story goes he was in the field parked in an open Jeep.

He said he was talking on the radio when a big vulture swooped down and landed on the steering wheel, right in his face. It's kind of feasible because there wasn't much else around for him to land on.

Anyway, Pop who was always looking to expand on a good story, said to him, "Wilbur, did his breath stink?"

He thought for just a second and said, "Something was a stinking!" It is a true story. I was there.

David Carlton grew up in Taylor County, where he worked on a Woods Creek Road farm in his youth. Decades later, he now owns that farm and spends his days tending to

his cows and enjoying the country life.



David Carlton



David Carlton shared this photo of hoes and oars, and an assortment of bung plugs.

LEGALS

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Dated this 28th day of July, 2021.
Signature:
Gary Knowles
Clerk of Circuit Court
Taylor County, Florida

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TDA 21-019 NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that Mikon Financial Services, Inc the holder of the following certificate, has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number, year of issuance, description of the property and the names in which the property was assessed are as follows:
Certificate Number: 1303
Year of Issuance : 2019
Description of Property:
Parcel Number: R08138-000
Described as Bohanan Subdivision Lots 10 & 11 of Block A in Taylor County Official Record Book 78, Page 721. Located in Section 04 Range 09 Containing 0.88 Acres of land. Located in Section 23 Township 09 Range 09 Containing 5.66 acres of land. Name in which assessed: Willard Saunders. Said property being in the County of Taylor, State of Florida. Unless such certificate shall be redeemed according to law, the property described shall be sold to the highest bidder at the courthouse door on the 30th day of August, 2021 at 11:00 o'clock a.m. Dated this 28th day of July, 2021.
Signature:
Gary Knowles
Clerk of Circuit Court,
Taylor County, Florida

TAYLOR COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TAYLOR COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT today announced an amendment to its policy for serving meals to students under the National School Lunch / School Breakfast Programs for the 2021-2022 school year. All students will be served lunch/breakfast at no charge at the following sites:
Taylor County High School
Taylor County Primary School
Taylor County Middle School
Taylor County Elementary School
Steinhatchee Elementary School
For additional information please contact: TAYLOR COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT; FOOD SERVICE OFFICE, 318 NORTH CLARK STREET, PERRY FL 32347; 850-838-2593
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Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). "USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA announces its intent to participate in the Afterschool Meal Program, a subcomponent of the Child Care Food Program, beginning August 6, 2021 at 520 E Lafayette St in Perry, FL. The Afterschool Meals Program is designed primarily to provide nutritious snacks and/or meals to children in participating afterschool programs. Snacks and/or meals

will be available at no separate charge to children attending the site regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, THAT THE TAYLOR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WILL HOLD THE SECOND OF TWO PUBLIC HEARINGS, AUGUST 17, 2021 AT 9:00 AM TO RECEIVE PUBLIC INPUT AND NOTIFY THE PUBLIC OF THE POSSIBLE GRANT APPLICATION TO THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION, FLORIDA RECREATION DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (FRDAP) , FOR THE 2022-2023 GRANT CYCLE REQUESTING FUNDING ASSISTANCE FOR ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENTS TO TAYLOR COUNTY SPORTS COMPLEX WHICH WILL INCLUDE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SOFTBALL FIELD. THE FIRST PUBLIC HEARING WAS HELD AUGUST 2, 2021 AT 6:00PM. THE COUNTY WILL BE REQUIRED TO WORK WITHIN THE GUIDELINES SET FORTH BY THE FLORIDA RECREATION DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR ANY PROJECT WHICH MAY BE SELECTED FOR FUNDING ASSISTANCE. ALL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND. NOTICE IS FURTHER HEREBY GIVEN, PURSUANT TO FLORIDA STATUTE 286.0105, THAT ANY PERSON OR

PERSONS DECIDING TO APPEAL ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT THIS MEETING WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE HEARING AND MAY NEED TO ENSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, WHICH RECORD INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED. THE PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE HELD IN THE TAYLOR COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING ROOM LOCATED AT 201 E. GREEN STREET, PERRY, FLORIDA 32347 IN AN EFFORT TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC AND THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, A CONFERENCE LINE HAS BEEN SET UP TO ACCOMMODATE COMMUNITY ACCESS TO THE MEETING. THE CONFERENCE LINE IS: 1-917-900-1022, ACCESS CODE: 32347#. THIS IS NOT A TOLL FREE NUMBER. ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN THIS MATTER SHOULD BE NOTICED BY THIS PUBLIC NOTICE. PERSONS REQUIRING SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS SHOULD CONTACT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS OFFICE AT 850-838-3500 EXT. 107 NO LATER THAN THREE (3) WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM: MELODY COX, GRANTS WRITER AT melody.cox@taylorcountygov.com OR AT 850-371-0377.