

**MESSAGE FROM THE
BATTALION COMMANDER
Col. Leon L. DeCorrevont
27 October 1965**

To: All personnel, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Artillery

Before we actually land on Viet Nam there are several things I want to make certain you are aware of. Some will be repetitious but still important.

This new 2nd of the 32nd already has gone a long ways together – not only in distance but in training, progress, and accomplishment and has done this as a battalion of closely knit batteries. We all know our members much better than we did even two months ago. I feel we have all lived up to our motto of “Proud Americans” in everything we have done since we were alerted and particularly on this trip.

The performance of those of you on various details aboard this ship has received nothing but favorable comment from those in a position of authority. We tackled a major encounter at Okinawa and came out winners. Aside from a few aching heads, we were straight; no major incidents arose in an atmosphere wherein many serious ones could have. Our physical appearance on ship has been, as a unit, the finest on the Gordon.

This whole performance cannot be attributed to any one group as such but rather to each individual in the chain from our officers, our non-commissioned officers, our junior NCO's and right on through to the cleanest sleeve in the battalion. The performance was that of truly Proud Americans.

Being the proudest of the Proud Americans is the finest position I have ever held. However, one of the greatest responsibilities of this position is now facing me and that is to see that we constantly operate in a manner to insure that each of you returns home safely when your time arrives.

To accomplish this we again must rely on each Proud American to do his job. By job I mean not only the TO&E job but each assigned duty. Of utmost and particular importance is the duty on perimeter defenses. Should any man not know his exact duties on this job, ask the next man in your chain of command. Do not attempt to pull this duty until you know exactly all of your related duties and are thoroughly familiar with what these duties require.

Next while performing these duties be not lulled into a false sense of security! In certain areas we will not have ammunition, we will not wear steel helmets, but remember, we weren't sent over here for one big party. We are dealing with one of the craftiest enemies ever encountered. The mere fact that we may go 30 or even 60 days without a single probe at our perimeter means only that we must be prepared for a simultaneous attack of a regimental size force at the next moment.

A study of Viet Cong tactics over the past three years will only prove how true this is. They are patient, meticulous in their planning, crafty, and strike like lightning, only to disappear as fast. Not one of us can afford to be caught "off guard" at any time. My guidance is to continually know what you would do if we were attacked at that particular moment.

In line with this I must mention two more items and pay attention! You will be authorized from time to time to visit cities or large villages. Naturally do not go without authority but most important do not ever go alone. A single man on a dark street or in the wrong establishment is a perfect target not only for a VC but for any unscrupulous native. A casualty is one thing but picture a commander writing a letter to a next of kin telling how one of his men was found stabbed in an alley behind a house of ill repute!

A short word about that kind of house is that many a man who went to far-off places to try it out today has a hanging reminder of what it used to be. Any doctor will tell you that where we are going, there is every venereal disease plus some others that today have no cure in sight. A year can be a long time but other things are better long than short.

The second point deals with the use of alcohol in Viet Nam. We will have a beer and whisky ration available. You have seen in Okinawa what a mere 100 cases of beer can do. It takes much less liquor! Off duty, fully off duty, a little won't kill you – on duty, your one drink could allow the whole unit to be slaughtered. Think that over. The fact that we get a "ration" by no means requires us to consume it all. As many older than I have said, "a brain pickled in alcohol is the fastest means to terminate a career."

In summary, we've done a fine job thus far as Proud Americans. Let me insure that we each arrive Proudly back in America by paying particular attention to our:

- A:** duties on perimeter defense.
- B:** constant awareness of the enemy threat.
- C:** Off-duty activities.
- D:** Use of alcoholic beverages.

Good luck and may God be with us.

Signed,
Leon L. DeCorrevont
Lt. Col., Arty.
Commanding,
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