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War Diary of San D. Francisco

San Dewayne Francisco

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WAR DIARY

25 AUG - So Today is Sunday, you would never know it. I had a 0530 Brief as usual (This dawn patrol business is getting old) I can hardly wait for night flying next month (HA!). I was flogged for Laos but got diverted to Pak one so I maintained my 100% Counters record. It takes 10 counters for each Air Medal or 20 Freebies which are missions into Laos. Jeffs had hung ordinance on his plane so we had to come back and land rather than play around for an hour like we usually do. I say play around because it is fun but actually we are learning tactics that we would have to use if we have to go back up to Hanoi (Pack six). I spent the afternoon writing up a recommendation for a Distinguished Flying Cross. After I got home I started a letter to Kay and fell asleep

WAR DIARY

26 AUG - And it was another 0530 brief - I can see it's going to be a long year. Nobody seems to have heard of an 8 hr. day. Much ground fire today it's hard to believe that those little cotton ball clouds all around you are filled with metal. No flak went through they can't hit the broad side of a barn (knock on wood). We hit a truck park and some boats on the coast. It looked like a nice place to have a seaside resort (if you don't mind having the sky fall on you all the time. Jeff is buying a motorcycle and is trying to talk me into one. The only real advantage are riding it downtown or to work. It's a 36 minute ride from our living quarters to the flight line because we are on one side of the runway and our planes are on the other side. The bus can only go 10 mph and makes 3,000 stops enroute. It's problem really unless you oversleep

WAR DIARY

26 AUG (cont'd) This afternoon I spent more time on AWARDS and Decoration write ups. Now I find out I have to make arrangements for the presentations plus I have to help decorate for another formal Dinner combining an open house in our new Squadron building (which we aren't in yet!) and a change of command dinner party for Col Doe who is leaving and Col. Hupp who is replacing him. Col. Hupp looks like a cross between George Hobel and an Eskimo dog. He's pretty quiet and I wonder if he is really on our side. Tonight I had dinner at the club and lost a buck in the slot machines (I'm either going to have to quit or get Kay over here or both). Jeffs and I went to indoor movie which is not airconditioned and saw "Jet Ryker" starring Lee Marvin. They also have an outdoor movie but you always run the risk of a cloud burst which we generally have every night.

A Kid's Diary

27 AUG - A Dream come true, I had an 1130 brief. Big deal I had to spend the morning at the squadron working. Oh well if they want to pay me for playing their silly little games I guess I'll suffer (YUK!). Got a letter from Kay saying Gary is home now. His 4 yrs must have seemed like eternity. We got fragged for N. Laos today but the weather was so bad we had to come back and hit the tanker then go into Pack one for another counter (Too Bad, now I only have one to go to get 10 and that is an Air Medal - YUK. I love those ribbons! HAHA). Now if I can only wrangle a Distinguished Flying Cross, a Silver Cross, and the Medal of Honor I'll be satisfied. Now I know why our Hootches are built on stilts. We've had a downpour for an hour straight and there's a lake over a foot deep under our quarters. I don't what's prettier than listening to the rain beat against our tin roof. I'm not going anywhere but to bed tonight.

Diary

28 AUG - Almost Banker's hours today, had 0930 brief. Pack one again which means 10 for 10 which means an Air Medal which means I'm ready to come home. After all I got what I came for so what's left? Just joking! Had the General of PACAF in the squadron today. The way everybody was acting you would think it was the "SECOND COMING". Oh well I never was easily impressed so maybe he did earn his stars but I had never heard of him before (YUK!). I have to go eat dinner now. Hey, I lucked out with halibut it was really good. Say I forgot to mention that I got my hair cut off today. I got tired of trying to keep it combed and I feel alot better now even if I don't look better! Haircuts here are the same price as the Philippines - 35¢ (can't beat that). Would you believe the little Thai barbers wear surgical masks? Don't ask me why I was afraid to ask.

Diary

8 SEPT - Went down to the flight line at 0730 with the rest of the squadron to meet the plane of a boy completing his 100th mission. In the process of taking a picture of him I got hit by a fire hose aimed at the keys. That's all right though almost everybody gets wet before it's over anyway. After the big champagne celebration I went back to bed and slept till briefing time (1700). Boy did we have a wild mission. Our takeoff was delayed until 2100 because of a huge thunderstorm sitting right over Tripoli. There were strong winds and heavy rain for a fast hour. Right after we took off Jeffs and I lost our navigation equipment. Then after hitting the target we lost our radios. We were in the weather of course and our leader had already penetrated to land - what to do? Being short on fuel we had little choice but to press down - which we did. We were lucky and broke out of the weather at a 1000 feet and saw the field about a mile away (whew!)

DIARY

9 SEPT. Went downtown today but didn't buy anything. I believe Ubon is worse than Nepic as far as poverty is concerned. People live in shacks built on stilts and many of the streets are not paved. Most of the shops have open fronts. Jeffs motorcycle is at a Honda place getting fixed. He had it two days and it fell apart (it was pretty old in the first place) He doesn't have much luck with motorcycles. The weather over in the pack was good for a change tonight. We were on a search and destroy mission but we didn't see anything so we dropped our ordinance on a known truck park. I haven't seen too much ground fire lately, mainly due to weather I guess. They must be staying in out of the rain.

10 Sept. No big deal today. I don't fly until 0300 Tomorrow morning. I spent most of the day working at the squadron. I have two new roommates. I knew them both at Tucson.

SEPT

19 SEPT - Spent all day at the Squadron working. I was just ready to go home when they told me that Jeffs and I had to take a bird up for a test hop. It only lasted for an hour so that's not too bad.

20 Sept - I started making arrangements for the party today that is going to be held on 1 October. It will be another Hail and Farewell party. Five old heads will be leaving and we've got 15 new guys that have arrived since I did. The turnover rate has been terrific, but that will cease around Christmas when the last of the guys under the 100 mission deal leaves. We tried to get into the Park tonight but just couldn't hack it because of a line of thunderstorms that turned us every way but loose. We returned home with our bombs

Diary

21. Sept. Would you believe six letters today! Four from Kay and two from Mom. Most of them were written around the 12th and 13th of Sept. I don't know why or where they got hung up but it sure made up for that week when I didn't get any.

They are building a new BX which is alot larger than the one we've got but I don't know what good it will do if they can't supply the one we have now. I don't have to fly tonight, thank goodness. I've been up 36 hrs straight and I've had it so I'm going to bed.

Diary

22 Sept — I slept from 1630 yesterday to 0300 today. It seemed to help because I don't feel nearly as mean now. I've been working pretty hard on this dinner party. There's going to five bird colonels and two Lt. colonels attending. There will be speeches, awards, etc. It's like everything else, everybody wants to come but they all have excuses why they can't help. It wouldn't be so bad but they keep changing the Date and place. This plus flying and normal squadron duties gives me a pain. I discovered that today is Sunday so I kissed it off and went to church this morning. They have a nice little "A" frame chapel. My roommate found out the base has handball courts so we went down and played a couple of games. Guess who's still champion of the handball courts! (YUK!) By this time I started

Diary

22 (cont'd) feeling guilty, so I went down to the squadron and worked the remainder of the afternoon. Jeffs and I flew at 2000. No big deal - weather again so we radar bombed.

23 Sept. Found out that party date and place had been changed again. I got disgusted and made out 30 invitations to VIP's and sent them out right quick before they could change their minds again. I guess it will be held the 28th Sept at the O'Club. Had a 1500 brief today, Same-o Same-o, radar bombed because of weather. No thunderstorms though, just a low cloud layer. Not too exciting but it was my 30th mission which gives me another Air Medal and after all that's what really counts (YUK!).

Diary

24 Sept Why me? Is there no justice? Party's been changed again. All those invitations! I could cry! There goes my last hope for trip to Bangkok! I really feel bad that Jeffs has to go by himself but at least he's getting away from here. I don't mind being a martyr but this is too much. At least I got them to agree to changing the dress from coat and tie to formal flight suits. Determined to make someone more miserable than me I stomped down to finance and demanded my back pay, much to my satisfaction after two hours of searching through thousands of files and stacks of papers an airman finally found my lost paperwork. They were happy to pay me in cash on the spot just to get rid of me. I celebrated with a #2.00 steak dinner tonight.

Diary

25 Sept - This is the first day of my four days off. Jeffs left on 0800 plane to Bangkok. I made out new invitations and distributed them around the base. I spent the rest of the day working on awards. My lucky day I received fudge from Kay which is out of this world. Everybody huddled around while I opened big box from home. Everybody burst out laughing when they saw it was full of envelopes, paper, and stamps. I went to the show tonight "The Good the Bad, and the Ugly" It wasn't bad. The only problem is that every time there was a tense moment a jet would fly overhead. Oh well for the price you can't complain (35¢).

Diary

3 oct- The squadron turned out to congratulate Ken Olson on completing his 100th mission over the North. Another happy boy is on his way home. I helped paint the car curbs and footbridges around our new squadron building this afternoon. It really hurts the pride of a hot-shot pilot to do coolie labor, but I guess the enlisted men got a good chuckle. It was a real Huckleberry Finn affair. We ended up in a paint fight, I now have a Kelley Green flight suit and one pair of green flight boots. Oh well you've got to expect a few losses in a big operation. I flew with my flight commander tonight and had a good time. He's more blood-thirsty than I am!

Diary

4 Oct- No big Deal today. I slept in and went to afternoon show. It was another loser ("Sweet Ride"). Had to pull duty officer from 1800 to midnight, that's always alot of fun.

5 Oct- One of my room mates was suppose to go on a test hop this morning but rolled me out of the sack to take it for him because he was sick. Being the nice guy I am I did it, but I plan to get even. I went down and picked up clothes at tailor shop for Kay and Jod. They probably won't fit, but it doesn't matter it's nothing either one will want to wear out of the house. He did do a good job on Jod's flight suit. I had to pull duty officer again tonight and am I sorry. The lights

5 Oct (cont'd) were off for four hours. My first thought was Sabatoge (sp) and I figured we were in for an attack because Hanoi Hanna keeps broadcasting that "when the rice grows tall, Udorn will fall" and man that rice isn't going to get much taller. Needless to say, nothing happened. During the blackout we had birds diverting to other bases and when they returned one of them had to take the barrier, causing me to stay an extra two hours. All in all it's been a miserable day.

6 Oct. - Played four games of handball today and almost keeled over. We flew a mission into Laos tonight and then ran into the Pack to get a counter for one of the boys trying to finish up his 100 missions.