

CAM RANH BAY



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Front Cover : Emerging from the darkness of night into the light of a new day ; Lifting a country from the grasp of Communist aggression and instilling instead a hope of peace and freedom ; this is the goal being pursued by the USARV soldier from the Highlands to the Delta.

The title, TOUR 365, signifies the normal tour of one year, 365 days.

Back Cover : A pretty girl with a smile greets servicemen who have completed their tour of duty in the Republic of Vietnam and are now homeward bound.



The Photo below was taken from the U.S. Army Publication "TOUR 365"

I arrived in the early morning hours of March 11th. Our plane was delayed in Japan for about 3 hours because the runway at Cam Ranh was mortared and had to be repaired. As you can see, the processing center was located next to the South China Sea. It was like being at the beach, except for the smell from the burning crap that seemed to linger throughout the day. The base had no sewer system. You went into an outhouse with a big can underneath during the day. Every morning the cans were filled with fuel, lit on fire, and stirred until the contents were incinerated.

In spite of the shortage of infantry troops in the field, it took me over a week to get an assignment. At one point it looked as if I would never get a unit assignment. I think the permanent cadre liked to make sure they had plenty of new troops to do their chores like burning crap, collecting the Mess Hall's garbage, and guard duty.

On March 19th I got on a twin-engine C-123 (Caribou) transport plane headed for Pleiku and the 4th Division training center. The 4th had moved from Pleiku to An Khe, but the training center had not left yet. The day was sunny, bright, and hot. We sweated on the tarmac waiting to board our plane. While getting ready to load on the plane we saw a group of GIs heading home on the Freedom Bird. Some of the group really looked undernourished and beat. We also so witnessed another group of GIs going home on a refrigerated C-141 transport plane. Each one was in an aluminum casket loaded on a wooden pallet. There were too many pallets. I hoped I came home undernourished and beat.

PS: I never did get to see the "Pretty Girl with the Smile", as mentioned below. I was one of the lucky undernourished and beat.