**Last Night Summer 1969 At Roosey Roads**

VMA-131 spent a two-week deployment in the Summer of 1969 at NAS Roosey Roads. It was a memorable one. We lost an A4 at sea (the pilot ejected and was safe), learned how to hot fuel, and many other experiences. The following one took place on our last night there. My duty section, Port Side, finished securing the flight line shortly before 20:00 hours. We piled into the back of our uncovered Duce and a half and arrived at the EM Club 20 minutes later.

We found a few tables and ordered beers. The party was in full swing as the rest of the squadron arrived a few hours earlier. About 20:30 hours the bartender announced last call, the club was closing at 21:00 hours. **This did not go over well!!!**

A few squadron members approached the bar and were told a Marine squadron destroyed the club the night before. The bartender did not believe we would not do the same thing. The word spread quickly.

A few of our NYPD Marines pleaded our case to no avail. They were told to “F” off, **Big Mistake!!** The bartender was told that he was relieved of duty. The NYPD Marines went behind the bar and free beers were passed out.

The bartender calls the MPs from the back room while the party continues for another 30minutes until four MPs arrive with clubs drawn. **The NYPD Marines don’t like this at all**. A few more of the city’s finest join in and show the MPs the door feet first! Another round of free beer is passed out. 30 to 40 minutes later every MP and Paddy Wagon on base arrives. We were peacefully escorted from the club to the Paddy Wagons as well as the Duce and a half, at least a third of the squadron was involved because VMA-132 had merged with us. Off to the Brig we went.

We were herded into a 50 by 50 processing room with a fingerprinting station set up on a long counter plus other equipment for processing detainees. The room was very crowded with very unhappy Marines and MPs. 30 minutes later a door opens and the Navy OD in his very white uniform walks in and the MPs call attention, as we quieted down and came to attention there was a very loud thud. And someone bent down to retrieve the source of the noise, putting it in his pocket.

The OD sees this and asks the Marine what it is that, and he was told it is nothing but a tool. The OD said he thinks it looks like a weapon to which the Marine replies “it is my NYPD weapon and I can’t give it to you.” The OD starts to say something and suddenly a third of the room raises their arms with NYPD weapons in hand! Well the OD and MPs turn as white as their uniforms. The OD turns and leaves through the door that he used to enter the room.

We wait for 30 minutes or more, the entrance door flies open and our former CO\* enters. He gives us “the if looks could kill stare.“ After what seems like a very long time, he comes back out and orders us to fall outside into formation at attention.

He read us the riot act including how he had to **give his word** **as a Marine Lt. Col.** that we would be punished appropriately. This was done in a very loud voice for the Navy’s benefit. He looks over the formation, sees our Duty Section Leader and Flight Line Plane Captains, and proceeds to order the Duty Section Sergeant front and center. The Sergeant was ordered to inspect the formation which he does in his best imitation of a Parris Island DI. After inspection our former CO tells the Duce and a half driver to leave with the truck, then he informs us that our first punishment was to March the 3 or 4 miles back to the barracks. He also orders our Sergeant to make sure everyone assigned to the flight line duty section would be alert and ready to work in the morning because we are flying home.

The Lt. Col. gets in his car and leaves. Our Sergeant orders Right Face and forward March, out of sight of the Brig he orders Route Step March!

**We are still waiting to this day for the rest of our punishment.**

\*At the time, former COs could remain in squadron. Regulations have since changed and this no longer happens. I understand why but they had so much experience to share.

Told by a plane captain who was there.