

The following Command Letters are republished in order to assure widest dissemination.

The Editor

13 July 1968

SUBJECT: Commander's Notes

TO: All Personnel

1. Assuming command of the 199<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Airplane Company (RAC) is a privilege. I accept the responsibility entrusted to me, just as each member of this company accepts his share of responsibility to the company when he becomes a Swamp Fox. The short, but honored, reputation of the Swamp Fox in the Delta is a result of the effort, sacrifice and devotion to duty of the men who preceded us or who still remain. The supreme sacrifice has been made by a Swamp Fox, SP4 Fred K.M. Hatada on 31 January 1968. To the memory of this man and to all Swamp Fox personnel, past or present, we owe a debt, which requires our individual and combined efforts to repay. In fact, the death of any and all Americans in Vietnam charges all those who see them fall with the responsibility to continue in the very best manner possible in the job assigned.
2. No job in this company, no duty assigned, no man, is unimportant. We have all been placed in our respective positions to accomplish one thing - the mission of the 199<sup>th</sup> RAC. Every assigned man has a responsibility to the unit, and to himself. To enumerate certain areas where particular attention must be directed, I provide the following guidance:
  - a. Perform your assigned tasks and duties to the very best of your ability. It's a matter of personal pride to accomplish. Any man who does not take pride in a job well done is deceiving himself. It's human nature to want to succeed. You are here to do a job, do it right.
  - b. You are a soldier in the United States Army. This Army has demands affecting each and every member. Whether you appreciate the intent and meaning of some of these demands is immaterial. They exist and must be obeyed. Discipline is the backbone of the Army. Without it there could be no Army, anytime or any place. A measure of unit discipline is demonstrated by the appearance of the individual soldiers; the pride each one takes in the proper wearing of the uniform, haircuts and demonstration of military courtesy. These must be emphasized by every NCO and Officer in this company. The sloppiness of one member of the unit can negate the good efforts of all others.

- c. Each of us knows right from wrong. The Manual for Courts-Martial, signed into law on 8 February 1951 by President Truman, defines the legal guidelines we all abide by. I cannot imagine any man who wants to lose money, freedom, rank, or be subject to extra duty purposely. The solution is simple - do what is right and stay out of trouble. Don't ruin a tour, or even a career, by careless or wanton actions. Your performance in the military will follow you into civilian life, good or bad.
  - d. Safety is the inherent responsibility of every man, no matter what his rank or job may be. It's purely a matter of self-preservation, a trait we all possess. Those moments of laxity, the periods of indifference to established procedures, cause almost all accidents. Don't hurt yourself, or others, by carelessness.
  - e. You have an outlet for your legitimate complaints. The Commander's "open door" policy, covered by subject letter posted on the unit bulletin board, is in effect. Use of the chain of command cannot be over emphasized. Most problems are solvable at the platoon level. However, realize the door is open. Congressional investigations cause embarrassment to the individual, his unit and the Army.
  - f. All of like to get mail from home. To receive a letter from home is probably one the highest morale boosts anyone here can have. Don't forget the morale of your folks at home. They want to hear from you too. The short time you take to write a letter provides so much benefit to those at home who care how you are. It's the best investment in time you can make.
  - g. Stay away from drugs. Report the existence of any you know of. Marijuana is common to Southeast Asia. Don't ruin your life, your health,, or place your comrades in danger, by yielding to a temptation "to try it".
  - h. Your billets are your home while you are here. Granted, they are not what we would like them to be. They are not the vine covered house on the shady street many of us left at home. They are military barracks, and as such must be maintained accordingly. In Vietnam we have a distinct advantage in the care of facilities and clothing, by having the Vietnamese labor. There is a prescribed standard for billets. This standard must be maintained. Enforcement of these standards is the duty of the responsible NCO.
3. Every man wants to return to the States proud of the job he has done while here. You will if you follow the listed guidelines. Be alert, sharp, military and do the best job you possible can. Be proud to be a Swamp Fox - it's a proud name.
  4. I desire this to be read by every man, assigned or attached, of the 199<sup>th</sup> RAC.

ROBERT S. BORER  
MAJ                      SC  
Commanding

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