

ROCKY'S EULOGY FOR LEE SCULLY 18 June 17

Lee Scully and myself were both members of the 1965 draft of RAAF personnel to be sent to Vietnam to serve with a unit titled RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam. Like the initial replacements we were sent in civilian clothes on civil aircraft, unarmed, apart from an official passport. We came home the same way. We were billeted in villas facing the sea in Vung Tau. Some 14 of us officers were luckily housed at Villa Anna, in comfort compared to the crowded unsuitable accommodation afforded the airmen nearby at villa Ngoc Hong.

We were all paid 2.50 dollars US a day to pay for 3 meals daily provided by the US Army. Again an unsatisfactory arrangement. Remember Pimento loaf, a supposed popular US culinary delight, maybe for them, not so for us blokes from Oz. This and other situations were a cause for concern. A very senior RAAF civil servant came to help, he was told but it took until after the creation of 35 Sqn and everything was located on base with total support of RAAF MESSING, medical etc., that things improved. It is to be remembered back in those days contact back home was by way of the US Army postal Service, letters were slow, there was no instant internet, mobile phone/ tablet connect. It was a hard slog, rife with dysentery and other medical problems. Things were not too good.

Then, suddenly, there appeared one day, free no charge, an English language newspaper titled "Wallaby Whisper". Obviously as we were nick named "Wallaby Airlines" it was to do with us. However, who sanctioned it, who was the author/editor, how did they source material, and where was it produced. Remained a mystery. No one was saying anything anyway. Over time everyone got a mention or two in the Whisper. Whoever wrote the articles nailed each topic with journalistic fervour. It must have been done out of hours, with access to typing, paper and printing Etc. The next issue was eagerly awaited and readers were pleased with the topics presented. It was a morale booster no doubt. It light heartedly TOOK THE MICKEY on members including all ranks. I myself featured as Uncle ROCKHEAD on a couple of occasions. It was right and correct, a very insightful bloke was on the job here. The highlight of the paper was the notion presented of a reporter interviewing so called pilots of the HYSTER'GIANT FORK LIFT being an aircraft that flew locally piloted by the individual being interviewed.

Such interviews always started naming the pilot and the story commenced for instance as follows:

Bugsy Rose, with a wry grin and a spit of betel juice, said "Bloody hot down the delta today, we zapped Charlie well and good. Not many fridges around though. Just imagine, a flying HYSTER???"

I had 2 copies of the whisper I brought home, but a search has failed to find them. Years passed and recently I contacted Lee by E mail and after a few messages, decided to ask a question of him. It was as follows.

WERE you the originator of the Wallaby Whisper?

The reply admitted he was.

We now, at last know that Lee was the bloke who had the insight, guts and capability to create a paper that amused the mob, took the mickey and gave pleasure to people far from home. Lee continued his concern for others over the years, his enduring battle with higher authority to gain inclusion of all RTFV/35 Sqn members of the award given 2 and 9 Sqn's, the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation, is typical of the man with a feeling for others. Sadly, his time was cut short, finally getting to ride Route 66 in USA. I am proud to have known such a fine fellow.

Vale Lee Scully

My condolences to Lee's family.

Rocky.