



Dining With An NVA Officer

Submitted by: Jay Trina, Hotel 1

Hey Tim,

I remember TET, 1968, we had a big feast in Gia Le. A lot of Buddhist Priests came from far away places. Me and another marine from our unit were invited over to this woman's house for dinner. She had two kids living at home, they were 9 and 11 years old.

Her third daughter was 17, going to school, and living in Hue. This 17 year old daughter was also coming to dinner. Also coming to dinner was the oldest daughter's fiancée. Well, the guy who got invited with me had to go on patrol that night, so I was to be the only Marine there, and the oldest daughter's fiancée was a 2nd Lt. in the NVA. **What the hell was I going to do?** I'd never had dinner at someone's house before, and certainly never with an enemy officer.

I went to my sergeant (Sgt. Funke), and asked what was I to do. He contacted our Lieutenant and we decided that I was to go to the dinner as a gesture of good faith during TET, and that I was not to make any aggressive gestures towards him and treat him with the respect due an officer.

So, I went, and I treated the man with all the respect due an officer. I of course saluted him when we first met, then he told me to relax and said that during TET we were not soldiers, but just two men having dinner together. Boy, was I relieved. I was walking on egg shells all night. But everything turned out all right. It was a frightening experience at first, but after a while I kind of got into it and felt like a real diplomat of sorts. The NVA Lieutenant acted like an officer and a gentleman at all times and I simply acted like a gracious guest. I guess people can act civilized, even in war, but those are egg shells I hope I never have to walk on again.

Hope you can use this somewhere Tim.

Semper Fi,
Jay Trina
CAP Hotel 1