

DICK CULVER'S SEA STORIES

**THE RECOLLECTIONS, TALES,
SLIGHT EXAGGERATIONS, AND
MISDEEDS OF AN OLD TIME MARINE**



KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SEA STORY AND A FAIRY TALE?

A FAIRY TALE BEGINS WITH "ONCE UPON A TIME"

A SEA STORY BEGINS WITH "THIS IS NO \$HI "



INTRODUCTION TO CULVER'S SEA STORIES

Just a few words about the efforts contained herein. This is, if nothing else, a continuing work in progress, and is not meant to be "The Great American Novel"... Instead, it is simply a set of sea stories told and retold over the years, and represent a number of years of adrenaline pumping circumstances often punctuated with long periods of boredom that would have tried the patience of a Saint (which I am most surely not, as any of my old time acquaintances can attest).

I have finally decided to at least leave some insight into the patriotic fervor that fueled our youth before it fades unceremoniously into the mists of history. I have noted on The History Channel, a number of seemingly old duffers who are finally being contacted vis-à-vis their remembrances from as far back as "The Great War" but it is pretty obvious that these folks are not going to last forever and we will lose a chance to learn from their experiences, savor some of the public attitudes and thinking that truly make up our past history. I recall listening to my Dad spin his yarns of his time in the Marines in WWI and the Banana Wars, and of course I experienced much of his service in WWII and Korea. I was absolutely sure I wanted to be a Marine by the time I had reached the advanced age of 6! I have always regretted not having sat my Pappy down with a tape recorder and a large pad and asked him some of the questions that now come to mind. He too lived during a lively period of history, and as a Lieutenant of the Guards on Alcatraz was one of those who was entrusted with the incarceration of many gangsters that now are the subject of the celluloid tabloids (movies). He (and I as a rug-rat) were on "The Rock" with Al Capone, Machine Gun Kelly, Alvin Karpis and Doc Barker. What stories he could have told if I had only been astute enough to reduce them to hard copy. I remember many of the stories, but only as a youngster sitting on the edge of adult conversations hoping I wouldn't be discovered and sent off to bed. Alas, it is now too late.

Most of my stories center around the more humorous aspects of soldiering, as dwelling on the blood and guts phases are usually related to selling books or impressing those gathered around the bar. I have also noticed that as the days of yore fade, and the teller gets long of tooth, the stories get more unbelievable, with the teller either actually believing his fabrications, or hoping that most of those who could contradict him are now gone to Valhalla, or so far removed as to not pose a viable threat. Many become "legends in their own minds" in the words of the immortal Dirty Harry, and many

gents who served their time as Remington Raiders (typewriter-pounders), or as Disbursing Clerks (Finance/Pay Personnel) have suddenly remembered their service in Reconnaissance outfits, or as Snipers. Closet SEALS and Rangers often emerge, and the tails grow with each additional brew proffered by a fascinated but equally well lubricated audience. I like to think of myself as closely akin to the troubadour in Medieval Times, simply relating many of the incidents I remember from my misspent youth that will amuse the audience. I think Louie L'Amour had the right idea, he used much of his own experience to entertain his audience. I've read 'em all.

I have written down a few of these Sea Stories over the years, but never made any real attempt to scrape them into one pile. I have found that as I would reduce one to paper, it would tweak my memory banks and cause me to remember even more of my often hilarious misdeeds, while gallivanting across the globe on a never ending search for the great adrenaline rush! If the statute of limitations have not yet run their course, I suppose Leavenworth isn't out of the question (since Portsmouth has been closed for quite a spell), but I have no regrets for my sometimes devious circumvention from the written rule of law, and I suppose I could have "schmoozed" those who held my fitness reports (and my career advancement) in the palms of their hand, but then what fun would that have been? Naw, I'd do it all over, and probably not change a dad-gummed thing – as the old saying goes, the final approach to your entrance into Valhalla should be punctuated with the exclamation of "**damn** what a hell of a ride" rather than another glass of warm milk, and someone adjusting your blanket or deciding to pull the plugs on your life support systems.

For publishing at least one of these sea stories I have been threatened by an active duty Army Lieutenant Colonel with recall to active duty to be tried for supposed war crimes over 30-years in the past. It seems this gentleman is a Judge Advocate General sort currently assigned to teaching "The Law of Land Warfare" at West Point. A bit of searching disclosed that this most sincere gentleman has yet to experience the exhilarating whine of rapidly rotating projectiles attempting to cancel his birth certificate. While I don't recommend such conduct for the faint of heart, likewise I don't take terribly kindly being judged by those I do not consider my peers. Some of my observations may seem a bit contemptuous of regulations and the ever present rules of engagement (usually proffered by those who didn't have to go out in the blast to administer such idiocy), and indeed they are. I always used the little inner voice that told me that my real responsibility after the accomplishment of an assigned mission, was the safety and well being of those youngsters assigned to serve with and under me. They didn't really care about such high sounding phrases as "losing the moral high ground" or other such nonsense, they simply wanted to go home to their families. I knew that most were not professional soldiers, and only cared that history would treat them kindly, and note their patriotic service to their country. I, on the other hand, (being a professional [sea] soldier) operated with the knowledge that assuming I survived, would have to look myself in the mirror every morning when I shaved, and not turn away in shame for having put political correctness above the welfare of those assigned to my care. So far I have no apologies and very few regrets...

There you have the gist of the thing, enjoy the tales if you will, and rest assured that they are as correct as my aging memory banks will permit.

And to all those fine men and women who have served and will serve in my beloved Corps of Marines, I wish you well, and encourage you to put your own recollections down in print – our country will be the better for it, and most usually will be able to sort out the fact from fiction, as I hope the readers of *my* scribblings will...

And as pointed out on the cover sheet, the difference between a fairy tale and a sea-story is easily explained by the following differentiations:

A Fairy Tale always starts with “*Once upon a time*”...

Whereas

A Sea Story is always prefaced with the exhortation, “*This is no \$hi+!*”

And so it is with these recollections from yesteryear – “*This is no \$hi+!*”

Semper Fidelis,

Dick Culver

Retired Major of Marines

Gentleman Adventurer

Fancier of Fine Ordnance

Genteel and Gracious Ladies

~ and ~

Beagle Hounds

(not necessarily in that order)

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