

Al Loreth

Memories, “Sea stories” and humor from MSgt Al Loreth, USMC (Ret.)

Liberty in Singapore

In 1955, I was in Singapore when four of us Cpls. decided to accompany a taxi driver to a hotel where we were told eight escorts would be brought to us. All we had to do is choose the four we wanted and they would return the rest to wherever they had come from.

While we were waiting, a veiled female slunk by us and left the lobby through a door into the hallway. As she exited, she enticingly looked over her shoulder at me and fluttered her eyelids.

I immediately followed her. She entered a small room in the hall and left the door open. That particularly attractive person was sitting at a dressing table combing her hair. While I was sounding out the situation, one of the Cpls appeared at the door to the room and told me that the girls had arrived. I told him to count me out; I had found the vision of loveliness for the night.

My comrade then told me, "Al, females don't have an Adams apple." I had been standing next to "it" and didn't have a profile to look at. I asked Rose (it's actual name) what reaction men had when they found out that she was a he. Rose told me that by then the men don't care. I told "shim", that she was lucky that I hadn't found out the hard way. No pun intended.

A week later I was in a movie theater when intermission occurred, the movie stopped, and the house lights went on. I stood and stretched, and while looking around I saw Rose sitting with two enamored New Zealand sailors. Imagine my chagrin when Rose spotted me, called me by name and said, "Hi" in a falsetto voice. Talk about being embarrassed. Everyone still in the theater cracked up. Apparently, shim was well known.

The story doesn't end there. Many years later, I visited my sister in Long Island, NY. She and her spouse had three tickets to a movie in a town some 10 miles away. We arrived in time, but there was a long line outside of the theater that we had to queue in. A few minutes later, I heard a male singing, "Rose, Rose of Malaya, I love you still." I turned around, and about a dozen people behind me, stood one of my old comrades of that night so many years ago. Moviegoers in line had no clue as to why two grown men were hugging each other, especially after one had just sung a verse for the benefit of the other. Turns out that he had joined the Merchant Marine, but was on vacation to visit his sister and brother-in-law in another town. They too had three tickets to the same theater and invited him.

Small world eh?

The Middle Camp Fuji Brig

In 1956, I was assigned as a prison guard/chaser at the infamous Middle Camp Fuji Brig. It was a no sitting, no talking, red line brig.

This brig was so tough the maximum confinement was 30 days. Marines standing before a summary court martial, who had the possibility of being sentenced to two weeks, would ask/beg for a sentence in excess of thirty days in the hope that they would be sent to the Army, Hardy Barracks stockade, AKA, rest home.

Within the Butler Building brig was a cage that contained about 16 double bunks. There were two cells for solitary confinement outside the cage, along one bulkhead. These two cells had gold footprints painted on the deck. Any prisoners sentenced to these cells were required to stand on two gold painted footprints. There were no lights in the cells. The deck near those two cells was carpeted so that a prisoner was unable to hear a guard approach. There was a rectangular cut about six inches by three inches at eyeball height in the cell door. If a prisoner was found to be off the golden footprints, he was brought before his commander for additional punishment. Usually restricted rations for three days. This consisted of a small box of rice cereal without sugar, served three times a day with all the water one could drink.

All meals were consumed in the mess hall while standing at parade rest. Everything served had to be eaten with the exception of bones and paper products. After the morning meal, prisoners broke rocks with sledgehammers until the noon meal. Following lunch, they were back out to the rock pile until the evening meal. During inclement weather, the prisoners performed lock step, close order drill in the wire enclosure outside the brig.

After showers, all prisoners stood at parade rest in front of their bunks, reading the Guide Book For Marines until lights out at 2100 hours.

On Sundays, the prisoners had the opportunity to attend chapel. Not surprisingly, 100% did.

When a prisoner finished his sentence, we never saw him again. There was no recidivism in the Middle Camp Fuji Brig. Every released prisoner was practically Squad Leader material. They found discipline, physical fitness, and knew the Guide Book for Marines from cover to cover.

The above was a far cry from the "Correctional Institutes" later adopted where prisoners were able to take out their frustrations by throwing feces and urine at prison guards.

One of the former prisoners wrote a Broadway play called, 'The Brig'. The Los Angeles Times reviewed the play. Part of what they had to say was, "The Brig is a modern inferno. The men who enter it abandon all hope of mercy, striving only to find within themselves the strength to preserve their sanity against what seem impossible odds.

Here, hell is a Marine Corps prison...etc" A little overstated, but the fact remains that the entire Regiment never had more than a dozen or so prisoners at any one time; far less than any other infantry regiment of the times. The Vietnamese have a good term, "Binh nang, thuoc mang." Big illness, strong medicine.

Firing line

I too remember the called out orders on the firing line. I had occasion to call them myself. My first Garand number was 21959746; I don't remember my M-14 number, but I loved that weapon and it took care of me very well. On September the eighth this year, it will be 50 years since I joined the service. Happily, I'm still kicking; just not as vigorously.

I-3-3 weapons platoon Section Leader

Thanks for sending that. I got a smile on my face when I saw his name. When first we met, he drove me crazy with his unmilitary look. He wore his utility cap on the back of his head, always had his hands in his pockets, and a red bandana could be found hanging out of his back pocket.

After numerous cautionings, I finally had to have him fill his pockets with gravel and sew them shut. I also required him to wear his steel helmet, sans liner continuously. His only respite for two weeks was to take off the steel pot in the mess hall, in chapel, shower, and bed. I cured him during that span. Can you imagine a Cpl. getting away with that kind of "Added Hours of Instruction" these days? (I have removed his name, but his nickname was "Herman Trevor".)

March the Prisoners on the field

Back in 1958, a Marine in my platoon got VD every time he went out in town. He went before a retention board who recommended he not be discharged. LtCol Silverthorn commanded 3/3/3. Each Saturday morning we had a Battalion formation. The Battalion Adjutant would call out, "March the prisoner(s) on the field", The Company Cmdrs. ordered, "About Face, Parade Rest." Drummers from what may have been the only rifle Battalion Drum and Bugle Corps in the Marine Corps, then slowly beat their drums as MPs marched the hapless Marine in front of the Adjutant. We all then hung our heads, chin to chest. The Adjutant read the decision from the retention board, AND THEN announced that the Commanding General overrode the board's recommendation, stating essentially that my Marine was a worm with unclean health habits and was giving him an undesirable discharge.

Shortly after in another formation, another Marine was marched on the field in the same manner as above. He was ordered to wear a khaki shirt with the top part of his Pfc. stripes partially cut from the shirt. After the sentence for his reduction to Pvt. was read, the Adjutant stepped forward and disdainfully ripped the chevrons from that Marines' sleeves. I made up my mind that I could not handle that kind of humiliation and vowed that I would never have that happen to me.

Years later, I did get a suspended bust for a violation of article 93. The next day I went to Land Mine Warfare School where I finished first in my class and thereby earned a meritorious promotion to the next higher rank while still serving on my suspended bust. Funny eh?

Rockets

I remember a time on the 3.5 range when a brass picker blew himself up with a WP round that hadn't detonated upon firing. I had the machine gun section leader's binoculars and was looking down range when I saw a brass picker using an entrenching tool that was folded in the 90-degree position, banging on the round to separate it from the motor assembly that had no scrap value. I, like you, understand the value of the metal in the practice round that was painted blue. Surely this guy must've been a rookie brass picker. Anyway, as I was watching, there was a sudden and violent, white explosion that enveloped the brass picker for some ten minutes. When the wind cleared the phosphorus, all I could see clearly, was a smoking military type boot.

Brass in the field

This Sea Story was a response to query on a Military net, re the demise of a Japanese brass scavenger. The Japanese brass picker was killed by a Marine who put an empty M-1 Garand clip over the muzzle. Firing a blank caused the clip to hit the brass picker in the head, which immediately ended his career. Back in "the bad

old days” machine gunners would harvest their brass by spreading out a poncho before placing the tripod. The brass thus collected could be used as currency to purchase sex and Acadama wine. The unit of measure for such activity was one utility cap filled to the brim with brass cartridges. It should be noted here that I never partook of those trades. I wasn't a machine gunner. (Note: I was an 0331 before I was an 0351 and I did!
Bob Rohrer)

Habu in Okinawa

Tell Mick Putterbaugh that I certainly remember our foursome getting lost in the NTA. Having been to survival school, I knew that if we followed a dry creek bed, it would eventually lead to a wet one, and thence to a river and civilization. As we walked through the stream, it became deep and formed a large pond. We'd been walking in the stream because the undergrowth was so dense. When we needed to pass by the pond we climbed a cliff, near the top of which was a kind of ledge. I was leading, when suddenly, one of our crew called out, "Habu". I had already passed it, looked back and couldn't see it on the trail. I finally noticed that the snake was coiled up by the root of a tree. I decided that the other three Marines shouldn't attempt to pass on the narrow ledge until we dispatched this very deadly snake.

We all threw bayonets at it, not only without harming the snake, but losing the bayonets to the water below. As an afterthought, someone pointed out that we had a machete with us. As I swung the machete at the snake's head, it struck at it and suffered a goodly gash through its mouth; a second blow killed it. I cut off the head, removed the first aid packet from its pouch and carefully stuffed the head in.

We soon came upon an engineer camp and hitched a ride back to the unit. No one believed the Habu story until I produced it from my first aid pouch. I was fully expecting an ass chewing from the Capt. (was his name Rice?) but he complimented me nicely by saying he knew we were lost, but since it was me, he hadn't been worried. OK, so it was stupid to throw our bayonets at the snake, since we had blanks in our M-1s, we could have easily dispatched the snake without getting within its striking distance. (Mick Putterbaugh confirms the exactness of Big Al's Story.)

Coming down the nets

Never enjoyed going over the side and down the nets. It wasn't too bad going over the side on the 02 deck just aft of the fo'c's'le; that spot was closest to the ocean. Aft, near the fantail was the worst; seemed like a mile to the water.

In rough seas, the peter boat would sometimes drop in a trough and the APA would rise on a swell. The four hapless Marines would wind up being suspended on a dangling net that the net handlers had to release or be pulled over the side of the peter boat. The Marines on the net would be repeatedly slammed against the side of the APA until the boat rose again on another swell and the net handlers could again grip the net.

On one occasion, a similarly loose net I was on flipped behind itself. As I was climbing down on one edge of the net, I suddenly found myself facing the sea while my back was repeatedly slammed against the side of the APA. It seemed like an eternity before the net handlers in the peter boat regained control. I was then violently launched back in the original position, and except for my death-like grip on the net, would have been launched out to sea like a missile. It's funny now, but wasn't then.

Happily, I survived more than a dozen wet net landings.

As a DI

In 1962, while serving as a Drill Instructor, I had the occasion to witness another Drill Instructor's recruit motivating techniques.

As any former Marines will remember, when a recruit's Drill Instructor required that the recruit enter the DI hut/office, the recruit had to loudly knock three times and scream out, SIR, PRIVATE DOE REQUESTS PERMISSION TO ENTER THE DRILL INSTRUCTORS HUT; SIR!!

The knocking and screaming never seemed to be loud enough. The DI would usually scream, "I CAN'T HEAR YOU MAGGOT!!" or charming words to that effect, and would require the hapless recruit to repeat his effort.

Now read what that DI did to motivate his recruits.

From another platoon that was about to graduate, he would borrow two squared away recruits that were armed with M-14s, and one borrowed recruit wearing new utilities who joined the new recruits and pretended to be one of them. The two armed recruits stood at attention on each side of the hut's door. The new recruits then received their "how to enter a drill instructors hut" instructions.

Naturally, all recruits failed in their feeble efforts. The DI would then leave the hut, address the recruits, and tell them that he was tired of those feeble efforts and the penalty for the next recruit who doesn't measure up would be most severe.

Enter the borrowed recruit who looked just like all the other new recruits. This actor would be next in line to attempt to placate the DI by knocking and screaming loud enough. The actor approached the door to the hut and made a noble, but unsuccessful effort to be admitted.

The DI would then rush out of the hut, grab the frightened actor and stand him against a nearby hut. The DI would then tell the recruits if they didn't measure up, he could kill them and no one would know. When they heard that, most recruits in line had a look of incredulity on their faces. The DI then asked, "How many of you maggots have already been issued ID cards?" Of course, no one had. Then he asked if anyone had been issued dog tags. Again, there was no response. The DI asked them if they had any contact with their families since they arrived. No one had. "In that case", said the DI, "your relatives don't even know if you've arrived, so if I kill you and dispose of the body no one will be the wiser. Some of the recruits started to look a little worried.

At this point, the DI called to the armed actors, "Kill him". The actors brought their rifles up, aimed at the cowering, actor and fired one blank cartridge at the weeping recruit. That individual clutched his chest with hands that concealed partially opened packets of ketchup, and fell to the ground, an apparent bloody mess. The two riflemen smartly grounded their weapons. Picked up the "Dead" actor and carried him to a Demster Dumpster that was located at the end of that same street. The door was open, so the riflemen unceremoniously tossed the "Dead" recruit inside, where he landed on a pre-positioned mattress.

For at least one week, all of the new recruits were as obedient and as attentive as they could be. Of course during the "act", the other drill instructors in the audience were perfect in being able to keep a straight face.

More DI tales

In 1963 while assigned as a D.I. in San Diego, I had the occasion to visit the dispensary on the base. While walking down a passageway, I was brought up short by a recruit addressing a Captain Stremic, the OIC of the special instruction section. The recruit said, "Howdy Captain". The Captain stunned at the temerity of the recruit in addressing an officer in that manner, screamed at the hapless recruit and demanded to know if the recruit had lost his mind. The recruit was in sickbay because he injured his arm while on the obstacle course, and was at that time, wearing a sling. The recruit responded, "Captain, don't you remember me? I'm Jim Nabors, ya know, Gomer Pyle, we're filming Gomer Pyle, USMC. We met earlier today." The recruit's response had the Captain in hysterics. Neither of us had recognized Jim as anyone other than a recruit. I suppose I should add that Jim Nabors had to lean on a nearby bulkhead and laughed for at least ten minutes.

Al's Daughter

One of my daughters is the only enlisted female aerial navigator in the Marine Corps. She's married to a Marine as well. Her planes are the C130 and the KC-130 refueler. She's been everywhere the Marines fly planes and is now in the Middle East as we prepare for a confrontation with Iraq.

Interrogations in Vietnam

While attached to the 95th army evacuation hospital, I was assigned as an interrogator of wounded POWs and civil defendants. I determined that one of them was nothing more than a farmer who was forced to grow manioc and raise farm animals for the bad guys.

I turned in my interrogation report confident that I had drawn the correct conclusion. To my dismay, I received a telephone call from my team commander, who informed me that the conclusion was inaccurate. He further stated that the alleged Viet Cong had been armed with a pistol when captured. My boss ordered that I re-interrogate the man.

After my second interrogation, I drew the same conclusion as the first. My boss was not pleased, told me to interrogate him again, and if I were unable to draw the correct conclusion, he would send someone over to the hospital that could.

Again, my now completely miserable prisoner convinced me that he was an unarmed farmer. I telephoned my boss and told him that I wanted to see the so-called pistol that was purportedly captured with the prisoner. An hour later, I received a call back to me to inform me that a mistake had been made, and there was no pistol captured.

Shortly after, my two Vietnamese language trained seniors were called to the interrogation headquarters. When they returned, they informed me that I was wrong about the interrogation, because papers belatedly turned in that had been taken from my prisoner proved that he was in fact, a VC. Further, his paper commendation (giay khen) as translated, indicated that he was a Warrant Officer who was being congratulated for killing 21 South Vietnamese soldiers and six Americans.

Naturally, I was extremely embarrassed about my incorrect conclusions, especially since my commendation-translating bosses were taking too much delight in my error. I began to read the commendation, smiling broadly as I read. By the time I finished reading it, I was laughing aloud. The so-called Warrant Officer was referred to as "Fighter", a common address to any who supported the VC. He was further congratulated for

successfully growing manioc. The commendation went on to read that it was particularly noble of the recipient to have raised 21 chickens and six pigs to good health.

I should not have laughed; could not help myself. I paid for it later.

More Interrogations – trying to be nice to civilians!

After interviewing a number of so-called innocent VN civilians, a few escorts from the PW compound guided the group toward waiting helicopters that were going to return the Viets to their village. Naturally, so that the Commander didn't have to walk far, the helo pads were a very short distance from the CP.

Nearby was Hq, which was dug in a few feet below ground level and cemented over. To avoid accidental discharges, all personnel entering the Hq were required to leave their weapons along the outside wall. One of these weapons was a .45 cal "grease gun" that had been placed there by a visiting Lt. from tanks.

Suddenly a 13-year-old girl broke away from the group she was in, ran a dozen yards or so, picked up the grease gun, and entered the CP on a dead run. The commander was at that time awarding the sixth Purple Heart to a Sgt. nicknamed "Ski"; it was the only part of his name that was pronounceable.

Unhappily for Ski, one of the 15 rounds or so that the girl got off stuck him causing him to earn his seventh purple heart while he was being awarded his sixth. I believe two Marines were killed and a couple were wounded before she either ran out of ammo or the weapon jammed. She didn't survive the attack. Since there were no weapons in the CP, the survivors tore her from limb to limb with their bare hands. They were pissed!

Sad, but we chalked it up to "lessons Learned".

Rice paddy water

Of course I'm a little older than you and clearly have forgotten much of the past, but after more the 26 years of doing essentially the same thing; events have tended to blend into each other in my memory.

I do not remember you breaking formation to fill your canteen. However, I must confess that in mid-1965 when my unit was pinned down and trapped by the VC, I organized four Marines that along with myself crawled on our bellies more than fifty meters to fill some 20 canteens with rice paddy water. We had been without water for more than 14 hours while the temperature was over 100 degrees.

In my platoon, three men were near unconsciousness with heat exhaustion. The paddies were dry, but the Vietnamese had been taught to dig out a small area where water would remain so they could raise tilapia and thus have some protein in the diets. I told the Marines to fill their canteen cups and then pour the water through their T-shirts into the canteens. The proved to be a good idea, as a variety of slimy creatures, some three inches long, were easily seen in the canteen cups. We all had water treatment tablets to put in the canteens. We returned with the water, but I had to hold onto the canteens for 30 minutes while the water treatment tabs took effect.

The Viets, not well versed in the benefits of good hygiene would typically walk about 50 meters from their huts and crap in the open. These areas were worse smelling than the paddies themselves. Eventually, the Viets were taught to build a kind of dock that had a hole in it so they could deposit their excrement directly into the

tilapia pool which would generate algae which would then become food for the tilapia. It was this pool that provided our water.

As an aside, to take a leak, the women would roll one pant leg up to their snatches, pull the material to one side, squat and piss. They would then use the rolled up section to wipe themselves dry. With no soap and little access to fresh water, these black pajamas were usually filthy and covered with hundreds of flies.

I was often with militia units that I trained in fire and maneuver, marksmanship, ambushes and patrolling. I could not possibly work with them away from my base for weeks at a time and carry enough C rats to sustain myself. I ate what they ate and drank what they drank. I soon came down with amebic dysentery that put me down for a short span.

I've had more charming tours of duty.

More Vietnam

I was in a unit as the rocket section leader. I was only there until we lost our leader at Ky Ha Island. From there I was assigned as Bn Operations Chief with the secondary duty of training the local militia (Nghia Quan).

I was also along when the Company was ambushed, with the killing zone over the CP group. The ALO went down right next to me, shot about four times in his right leg.

There was a cry for "Corpsman" screamed numerous times from someone farther down the trail. I was wondering why no one went to his aid, so I ran at high port to the location of the screaming.

The reason no corpsman responded was because it was the company corpsman that had been struck in the left elbow. The rounds were coming in hot and heavy and I got one through my pant leg without striking me; others hit the road in front of me with several pieces striking my shins. I dragged the corpsman to relative safety beyond a cut in the road and started first aid.

Another corpsman showed up who was assigned to the 1st platoon, and gave the wounded corpsman a morphine shot directly into a vein. Five minutes later, the wounded corpsman was still screaming his ass off, so I told him it was impossible for him to still be in pain and told him to "shut the fuck up" which he immediately did.

At that point, it seemed no one was taking action, so I had the rocket team attached to the CP lay down some WP to help mask our location. I then hunted for the CO. I found him face down in a rain-washed out culvert on the right side of the road. I leaned over the culvert and hollered down to the Capt., "Captain, we need some helos to take out the wounded". The captain looked up at me and screamed, "Loreth, get away from me, you're drawing fire" What little regard I had for that officer disappeared that day.

Did you know that when we first arrived, he would select a nighttime defensive position based solely on the location of two trees that would be the correct distance apart so he that could sling his army hammock?

Did you know that he had us carry rifle grenades that could not be fired because the cartridges that came with the grenades would only fit in the M-1 Garand? He told me I was full of crap, took my rifle and tried to ram one home into the chamber. Naturally, I wouldn't fit, and I was unable to get the round extracted, so I had to go to the Bn armorer to have it punched out.

Did you know that he gave specific orders that would have us carry only our protective masks in the protective mask carrier? When we made our amphibious landing at Chu Lai, I looked back in the direction of the commander's copula and watched with disbelief as he took a camcorder out of his mask carrier so he could film the landing.

I continued on with two more tours of duty, became a successful DI in San Diego, was sent to Chinese Language School and Vietnamese Language School, and then on to Interrogation of Prisoner of War School taught by the Army in Baltimore. I was assigned as NCOIC of a 12 week, intensified Vietnamese language school, and then on an assignment to the Defense Language Institute as the only American born instructor of a foreign language, finishing up my career as a MSgt in ITT.

Army Living and Marine Life

My son, who was in the Army as an E-6 at the time, and I were both in the desert on maneuvers during the same operation. It was in July and lasted a month. It was so hot that I commonly consumed 10 canteens of water a day, but barely pissed at all. During the second week, I took the liberty of driving my jeep over to the army encampment and hunted my son down. At that time, he was a Bn S-1 chief.

After a long search confounded by the fact that although I queried numerous army units as to the S-1 location and found the soldiers to be singularly uniformed, I finally located three large trucks backed up to each other that was the S-1 shop. The trucks were connected by accordion like doors that formed a large **air-conditioned** office.

My son, Mike, was supervising five lady soldiers, all dressed in starched utilities and shined boots. When I walked in, I think they were all frightened by my dusty, dirty appearance. Even my teeth were brown from the desert dust. The only white spots visible on my body were parts of my eyeballs. My son graciously offered me some cooled water from their refrigerator and a donut prepared by the unit's bakery. After my visit, shortened by my becoming too chilled, I returned to my unit.

"The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in wartime"

While still in the USMC, and immediately after discharge, Al worked as a waiter and dining room manager at the posh Southern California La Costa Resort near San Diego which was convenient to Pendleton where he was stationed at the time.

While a waiter, an irritated guest asked me if his wife could have a cup of coffee. I looked around and saw that their waiter and assigned bus boy were nowhere in sight, so I got the coffeepot and went over to the table. Lo and behold, it was my girlfriend from kindergarten through grade school and HS. Evelyn Hinderstein.

She didn't recognize me. I played a game that I could tell she was from NY and then telling her that by her accent, she was from the Bronx. She didn't catch on until I linked her accent with 2726 Grand Concourse, her former home address of some 25 years ago.

Funny, but I had never concerned myself with what someone might think about a middle-aged waiter. I knew who I was and who I had been, but I'm embarrassed to tell you that I found myself hastening to explain myself. That I was presently going to college full time, was working as a writer and consultant for a major sport fishing magazine, and that I'd retired after serving 26 years in the Marines Corps.

Small world eh? She was on honeymoon with her new husband. He didn't take our reminiscing too well. She was a beautiful girl and woman, sang like an angel and was an expert pianist. Her mother forced her to stop seeing me once she found out I wasn't Jewish.

I had a great youth until I joined the Corps. Of course, life became even better then.

Robert Stack died today, May 15, 2003

This reminded me of Moe Dalitz who was a crime boss in Detroit during the time when Eliot Ness was, I believe, Safety Commissioner. He was the boss of the police and fire departments. Eliot's crackdown on crime culminated when Moe Dalitz was declared persona non grata in Detroit. You can check out Moe Dalitz by typing in his name in Google.

Now my story:

I came out of the kitchen and discovered that I had two newly seated guests in each of two banquettes that were side by side. Neither occupant could see the other. On the left sat Robert Stack who played Eliot Ness on TV, and on the right was the gangster, Moe Dalitz. I really wanted to go up to the two banquettes and let them know who they were seated next to. Of course I couldn't.

Moe Dalitz was old and decrepit looking. I had been his waiter on numerous occasions. If you've seen the movie "Casino" with Robert DeNiro and Sharon Stone, you should know that I knew all of the main characters that were portrayed in the movie.

Two of those characters, even when separately coming into the restaurant, would tell the maitre'd they wouldn't dine there unless "Albert" (my assigned name) was their waiter. I've forgotten their names, but one of them was executed with silenced pistols in Chicago and was the man in charge of the Teamsters Retirement Fund that was used to build La Costa.

The other guy owned a large casino, but was forced to become the figurehead owner, when in fact the casino was owned by the mob. He always tipped me \$100.00 when he walked into the restaurant. Dolores and I were invited to Las Vegas on numerous occasions, but only went twice. Everything was complimentary --room, drink, food, and show.

One of my invitations came as a result of one of my busboys spilling eight glasses of water down the back of a woman in a party of eight. I was horrified since the hotel owner had told me that the group were his special guests and to be sure that I took good care of them. The woman was so soaked that napkins wouldn't do for drying her off. We provided table cloths for the purpose.

The woman's purse had been on the floor next to her chair. When the woman looked into her purse, she discovered that it was full of water. She pulled out a wallet and said, "Oh my god, this is my husbands expensive seal skin wallet". Brightly, I said, "Water didn't hurt the skin when the seal was wearing it." The host roared with laughter, so naturally his minions followed suit.

It turns out that John Walsh was the owner of one the largest hotels in downtown Las Vegas. I can't remember the name of the place. This incident occurred on a Sunday and the restaurant was closed on Monday. On Tuesday, just before opening, John Walsh entered and told me that he was scheduled to return to Las Vegas on Monday, but stayed an extra day to tell me that the story of the seal skin was already his most popular tale. He also came to inform me that any time I wanted to come to Las Vegas, I was to

telephone Helen, his personal assistant, and let her know when I was coming and how long I would be staying, and that the tab was on him.

Dolores and I took him up on his offer and arrived on a Friday and stayed until Tuesday. We were treated like royalty while there. Champagne, flowers and a huge cornucopia of fruit arrived in the room within minutes of our arrival. John Walsh telephoned me on Saturday to inquire if I was being well taken care of. When we departed, Helen was in the lobby to bid us farewell and to tell me to come back any time. We never did.