

MARS CALLING **Binh Thuy !**

by **Bill McCarron**

Binh Thuy Air Base, 1969-1970 - "Captain, you've got a MARS call coming in!" The Air Policeman aroused me from my rack at 0200. "It's your father, Sir. He wants to talk to you." The AP's jeep whizzed across Binh Thuy Air Base to the MARS station [Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS), DOD]. "Hello," I said, "Dad, this is your son, Bill, over."

"Hi, son. I'm calling because... well, uh, your mother and I... just received this package. Uh, it has a baby bottle sterilizer in it. And blankets and cloth diapers. And, uh, a baby stroller. Folded up. Son, your mother and I were wondering... well, you've been over there for nine months and well we thought maybe... well, you know."

A long pause. "Dad, you have to say *over* when you're through. Then I can talk."

"... Uh, *over*."

"That package, Dad. It's not for me. My Vietnamese counterpart's wife is expecting a baby and I ordered a bunch of stuff from CONUS. A place in Dallas, to be exact. I sent them a copy of my PCS orders. Geze, they shipped the stuff to my permanent home address and not to my APO. *Over*."

"We thought... *your mother and I*... thought that maybe you had gotten a Vietnamese girl, er, well *pregnant*... Er, *over*."

"Nope. I'm still single and I'm behaving myself. Do me a favor. Relabel the box and ship it to my APO. Can you do that? *Over*."

"Yes. Yes, I can. I'm sorry to call you, but we thought it was, well, an emergency."

Another pause. "You need to say *Over*, Dad." He stumbled through the two-syllable word again. "Dad, I appreciate your concern. Just trust me on this. Give mom a hug for me. *Over and out*."

The AP's face wore a distinct smirk. "That was a good *storyline*, Cap'n."

"Thanks," I mumbled. "Not a story. Just the truth. It's a large carton. I'll give you a call, Sergeant, when it arrives and we can both deliver it off base to Major Thuc and his wife."

**Captain Bill McCarron,
USAF Training Adviser, AFAT-4
Binh Thuy Air Base, Vietnam,
July 1969-July 1970**

We Take Care of Our Own

[Click to Report BROKEN LINKS](#) or [Photos](#), or [COMMENT](#)