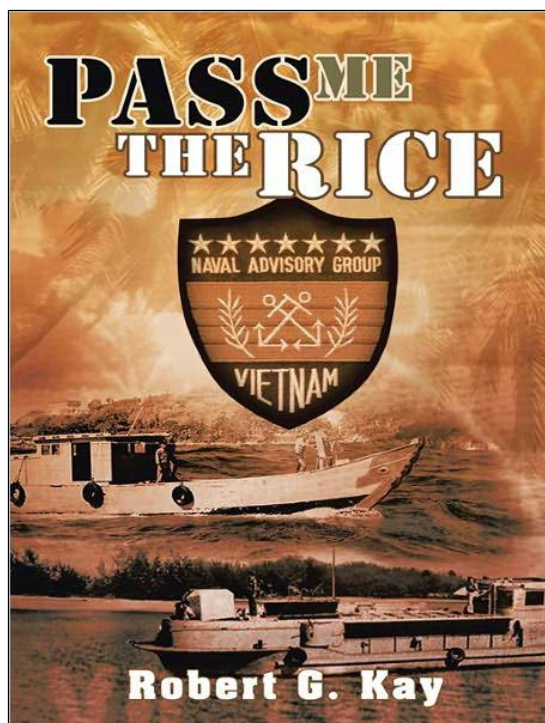


PASS ME THE RICE, by Robert G. Kay, Lieutenant, Ret. USN



The Day I Shat Myself

(As remembered after 40 some years)

by [Don Fitzwater](#)

I was an Infantry Platoon Sergeant assigned to Alpha CO 4th Battalion 47th Infantry 9th Infantry Division in the Delta during the TET Offensive of 1968. I'm not exactly sure of the date this happened but it had to be in February sometime.

We had been guarding some floating barges of artillery on some canal 29 January when the offensive started. We got mortar fire and some small arms but the gunships came out and raked the area and all was pretty much quiet for the night. Lt John Walsh from Moses Lake, Washington was my Platoon Leader and he was lightly injured with a sliver of something under his scalp. We were redeployed the next morning to Dong Tam and assigned duties as Ready Reaction CO.

On 2 Feb we were given a mission to go to My Tho to relieve a sister unit having problems. We never made it there before being ambushed with several casualties. Dead and Wounded. Lt Walsh got his second wound. We never made it to My Tho.

Some days later we were in the Toolies again and for some reason we didn't get our re-supply chopper and chow was scarce. Some young boy, 10-12 years old came by trying to sell those little green bananas. He had a large stalk of them over his shoulder. He wanted more money than I had on me so I just snatched a few and gave him the piasters I had. I never carried much money to the field. If Chuck was gonna shoot me he wasn't getting any loot off me.

Anyway, being very hungry I wolfed the bananas down, as I do most food, and continued our trek up this built up trail to wherever we were headed. It wasn't long until my belly was emitting these roaring noises and was moving as if I was pregnant with a kicking baby. In a few minutes I was fertilizing the bushes about every fifty yards moved. We had seen no action so far that day and wasn't expecting any. My point man was Sgt Wrenn and he was a few yards to the front. All at once there was this ear shattering explosion on my right side down the bank. I just knew we had received a mortar so instinctively I dived to the left over the bank. No other shells hit so I was asking if anyone was injured and if anyone knew what it was that exploded. The troop in front of me said Wrenn had thrown a grenade in a hole as he went by and didn't tell anyone. I was ticked off to say the least and after the adrenalin rush subsided I discovered my trousers were full of this stinky sticky stuff. Then I was ticked off. Here we were in the middle of nowhere with no clean trousers.

Now picture this troops.. The Platoon sergeant in the field with dukey drawers trying to wash them in a nasty canal and being laughed at by his troops. Somehow that stuff didn't want to come out.

At some time after getting my trousers back on I called the Supply Sergeant, SFC Bill Stewart from Ohio, and told him to get me some new trousers on the next bird out to our AO. His answer was something like: *Who the hell do you think you are Fitzwater, wanting new trousers sent to the field. Are you special or what?* Just send the F'n trousers. I'll explain later. Of course some wise acre with a radio announced to the world that I had Shat myself. All you folks laughing think it is funny huh.. Wasn't then, Is Now...

Don Fitzwater

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