

..... PARTING SHOT



Photo by Dennis Mansker

The Loon Foon and the Jeep

I was introduced to the Loon Foon Chinese restaurant on Long Binh Post in September 1969 by Sgt. Coffman, my E-7 Platoon Sergeant when I was attached to a MACV team in Binh Dương Province as a liaison between U.S. forces and Vietnamese Ruff Puffs. Sgt. Coffman asked me to accompany him to Long Binh to take care of some paperwork and while there took me to the Loon Foon.

It was in a nondescript building sandwiched between the Chase Manhattan Bank and the Bank of America. Both banks were in double-wide trailers.

The Loon Foon was outfitted with lots of red brocade and those massive chairs that seemed to be everywhere in Vietnam. It

served primarily Vietnamese food and had the best spring rolls I've ever eaten, even to this day.

As we left the restaurant that day, Sgt. Coffman noticed a fully loaded MP Jeep parked all by itself. He told me to drive the Jeep we had come in back to the compound in Châu Thành in Tây Ninh Province. Pointing to the MP Jeep, his parting words were, "the Major always wanted one of these."

About 30 minutes into my drive, after I had passed Dĩ An, the home of the 1st Infantry Division, and Phú Lợi where the 3rd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne was based, I heard a horn and a siren behind me. I looked in the mirror just in time to see Sgt. Coffman

fly past me on the left, red lights flashing, siren blaring, and horn honking. He had a giant, shit-eating grin on his face.

By the time I reached the compound, the locals had stripped the MP Jeep and had it repainted, obliterating any identifying markings. An hour later, the Jeep was ready for action with its huge radio and whip antenna, lights, siren, and machine gun mount in the back it came with.

I returned to my 1st Infantry Division unit shortly after that and every time we could "requisition" a Jeep from the motor pool in Dĩ An, we would race to Long Binh and enjoy the pleasures of the Loon Foon.

—Jim Doyle ♦