



LET'S HOCK MY MOTORCYCLE

by John P Slusser, SMSgt USAF Retired

In '64, I had an old 250cc Yamaha motorcycle, similar to the one above but all black, when I was stationed on Okinawa. I got a ticket for riding a passenger without a helmet and one for a loud muffler up in Machinado. So, the 51st A&E Commander took my driver's license away. A month or so later, during a barracks inspection, he told me to come to the orderly room Monday and he'd give me my license back. Great!

It was Friday afternoon before payday and I was sitting in the Airmen's Club with A1C Jack P Early and we were lamenting the lack of money and Namanoui (the bar district) was beckoning. Jack says, "Why don't you hock your motorcycle, say for 50 bucks, and we can split the money and I'll pay ALL the interest." Sounded like a plan, and still in fatigues, I went to the barracks and got on the bike, sans license, and headed for the main gate where just outside a bit, and down the hill near the curve, was a hock shop, not too far from the Seaman's Club, if I remember correctly.

As I approached the gate, I saw that the Okinawan guards were not alone. There was a blue Air Police truck sitting there, so I aborted the mission and turned left, heading down toward the Navy area to return to the barracks. He must have jumped in his truck and followed me all the way down to the flight line road where he stopped me. He wanted to see my license and...well...you know the rest. He wrote me up for driving without a license (true), attempting to leave the base without a valid pass (stamped on the back for driving after dark – true but how did he know?), driving after dark (but it wasn't dark, barely dusk), plus speeding and resisting apprehension (wasn't doing either of those as well). Then he dragged me off to the brig! What an alpha hotel!

When MSgt Cooper, 51st A&E First Sergeant, bailed me out, he took my pass and said, "I've got you by the balls now!" To add insult to injury, he made me walk all the way back to the barracks. I envisioned my stripes flying off all weekend. As they say, I was dead meat!

Monday morning, my supervisor, TSgt Dunaway, went with me to see the commander. Major Hart (I think) asked me what happened, and I told him exactly...Jack Early, hocking the bike and all, leaving out nothing. He asked TSgt Dunaway if I was a good troop and he said I was the best troubleshooter he had. Then the commander said, "Do you remember on the day you cleared in and the First Sergeant chewed you out because you used his desk cigarette lighter without asking permission?" I answered, "Yes sir!" He says, "Well, I remember it too." He then opened his desk drawer and pulled out my license and tore it in half and said, "You won't be driving the motorcycle for the rest of your tour." Then he said, "Dismissed!" I stood there with my mouth agape and he said "Dismissed!" again. I saluted, about faced and left the room.

About the time Sgt. Cooper saw me come through the door into the orderly room, the Commander called me back and said, "You'll probably need this." As I passed Sgt. Cooper the second time, he asked, "Well, what happened?" As I stuffed my pass back in my wallet, I said, "He gave me back my pass!" You could see the steam building up, but about that time Major Hart says, "Sgt. Cooper, come into my office, please." Don't know what happened in there, but I can tell you that I stayed out of the 1st Shirt's way the rest of my tour! I sold the motorcycle. Major Hart later told me he had several inquiries from legal wondering why I hadn't received some form of punishment. MSgt Cooper, RIP.