

# **Chapter 6**

## **Fort Polk, Louisiana**

### **Combat Support Company 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

TIME MARCHED ON, and a year had passed since I took command of the company. The battalion's annual IG inspection loomed only one week away. As usual, I found myself sitting behind a mound of paperwork on my desk. I looked up to see First Sergeant Serna standing in the doorway with SFC Fazzino hiding behind him. I instantly knew from the look on Serna's face that I was about to become a very unhappy camper.

"Sir, Fazzino's got some bad news." Serna stepped in with Fazzino trailing close behind. "Tell him, Fazzino."

"Sir, there's no good way to put this. We're missing the first month of this year's document register."

Missing part of the maintenance section's document register was like the armorer coming up short a weapon or two, and the IG was barely a week away.

"What the hell happened?" I looked at Serna, then at Fazzino.

"Tell him." Serna nodded at Fazinno.

"Well, sir, it's like this. . ." Fazzino explained what happened as I sat there barely able to contain

myself. When he finished I said, “Is that the truth? Who do you think’s going to believe that?”

“Sir, I swear it’s true.”

I looked at Serna. He nodded.

Being a good Special Forces soldier, I assessed the situation and knew that there was only one hope to save myself a major kick in the balls. “OK, Fazzino. Go down to the motor pool and round up the mechanics that know what happened and bring ‘em to my office.”

Fifteen minutes later, Fazzino, Serna, and three mechanics crowded in front of me. I gave the mechanics the *Readers Digest* version of what Fazzino had told me and asked them if this was true. They all gave me the Billy Goat. I turned to Serna and said, “Top, take ‘em all outside and have ‘em write up their statements, get the clerk to type ‘em up, and have the XO swear ‘em to it. Bring the statements to me. I’ll write a Memorandum for Record on this, and we’ll put it with the document register. Let the chips fall where they may.”

Three days into the IG inspection, Serna stuck his head into my office. “Fazzino just called from the motor pool. You’d better get down there ASAP!”

I beat boots to the motor pool and headed directly for Fazzino’s office where the IG inspector sat with the document register spread out on the table.

The inspector, an old master sergeant, looked as if he had pulled maintenance on General Patton’s tank. He sat behind a field table we’d set up for

him. Tears streamed down his face as howls of laughter rolled from his chest. He couldn't talk. All he could do was shake his head and point at my MFR with its attachments that read:

4 Aug 1970

SUBJECT: Memorandum for Record, Maintenance Records

1. Reference attached statements dated 3 Aug 1979.

2. During one night in early January, 1979, after duty hours, the Document Register for the Combat Support Company was destroyed. At that time, the Motor Pool Records for this company were being kept in a large tent in our temporary Motor Pool. Due to the actions of a small wild animal, (which is assumed to have been a raccoon), the records were made completely unreadable and unserviceable.

3. There was no corrective action possible.

THOMAS H. DAVIS  
CPT, INF  
COMMANDING

Attached Statement # 1  
3 Aug 1979

One evening during the first week of January, 1979, a raccoon got into our Motor Pool tent and shit all over the Document Register. The paper work was on my desk and the Raccoon got all the paper work and most of my desk. He also got a filing cabinet. We set a trap to try to catch the raccoon but he didn't take the bait. The raccoon destroyed all the first month of this year's Document Register pages and peeled the paint on the filing cabinet.

SAMUEL M. FAZZINO  
SFC E-7  
MOTOR SERGEANT

Attached Statement #2

3 Aug 1979

Around about the first week of January, while our Motor Pool was operating out of this big fucking tent, a frisky raccoon took himself a tour of our working facilities. In the process he shit on SFC Fazzino's desk destroying the first part of this year's Document Register. He also shit on top of a filing cabinet.

KEVIN L. GIBBS  
SP4 E-4  
TRACK MECHANIC

Attached Statement #3

3 Aug 1979

I, Sergeant Howard J. Cook, freely make this statement. Sometime in early January, 1979, while the Motor Pool was working out of a tent, a raccoon got into the tent and shit on SFC Fazzino's desk and a filing cabinet. In doing so, he destroyed a lot of paper work. I built a trap in an attempt to catch him; this however, proved fruitless.

HOWARD J. COOK  
SGT E-5  
SR RECOVERY NCO

Attached Statement #4

3 Aug 1979

One day in January, 1979, when we were living in a big tent as our Motor Pool office, a Raccoon walked into the tent and shit on a filing cabinet. Then walked over to SFC Fazzino's desk and tore off some

numbers on some paper work. The next day SGT Cook tried to catch the Raccoon but the Raccoon was smarter than him.

JAMES K. EZELL  
SP4 E-4  
TRACK MECHANIC

And that was our story and we stuck to it.