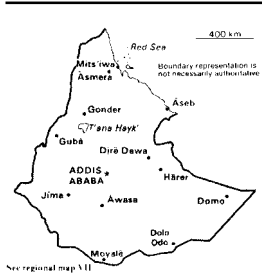


# CHAPTER 4

## MASSAWA, ETHIOPIA

15° 37' N 38° 29'E

### Ethiopia



I left Fort Eustis on April 6, 1967, and went to Massawa, Ethiopia (in the Bible, Ethiopia is called Abyssinia - Massawa is reportedly on the location of the Port of Adulis and has been running continuously since 300BC). My trip there was really something. This was the first time that I had to travel alone. It was also my first trip outside the United States. I had \$20 in my pocket. That money had to last until the end of the month. In those days, I only got paid once a month.

Our first stop was in Madrid, Spain. I didn't get out of the plane. I was afraid that I might get lost or miss the plane.

The next stop was in Athens, Greece where I was to spend the night. The airline got me a room and arranged for dinner. I found two other guys going to Ethiopia and we all went to see the Acropolis. That was really impressive. Greek mythology has always been interesting to me and this was the home of it.

Both of these guys were NCO's. They bought me a drink of Uzo and we had long talks. Their orders read that they must travel in civilian clothing because of the base rights agreement. They convinced me to continue my travels in civilian clothes even though my orders read to travel in uniform. They knew what they were talking about because uniformed personnel were turned away at the airport in Ethiopia.

The next morning we continued our travels. We stopped in Beirut, Lebanon for about an hour and in Cairo, Egypt for about three hours. I got off the plane and walked around in Cairo. I thought the airport was a pretty neat place. The one thing that I had been advised was to avoid getting my passport stamped in the Middle East. This was because it could cause me trouble because of the Arab - Israel situation.

We finally arrived in Asmara, Ethiopia. There was a military installation there - Kagnew Station. It was run by the Army Security Agency and shared space with a Naval Communications Station. Everyone on base, including the civilians and dependents, had a security clearance. I did not.

I guess this is time for a little lesson. Biologically speaking, the Ethiopians are Caucasian, even though their skins are black. I learned about prejudice in Ethiopia. Our black soldiers were discriminated against by the Ethiopians as being inferior solely because they were Negroid. Since then I have always held a distinction between the races, not on their culture, or color of skin, or body features, but on the three major biological categories - Mongoloid, Caucasoid, and Negroid. And, since I can't look at a person and determine which category they fall in, then I can only be prejudice against one individual at a time based upon his personal actions. To me that really isn't prejudice, just dislike. My parents raised me to believe that all men are created

equal and that their color or ethnic background only makes them their own individual.

The Ethiopian calendar had 13 months. 12 months with thirty days each and one month with just a few days. New Years was September 11.

Ethiopia had some strange customs. They had a place just outside Asmara that is called "Stone House." Stone house is a rock house in a field where they grow rock. This is an interesting concept and they have been growing those rocks for hundreds of years.

When an Ethiopian defecates, he cracks rocks behind him. This was done to kill the evil spirits that live in the gases that are expelled from the body. We had fun making fun of some of the Ethiopian that we considered our friends because of this belief.

The women (mostly Muslim) also have a custom that I think really stinks. They have their young girls circumcised. This involves slicing off the clitoris and surrounding tissue with a piece of glass or sharp knife. It is done without anesthesia. The reason that they do it is to curb the sexual desires of the women in maturity.

Almost all the children have their eyebrows cut as well. The blood is then allowed to drip into the child's eyes to give them good vision in later life.

On New Years Eve, the Ethiopians would build bonfire and then jump over them. This was done as a sort of cleansing of the soul for the things that were done in the last year. At Christmas, all the hookers that were Christian, would go to church and repent their sins.

Kagnew Station had its own radio and TV station, hospital, exchange, commissary, clubs, and educational system. There were sites spread all around the city. It was quite a small military community. The school kids used to shove a soda can down the barrel of the post cannon. When they fired the cannon in the morning, the can would go through the principal's window. The Post Engineer replaced that window every week during the school year.

I was temporarily billeted in Headquarters and Headquarters Company. I was told by the First Sergeant that someone from my unit would be up to get me checked in. I came in unexpectedly and wasn't met by someone in accordance with unit policy. He wouldn't give me a meal card and I was afraid that I wouldn't be allowed to eat. Finally the mess sergeant let me eat on my orders.

When my First Sergeant came up, I learned what power was. He had me inprocessed in less than three hours. We went to the head of every line that we came to. I later learned that there was an installation policy that allowed us to do that. The policy was created as an exception for our unit because of travel restrictions in Ethiopia. We were allowed to do things in civilian cloths when the personnel assigned to Kagnew Station had to wear a uniform. We could only travel to our unit between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. The thing that impressed me most about inprocessing was my gamma globulin shot. They give it to you in the butt and it makes you hurt from head to toe. I thought the nurse was trying to kill me. I had to get this shot every six months.

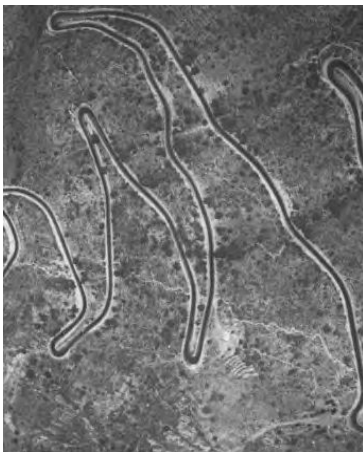
My head was still spinning from all the rushing around when we started off the mountain. Asmara is at 7,000 feet elevation on a plateau. Our destination, Massawa, is at sea level. I was setting in the front seat of the sedan watching the world pass by when we went around the first corner going down the mountain - there was a 3,000 foot cliff on my side of the road and the road got increasingly narrow. I was so scared that I think my finger prints are still imbedded in the dash board. The First Sergeant laughed so hard he had to stop alongside the road and urinate.

The road between Massawa and Asmara had 853 curves and 26 switch backs. It is narrow and windy. I always thought that some drunk was the person that drew up the plans. You had to watch for Ethiopian children riding homemade carts down the mountain. I have seen more than one go flying off a cliff trying to get away from vehicular traffic. One extreme hazard was meeting a vehicle going in the opposite direction. Big trucks often drove with one wheel hanging over the cliff. You usually only see this as a stunt in the movies, for us it was commonplace. We also had to watch out for baboons. They would attack vehicles with rocks. There are a few recorded incidents that they stopped a vehicle and killed its occupants.

We stopped at half way house on the way down. Half way house is what we called a restaurant located about midway between Asmara and Massawa. The First Sergeant got us something to drink and he bought fruit. I found out that we lived on rations not available because there was no mess hall in Massawa. We had to feed ourselves. We went on down the mountain after resting up for a while. This worried me because of my lack of funds.

Half way house was shown on National Geographic. They had a guy there they called "Hyena Man". He would feed wild hyena raw meat with his mouth. I always thought he was a little crazy. Years later I saw him on a National Geographic Special. It was also the best place to buy fresh fruit from the local vendors. The fruit in Massawa was usually spoiled.

The closer to the sea you were the hotter it got. Asmara was averaging between 50 - 90 degrees cooler throughout the year. Massawa rarely got below 100 degrees. I have seen days that it was 165 degrees (with 80% to 90% humidity) in the shade. This temperature extreme made for a short duty day. We worked from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. The rest of the time we were supposed to be taking care not to suffer from heat diseases.



Massawa was a small city of 30,000 people. It was the home port of the Imperial Ethiopian Navy and had a regiment of infantry. The city consisted of a small piece of the mainland and two islands. Taulud was the first island and where I lived and Massawa Port Island is where the port was. Everything was connected by a causeway.

We lived next door to the police station. Our building was two stories. The ground floor contained an American restaurant run by the NCO Club and a small transient quarters used by the personnel

at Kagnev Station when they came down. The transient quarters contained bunks and a small bathroom with shower. There was no charge to anyone that stayed in these quarters. The second floor was our billets. It was off-limits at all times except to watch movies. We were on the 16 mm movie circuit and watched them for free.

We stole popcorn from the commissary to eat while we watched the movies. The commissary and exchange unofficially authorized us to take certain items. We were allowed to steal popcorn, personal hygiene items (soap, razor blades, etc.) and beer (for unit parties only). We were given this because of our isolation and lack of facilities and services.

The police station had a machine gun permanently positioned on the roof so that the barrel pointed down our hallway. Ethiopia was at war with the province Eritrea. Massawa was in Eritrea. The United States was officially neutral; therefore, we weren't involved in their internal problem.

Each room in the billets had an air conditioner and ceiling fan. I ran mine 24 hours a day. It was almost impossible to keep the room cool even though the walls were two feet thick. We just tried to keep them liveable.

This was during the time of the Emperor Haile Selassie. He had a palace on the same island we were on. I got to go into the palace on several occasions. It had a company of infantry guards and was a grandiose place. They had more shade trees there than the rest of the city combined.

The other island contained the majority of the bars, prostitutes, and the port. The port was built by the Italians during their colonization. It had mobile cranes to lift cargo from the bulk break ships. We couldn't handle containers. The harbor was what is considered to be a shallow draft harbor. This means that ships drawing more than thirty feet of water couldn't come here.

I was assigned to the United States Army Transportation Terminal Unit, Ethiopia. It was commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel, with a Major as the Executive Officer (no other officers). There were eight enlisted personnel authorized. We had attached to us a mess sergeant (to run the club) and two military policemen. The Ethiopian Navy had two enlisted attached to them as advisors. We never had more than ten Americans assigned to the town at any given time. When we had more Americans in town, they were either on pass, leave or temporary duty.

Life was rather dull. We had no medical, radio, television, theater, commissary, exchange or other places that we could get services and goods that you would expect as an American. The local theater did play some American movies (usually with English sub-titles). We were able to receive BBC and Voice of America radio transmissions when atmospheric conditions were good enough. We rarely heard them. Besides, I never really liked their programming.

We created our own entertainment. We played intramural basketball against the Ethiopian Navy and Army and against local teams when we could find one. We played tackle football, on the beach, when the Ethiopian Air Force Academy came down for its annual training. No one

would play against us so we played against ourselves. We played soccer against the Navy. We played a lot of cards, usually poker. We watched movies. We spent a lot of time on Gorgusum Beach (also called North Beach). We drank all the time. I also learned to water ski there. I did a lot of snorkeling. We harassed the guards at the airport by driving between machine gun nests hoping that they would shoot at each other - this wasn't very smart, but we did it anyway. And, we played poker. One game lasted for two weeks. At the end of that time I was \$50 ahead and threw a big party.

Punishment for coming to work drunk or with a hangover was always the same. You had to stack pallets. We had a 10,000 square feet open storage area in the port. You would move a stack of pallets from one corner to the opposite corner and then return them until you sweated the alcohol out of your system. We had a forklift, but you had to do this solely by hand. The punishment applied to everyone regardless of rank. I spent my time doing this punishment. It really made you sick and made you wish that you hadn't had so much to drink.

We usually won when we played basketball. Most of the teams that we played against had tall guys who were better than us. Their problem was our height. We were short enough to run under them. I've never been very good, but I always played.

We always lost playing soccer. None of us had ever really played and didn't understand the rules. Besides, we didn't want to get kicked to death. They played rough. No one would play American football against us. They thought it was too rough a sport and figured we were animals for wanting to hurt each other.

One form of entertainment that I liked the most was when a doctor from the French Foreign Legion (in Djibouti) would come to town for his monthly visit. He would give all the prostitutes a monthly checkup and shot as necessary. We (including the MP's and civilian police) would kick in doors and roust the girls for him. This was a contract service that the doctor performed because prostitution was legal in Ethiopia. We did it for fun. Sometimes we would ride around in the MP truck and pop the girls on the butt with a night stick. They would cuss and yell at us, but most of the girls seemed to like the attention.

We used to pick on the Catholic Chaplain. He would bring our pay to us once a month. There were other chaplains that brought us our pay but they were never as much fun as the Catholic Chaplains. We would gather in one of the rooms to receive our pay and our character guidance training. The Chaplain would sit down at a desk and take out his .45 cal. pistol. He would then teach our character guidance class. He would pay us in cash immediately after the class was over. Then we would go into the bar where tables had been set up for us to pay our bills (food, houseboys, etc.).

That evening we would take the Chaplain bar hopping. One of the Catholic Chaplains could out drink anybody. I saw him drink 125 sailors under the table one evening. He walked around and looked very sober. The girls would set on his lap and try to get him to buy drinks. They were also prostitutes and would try to get him to spend the night with them. The Chaplain would get embarrassed and we would try to get the girls to try harder. They would talk to him and when they found out

that he was a priest they would get mad. The girls would cuss us out and the Chaplain would stay embarrassed.

Our greatest entertainment was drinking and going to the beach. I spent so much time on the beach that I was almost as dark as some of the lighter Ethiopians. I hardly ever wore long pants and the only time I wore a shirt was at work or if I went to town.

Like I said, we drank to much. We had a party at least five days a week. We ran out of things to celebrate from time to time. One major party was over a new crack in the walls. We threw a party over almost everything. Some of our parties were very close to getting out of hand. We would have catsup fights where we would put catsup on coasters and throw them at each other. We would scare the waiters to see if we could get them to drop the drinks. We did a lot of really dumb things.

September 27, 1967 was an eventful day. I was given the day off for my birthday. The Military Police had taken me to the beach so I could just goof off. Actually, I was afraid that if I stayed around the unit they would put me to work.

Around noon the MP that dropped me off came to get me. There had been a flat bed truck loaded with 14 pallets of beer turned over on the road to Asmara and everyone had to go and salvage what they could. Every case had exploded and we had to pick up about 16,800 cans of beer one can at a time.

We picked up beer until about 1800 hours. We loaded a small refer van, a one and one half ton truck, several Ethiopian Army Land Rovers and a couple of our pickups with loose beer. We drank a lot of it while we were working. The temperature was about 165 degrees and we had to keep the MP busy getting water from town for our canteens. We bust the cans open on the rear of the trailer and drank what we could - the cans we had then required a can opener to get into. We were all pretty drunk on hot beer by the time we got in that night. We all got letters of commendation for our work that day.

I used to run on occasion. I would run about six miles cross country from the beach to the unit. The path I took was mostly coral and I would run it in shower shoes. In retrospect, it was really pretty dumb. I was fortunate that I never cut my feet up.

We didn't have many duties that we were required to perform. There was one that was dangerous to me. About once every two months I had to clean all the weapons in the Arms Room. There weren't that many weapons, so when it was your turn you had to do every one. It was preferred to do them all every couple months rather than having to clean mine every week.

Twice I had to be taken to the hospital in Asmara after cleaning weapons. On both occasions, I had been cleaning the pistols when the spring slipped from my hand and went through my glasses into my eye. The doctors recommended that they not allow me to clean weapons because it was to hazardous to me.

One shadier side of my life was when two Navy Chief Petty Officers (they were assigned to the Ethiopian Navy as advisors) got me drunk on rum.

They say I drank a bottle and a half that night before we left the unit. The chiefs took me to one of the local bars and started feeding me beer. I was so drunk that they had to physically carry me around. I escaped from the chiefs and was trying to make it back to the unit. The Military Police picked me up in a mud puddle and returned me to the Navy at the bar. The third time I escaped, the MP took me back to my room. My roommate stripped all my clothes off and threw me into the shower before putting me in bed. One of the other guys decided that I needed a woman. He went out and got one of the local girls and put her in bed with me. She woke me up playing with me. The guys said that I chased her down the hall - bouncing off both walls. She was yelling "What's the matter with you GI?" They all stood around and laughed at me. I don't remember a thing.

I had my first woman when I was in Ethiopia. I had gone to one of the bars and got really drunk. I was drunk enough that I couldn't walk. One of the girls took me to her room for the night. The next thing I remember was waking up without any clothes on and her telling me that we had sex during the night. I got dressed and took off for the unit. It was quite a while before I went back to that bar.

The 1967 Mid-East War hit our unit in a strange way. We had eight military personnel (counting the chiefs at the Navy Base) and one dependent in town. She was staying in a local hotel. Our unit wasn't authorized to have dependents. She was the wife of a NCO stationed with the American Embassy in Addis Ababa. She was also a retired Master Sergeant in the Womens Army Corps. We moved her into the barracks as soon as we got the word that we might be attacked. We were told that we could expect no support, and if the situation appeared critical, we were to attempt to escape to sea - there was a U.S. Navy destroyer operating in the Red Sea. We issued her an -1 Carbine and 1,000 rounds of ammunition. Women in the Army at that time were not issued weapons and not allowed to go to the field. Dependents were also never issued weapons. They were supposed to be evacuated. We couldn't get her out so we armed her as her best chance of survival in an attack.

We were also ordered to stay in our compound unless we absolutely had to go out. We sent the Military Policemen on patrol to keep an eye on the situation. We pulled guard duty, taking care not to show our weapons. We ensured that our boat was operational and waited for news of when to move out.

The Mid-East War lasted only six days. We determined that we wouldn't be able to survive if we got into a fight with a force larger than squad sized. This created a mood that was typical of our unit. We threw a beach party on the third day. We hired the Ethiopian Navy Band to play for us. We invited all the local dignitaries and had a major barbecue and drunk. Kagnew Station stayed on increased alert for several weeks following the war. We carried on as usual.

We would occasionally drive between Ethiopian machine gun nests at the airport. We would do it after dark, with our lights out. Our hope was to get them to shoot at each other. We were really stupid to think that they wouldn't hit us if they opened up. Fortunately no one ever got trigger happy.



Picture taken  
someone else

Our unit had a U.S. Army J-Boat (J-3568). It was 46'4" long and 24'6" wide. It arrived about five days after I did. They made me the commander of the boat. It had twin GMC marine



**In the Red Sea - 1967**

diesel engines that I had to get the Navy chiefs to show me how to get started and how to pull maintenance on. We used the boat for fishing mostly. Its official mission was air/sea rescue in case the astronauts had to make an emergency splash down in the Red Sea. I was really excited about this mission. Fortunately, we never had to do it. During the Six Day War, we put an extra 100 gallons of fuel and C-Rations on board for our escape.

Our unit did a lot of work for the local Rotary International Club. We usually upgraded the quarters for orphans and nuns in town. We also helped build recreational facilities by clearing ground and doing construction work. We never had the use of a power tool, and this slowed us down quite a lot. It got to be that Rotary had us doing so much that we requested permission for one of the NCOs be allowed to join to protect our interests. The guys elected me. I think I got screwed. I was only 18 years old.



**Behind my desk -  
1968**

I had to learn to deal with the heads of business and politicians. The Royal family was also represented. I got us out of a few jobs, but we still did a lot of work for them.

I started running around with a few of the businessmen in town. There was Mario, an Italian, who ran a stevedore company; a German (Dietrich Gottz) who ran a competing stevedore company and had a doctorate in theology; a Englishman (Colin) who was the Chief Port Pilot; and later his girlfriend. Once a week we would meet for dinner at the hosts home. It rotated from person to person. I took them to our club most of the time. There was one occasion when I wanted to cook. I had the opportunity to make a trip to the commissary at Kagnew Station. I bought most of the stuff that was required to make Mexican food. I went to the Italians house and used his kitchen. I did all he cooking myself. He had a cook and a maid that worked overtime that night because they were so interested in my cooking. I later found out that they stayed without pay because they wanted to watch me. The dinner was a success.



Our unit had hired several servants. We had to pay them out of our pockets. We had two house boys, a laundry girl, and a boy that lived in the barracks that we were putting through school. The head house boy made more money than the Mayor of Massawa. He also had four wives which he kept in separate cities and rotated them in to him so they wouldn't fight.

I had one other drunk that I think you should know about. It was Christmas Eve 1967. Our unit always had a Christmas Party. We always got drunk on Christmas Eve. This was my first Christmas away from home. I got drunk out of my mind. The next thing I remember it is January 26, 1968. They tell me that I did my job, but the fact remains that I was drunk. After this incident I re-evaluated my drinking and determined that a person can have fun, enjoy himself, and not drink. I still drink occasionally, but not very often, and not to get drunk. It just doesn't pay. I hope you never make the same mistake that I made. I have always considered myself an alcoholic because of this incident.

There was only one "white" girl in town. She was the unit sweetheart. Her parents were Greek. She would come over to the unit to watch our movies, or eat dinner with us. She didn't date any of us. She was just our friend.

We unofficially placed all the American women off limits. It was OK because they wouldn't speak to us anyway. Those few that did talk to us said that we made the women of Kagnev Station feel like they were being raped. We had a major shortage of women with whom to talk and relate to on a common ground. We would just stare at them whenever one would walk through the door of the restaurant.

There was one American wife who came to the unit as a chaperon for a boy making a movie that was to be shown on Italian television. She spent about three months with us. She taught us to play bridge, and went to some of our more formal occasions. Formal wear was a white short sleeve shirt, white belt, white long pants, white socks, and white shoes. We authorized her to enter our day room at any time. I never saw her doing anything out of line, but the wives at Kagnev Station ostracized her because the time she spent with us.

I was asked to take out one American girl while there. She was the daughter of the topographical battalion commander and was 16 years old. She lived in Addis Ababa and I don't remember why she was there. I was given the sedan to use and I took her to the beach. She cried the whole time. What she really wanted me to do was have sex with her. She had a real complex about her sexuality and I didn't want to become involved even though she was of legal age under both military and Ethiopian law. I was never so glad to get rid of anyone in my life.

I met Lina Pasqualini on the beach one day. She lived in Asmara with her parents. I fell in lust almost immediately. Love took a little longer. We dated every chance that we could. She would come down to Massawa for a few days and I would volunteer to go to Kagnev Station to see her. I remember getting caught in Lina's hotel room by the desk clerk. I was really embarrassed. Lina took care of the problem.

Lina's dad had been a prisoner of war of the British during World War II. He was an NCO in the Italian Air Force. He was also a "Black

Shirt" which was the same as being in the German SS. He owned a small restaurant and catered to rich Ethiopians and Italians. His true love was gardening which he finally got to do when he returned to Montecatini Terme, Italy.

I think I took her mother out more times than I took Lina out. Lina and I would see each other for days at a time. After Lina went to Italy to go to school, I started visiting her mother. We always had to have Pia, a friend of Lina's, come as an interpreter for with us. This was rarely a problem. Lina's family moved back to Italy before I left Ethiopia. I was a little lost. We all knew that one day Lina and I would get married.

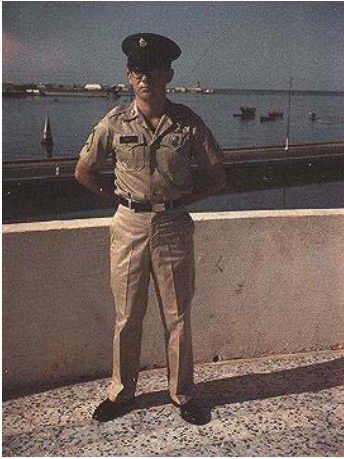
When Lina came to Massawa, we would spend most of our time on the beach. There were times that we would go out into the water after dark and someone would see sharks coming in. One time a MP came out to get us out of the water. He carried his M3A1 and pistol because of all the sharks he saw.

The official policy of the United States Government was that we were not involved in the internal affairs of the Ethiopian Government. The war in Ethiopia was their problem. Our orders were simple. If stopped, ask permission to leave. If robbed, surrender everything. If captured, do not resist. If shot at, run away if you can, return fire only as a last resort. We were rarely allowed to carry weapons.

I was placed in a situation that I had to shoot back once. The base had asked us to investigate an incident on the road between Massawa and Asmara. There were five of us. We took four .45 caliber pistols, two shot guns, two M3A1 submachine guns, and five -1 carbines. We were looking around the site when we started to receive incoming small arms fire. We took cover behind an embankment, but were cut off from our vehicle. We returned fire. The Ethiopian Army heard the shooting and joined our side when they got there. I don't know if I hit anyone. I don't care. Fortunately, none of the Americans were wounded or killed. We carried the Ethiopian Army casualties back to Massawa. I was scared to death.

I have seen enough war to know it is no fun. I still have nightmares about holding a baby that was covered with his fathers brains and blood. An Ethiopian Navy sentry shot him while he was taking the baby to the hospital. It was a luck shot. The guy was driving at about 50 MPH in front of the sentry. The bullet went through the rear quarter panel of the car to get to the driver.

I was taken prisoner of war seven times while I was in Ethiopia. It was always by the same platoon. I hunted gazelle in the desert near the beach. The Military Police would pick me up at the beach when I got done. I carried a bow and several arrows on me. The first couple of times they captured me I had to go through all the usual military drill. After that, I wasn't even disarmed. I got to know the platoon leader pretty well. He always gave me the same speech about being in an unauthorized area. I always showed him my pass that allowed me to go anywhere I chose. My commander liked the idea of me exercising our right to travel.



**May 1968**

There was an Ethiopian Sergeant that got all our fresh game while I was there. We would trade two rounds of carbine ammunition for a gazelle. He would crease the spine of the gazelle and bring it back alive. We would kill it and then barbecue the gazelle. It tasted great.

LTC Schindler, one of the unit Commander's, brought his 16 year old son to Massawa in 1968. As I have stated previously, we weren't allowed to have dependents. The boy came without command sponsorship. He was a problem child who had run away from home. The Colonel asked our permission to move him into the barracks.

We agreed provided the boy was given an allowance to live on equal to about \$100 per month; he would study his school work during duty hours and pull detail or work in the port as necessary. He was given exactly the same privileges as a soldier and any dispute between him and a real soldier was to be resolved either between the individuals or by the Executive Officer. LTC Schindler knew that we could not be forced to allow the boy to live in the barracks. There were Army Regulations to protect us. We essentially made the boy a soldier.

The boy worked and partied with us just like any other soldier. He got into a fight with one of the sergeants and the sergeant beat him up pretty badly. LTC Schindler asked what happened and was told the boy tripped in the parking lot. The boy started to tell his dad the truth when dad interrupted him and told him to be more careful when walking. That ended the incident and the boy soon straightened up his act. He turned out to be a fine young man. He learned that everyone cannot always get their way.

I spent thirty months in Ethiopia. The normal tour of duty was twelve months. I extended for a couple of reasons. They were fear that I would go to Viet Nam and the fact that I really liked it there. I am not sure why I liked it so much. I've been asked by quite a few people and never been able to adequately answer. Almost everyone that liked Ethiopia tried to stay as long as they could. No one could really tell you why, including the civilians that could make much more money in their home countries.

I made rank rapidly in Ethiopia. I arrived as a Private E1 and departed Sergeant E5. I was eligible for Staff Sergeant when I departed, but the unit commander felt that a person must be 21 years old to be a Specialist E4 and wanted to find a way to reduce me in rank. He couldn't because I worked hard and kept my nose pretty clean. I was filling an E7, two E6 and an E5 position when I left.

I saw things in Ethiopia that I hope you never have to see. I also saw things that I wish you could have seen. I have seen people with elephantiasis, leprosy, and other exotic diseases that you rarely see in the United States. I saw children living on the streets begging for food and knew that there was nothing that I could do for them. I have seen six year old prostitutes trying to survive. I saw death caused by

war, famine, and disease. I even had the opportunity to buy a young girl to be my slave because her family couldn't afford her anymore.

I tried to help as many people as I could. I would employ street people to do some of my chores. I couldn't let them do everything because it would be too much of a hazard. I have never been big on just giving people money. If they earn it, I can be quite generous.

I learned to experience life when I was in Ethiopia. I learned that you can eat things that you never thought that you would eat - my favorite Ethiopian meals were goat and monkey. I learned to hide my emotions within myself, to suppress those feelings that make you vulnerable.

I learned that people can be happy with little material things. Having a fancy car, a television, or even a electricity are just things that can be done without. I saw natural geographic formations that were amazing. I saw animals in the wild and found it to be a wonder. Life can be lived and experienced with a proper attitude. I hope that I developed such an attitude.