

TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS
OFF THE VIETNAM COAST
BY CHIEF RADARMAN
ROBERT E. BRENNER
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ON THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS, OFF THE VIETNAM COAST
SAT THE BELKNAP ON PIRAZ, LIKE A SILENT GRAY GHOST
WHILE ALL OVER THE WORLD, FOLKS WERE JOYOUS BECAUSE
THEY WOULD SOON BE VISITED, BY OLD SANTA CLAUS

OUT HERE ON THE TWO SIX, IN THE WARM TONKIN BAY
WE KNEW THAT OLD SANTA, WOULD NOT GET BY THIS WAY
GUYS HERE ON THE BELKNAP, MUST ALL BE CONTENTED
TO WAIT UNTIL NEXT YEAR, TO GET SNOW ORIENTED

AND SO ALL OF OUR THOUGHTS, WERE ON NORMAL ROUTINE
WE'D JUST MAKE THE BEST, OF THIS ONE IN THREE SCENE
WHEN OUT OF THE NORTH, LIKE A LOW SWEEPING HAWK
CAME A FAST MOVING BOGEY, WITHOUT ANY SQUAWK

GET THE CAP HEADED OUT, TRAIN THE DIRECTORS SAID SWIC
THIS MUST BE SOME KIND OF VIETNAMESE TRICK
ON THE RADAR THIS TARGET, WAS AN ODD LOOKING KIND
IT APPEARED AS EIGHT ONES WITH A LARGE ONE BEHIND

SAID THE O.D. SOUND GQ, MAN UP ON THE DOUBLE
CALL THE CAPTAIN RIGHT NOW, IT SURE LOOKS LIKE TROUBLE
WHEN OUT OF THE DARK, AND THE OVERCAST SKIES
THERE APPEARED A STRANGE TARGET, WE ALL RUBBED OUR EYES

IT ISN'T A PLANE, THE STARBOARD LOOKOUT SAID
IT LOOKS LIKE EIGHT REINDEER, PULLING A SLED
IT CIRCLED US TWICE, WENT AWAY THEN CAME BACK
AND FINALLY LANDED, ON OUR FORWARD MACK

TELL THE SNIPES, SAID THE O.D., PUT NO SMOKE IN THE AIR
BUT BELIEVE IT OR NOT, OLD SANTA'S UP THERE
SURE ENOUGH THERE HE WAS, ROUND AND JOLLY WAS HE
HE CAME TO THE BRIDGE, GRABBED UP THE 1MC
IN A LOUD BOOMING VOICE, SO THAT WE WOULD ALL HEAR
HE SAID HI BELKNAP SAILORS, I BRING YOU GOOD CHEER
I HAVE HEARD OF THE JOB, THAT YOU ALL HAVE DONE
AND I HAVE HERE A PRESENT, FOR EACH AND EVERYONE

TO THE SNIPES, WHO AFTER FUELING, RIGHT NOW MUST HIDE
HAZE GRAY COLORED OIL, FOR SPLASHING THE SIDE
CHIEF GASKINS AND SETNICK, AND ALL OF YOUR CREW
A DRY SONAR DOME IS MY PRESENT TO YOU

I HAVE HEARD OF THE WORK, THAT THE GUN TYPES HAVE DONE
SO I HAVE FOR YOU A NEW MOUNT FIFTY ONE
THE RM'S ARE BUSY, CHANGING EQUIPMENT AROUND
SO FOR YOU A NEW SQUAWK BOX WITHOUT ANY SOUND

TO EACH BOATSWAINS MATE, A PIPE OF YOUR OWN
WITH A SET OF INSTRUCTIONS, ON HOW THEY ARE BLOWN
AND TO THE CHIEFS QUARTERS, SOME THINGS YOU CAN USE
TWENTY-SIX BUNNIES AND A GALLON OF BOOZE

AS FOR YOU CHIEF DAVIS, WRAPPED UP IN THIS WREATH
IS A BRAND NEW MEAT GRINDER, WITH NINE THOUSAND TEETH
X.O. I HAVE HERE, A PENNANT I FEAR, ONE SIDE SAYS BOSTON
THE OTHER WAIT TILL NEXT YEAR

CAPTAIN ALDRICH THERE'S NOT MUCH, THAT I CAN GIVE YOU
YOU'VE ALREADY THE BEST SHIP, AND BY FAR THE BEST CREW
AND THE REST OF YOU FELLOWS, ON THIS DISTANT FAR SHORE
MY HOPES THAT YOU'LL SOON, BE BACK HOME FROM THIS WAR

AND SO SAYING HE LEAPED, TO THE TOP OF THE MACK,
AND HIS SLEIGH STARTED RISING, AND HE TURNED AND LOOKED BACK
SAID, GOODNIGHT BELKNAP SAILORS, WITH A WAVE OF HIS HAND

***I SALUTE YOU AND YOUR SHIP, YOU'RE
THE BEST IN THE LAND***