Prior to my career in the Navy I served in the Army. This memoir is from that time and is in response to a question regarding the longest trip I ever took:

In terms of distance the longest trip I ever took began in April 1970. Via a charter jet configured for maximum capacity i.e., no first class cabin or business section, all sardine coach, I and scores of other fortunate travelers recently awarded an all-expense paid extended vacation flew from McGuire AFB (NJ) to McChord AFB (WA) to Elmendorf AFB (AK) to Atsugi AFB (Japan) hence to Anderson AFB (Guam) and then to Tan Son Nhut AFB (RVN). From there I flew via C-130 (an adventure unto itself) to Bin Thuy AFB (RVN) and, finally, via UH1H (another noteworthy escapade) to Can Tho AAF (RVN). There I spent a year in the tropical paradise formerly known as the Republic of Vietnam. Not just any old spot in that popular (at the time) tourist destination, oh no, a special place in the heart of the Mekong Delta where mosquitoes grew to the size of small birds and the only thing worse than the eighteen inch deep dust that flourished during the dry season was its transmutation into the one and one-half foot thick quagmire of glutinous, viscous, boot sucking mud that burgeoned during the monsoon season. Upon arrival I was greeted by the aroma of excrement burning in diesel fuel but that was a good thing for it masked the heady bouquet of jungle rot combined with Agent Orange that wafted over the fetid rice paddies. Once inured to the scent I was fully able to appreciate the gourmet meals prepared daily by some of the finest chefs ever drafted by the Army. I found SOS and Chilimac especially piquant. So skillful were these masters of mystery meat, so savory were their culinary creations that I looked forward to going into the field and dining on C-Rations if that tells you anything. Accommodations were on a par with the meals; a two story, four star hooch whose preeminent quality was an adjoining sand bag bunker. I berthed on the first floor which was fortuitous. When mortar rounds hit the corrugated tin roof, the floor above me absorbed the unexpected, uninvited and unwelcome shrapnel guests. Luxurious showers, where water occasionally ran in abundance and once in a blue moon was warm, were just a few steps away. More often than not I lathered up while water trickled into a salvaged five pound coffee can and then rinsed when it was full. During the monsoon season it rained so hard you could rinse standing outside which I occasionally did. It was the cleanest water I washed in for a year. Ultimately how I bathed or rinsed was immaterial. As soon as my jungle fatigues, washed in the pristine waters of the Mekong River and ironed with rice starch got wet, whether from monsoon rain or sweat depending upon the season, I smelled like fermented fish heads anyway. Entertainment came in the form of sixteen millimeter films flickering on a bed sheet; the sound track augmented by the percussion of outgoing 4.2 inch mortar rounds. What an adventure! Speaking of adventure I spent many pleasant evenings in a sand bagged guard post gazing over the minefield, claymores and razor wire that formed the perimeter of our lavish resort, across the clear cut kill zone to the distant jungle beyond listening to the melodious night sounds of calling birds and my flatulent fellow sentries and watching the Cobras ply their trade. I ask you, is there anything more reassuring than an airborne Gatling gun that can move at 170 MPH when your next door neighbor is a sniper? I would be remiss if I did not also mention the natives most of whom, with the exception of a few misguided miscreants collectively known as Victor Charlie, were lovely people. Charlie was a devious but highly entertaining rogue, engaging us as he did in challenging games of strategy and tactics, intriguing four dimensional puzzles and frequent displays of fireworks. Dysentery, leeches, ravenous insects, rodents of unusual size, rare tropical diseases, two step vipers and less than ideal weather aside it really wasn't any worse than any other moist, sulfurous, infernal horror you might visit compliments of Uncle Sam. All in all it was a memorable experience well worth the ten thousand mile jaunt.