

## Miss America Visits The Nam

*Here she comes, ready or not!*

By [Dorcey Wingo](#)©

One day back in good ol' 1969, Miss America made her rounds of South Viet Nam. Wherever she traveled, young pilots like myself were taken off combat assault rolls and ordered to fly her and her entourage around in the newest Huey we had available. That meant that the "H" model had to be all spit-shined and gleaming. And *that* meant that the pilots had to help make it that way, because there was a lot to do and only four people to do it, practically overnight.

I recall having mixed emotions about flying the mission. On one hand, I feared the rush of distracting hormones that most of us manly types suffered from upon being suddenly exposed to a helicopter full of gorgeous, radiant women. On the other hand, I was embarrassed to be assigned a non-combat job. I was one of the newer peter pilots at Camp Enari, home to the "Famous Fighting 4th" Infantry Division, therefore I was at the beck and call of my Company Commander. If Major Griffiths wanted Wingo to fly the right seat of the "V.I.P." Huey, then by gosh, Wingo was available. There were worse jobs.

So there I was and here they came, an hour or so late. I tried not to look at the beauties; just did my duties, setting up the ship to crank as the XO showed the lovely ladies into their seats and seat belts - taking a lot longer than I thought was necessary. The young Captain probably fell into a daze back there amongst the cluster of fragrant southern belles dressed in camouflage - yet looking good enough to eat. I tried to keep my thoughts on the turbine engine's N1 and exhaust gas temp amid their charming, melodious giggles; roasting an engine at this point would not get me any Brownie points.

The firebase we were flying to was about half an hour west of Camp Enari, and I can't begin to remember its name, as they came and went under the direction of Major General Pepke. If the CO at the firebase knew of Miss America's approach, I don't think he bothered informing one combat infantryman who chose that time of the morning to head for the *head*. And who on *Earth* put the incredibly dusty helicopter LZ next to the head? Whomever, the guy had a military sense of humor.

Looking back, it might have been a secret to the troops that five of the finest looking, unattached American women alive were only a minute away. No sense in telling Charlie about our precious cargo, as he was not above ruining our day at any given moment.

No one could have been less aware of Miss America than the brave, temporarily clean and shirtless GI who faced the morning sun and calmly dropped his shorts. He bowed, taking a seat on the open-air slit trench's wooden stoop as our *slick* banked in his direction. My final approach over the firebase's wire-strewn perimeter was deliberately *hot*, zeroing-in on a red smoke grenade just upwind of the head. Standard tactical approach.

The Huey was heavy with fuel and the Highland's density altitude was over six thousand feet that day, as usual. Picking my spot, the skids slid onto the ground with forward momentum near the smoke canister as I reduced collective pitch. I kept one eye on the smoke, and one on our disbelieving GI, seated thirty feet away - his olive drab skivvies down around his ankles. I heard the XO key his foot mike as he looked *forward* for the first time and took in the scene unfolding at twelve o'clock.

**"HOLY SH \_ \_!"** the Captain gushed, as the ugliest cloud of dust in all of II Corps boiled under the Huey's forty-eight foot main rotor, and raged in the direction of those green skivvies. At the last second, the GI looked up at us with an expression of.. *not again!* Resigned to his fate, he leaned forward, turned his head to the side, and clenched his eyes tightly shut. His precious roll of paper began to spin and flutter, as he tightly gripped the rough wood board behind his bent knees with both hands. The nasty red dirt momentarily obscured his image, tearing at him like an angry herd of tumbleweeds.

You could hear the lovely ladies gasp in unison behind us as the hapless soldier went feet up and over backwards, the roll of toilet paper shooting skyward, unraveling. It was a scene burned forever into the windshield - never to be forgotten by manly warriors nor virginal beauty queens.

As the dust cleared, our vista became the backlit underside of the wooden bench: Several uniformly sawed privy holes were all lit up horizontally, left to right. Toilet paper waved gaily from yonder perimeter's concertina wire. Behind hole number three, the naked GI reclined on his backside in the warm, red dirt. Slowly, his right arm rose, and he flipped Miss America the bird, through hole number two.

**The End**