

KORAT REVISITED

It was not the same. Still, I am glad I went. The pungent odor I remembered when I stepped out of the C-130 twenty years prior was still there along with that roller-coaster runway that came up and met your Thud (hold what you got) on landing. The streets, some of the buildings, the O'Club and that ugly square concrete water tower "that won't last a year." The Thais ever so gracious and generous to share their base with us for the day, even though they had other visiting dignitaries.



The new was profoundly new and beautiful. Across from KABOOM is a large white and gold building of great splendor which houses the new Officers Club (we haven't lived) complete with bar, stage, meeting and dining rooms and their new museum with a special place for all their trophies, etc. It would have taken a whole day to see it all. Now Sparky knows what #1 is!

The old club (KABOOM) looks very seedy in comparison. The pool, which I never used unless fully clothed looks like the abode for the creature from the black lagoon. Weasel Drive is gone along with the hooches of the 34th and 44th. Our Thai host aptly put it into perspective when he said "The old must make way for the new," and so it must. Besides if anyone should get credit for my hooch, it should be me! It deserved to go.

The chapel, hospital, dental clinics are gone. The Airmans barracks, which we bombarded with smoke grenades using the Weasel cannon still stand. From the tower it looks pretty much the same. The old hangars on the far side of the concrete snake, and the revetments still stand ready to house "come what may" in this world of strange politics. Fort Apache was flattened and no longer useful (that makes sense). Would I have enjoyed it if it was still there? Perhaps, but I



can think of too many guys who would make that impossible.

Just outside of KABOOM, about where he would meet us to share our hamburger lunch, lies Roscoe. It is a fitting place, set aside by the Thais and kept in excellent condition. To many of those who were there it was an overpowering place. As one of the ladies put it "All of a sudden you're standing in a crowd, but you are not." Just in front of Roscoe's gravestone there stands a plaque donated by the 44th TFS to tell the story of Roscoe. It was the Korat I remembered and that I wanted to visit. There at that tiny patch of ground, I was among friends both of today and yesterday. The Thais had a word for this place too. "It is a place of many strong spirits."

Frosty Sheridan