

Mostly about People

By Wally Trabing



Sightseer In Saigon! Gad!

If anyone were to ask me if there was a city in the world I would NOT care to visit, I'd blink once and answer Saigon.

But, wouldn't you know it, when Matilda Dedrick's freighter, the Flying Endeavor visited that port this June on its around the world trip, she (Matilda) poked around the city as if whoever was in power that day had given her the key.

And no doubt completely discombobulating the Viet Cong.

Matilda Dedrick, 411 Cayuga street, is a retired music teacher. She is also an ex-WAC major, sir.

Likewise, she is a friendly sort and an eye-to-eye conversationalist who knows her own mind and who would not be reluctant to part with a piece of it should you have it coming.

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The Flying Endeavor's 50-mile trip up the Saigon river to Saigon was enough to pale any enthusiasm for sightseeing.

First they were loosened from their skins by a diving Red plane at the mouth of the river, after which two American planes arrived and circled the ship protectively.

If that wasn't enough, there was jungle on both sides of the river and the passengers were told to stay inside because of snipers.

"But we didn't," she said with just the slightest protrusion of chin.

"It was such pretty country and I wanted pictures. We saw flashes of gunfire along the way. It was very exciting."

Gad!!!

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"Then in the port of Saigon there were these young men in small boats who would sneak up to the ship, hook a long pole to the deck and sort of walk up the poles to the ship."

"Two got aboard and took a carton of cigarettes and a portable radio from one of the crew's cabins."

"We saw one dive overboard and swim to his boat holding the cigarettes above the water," she said. "We saw it all."

"There were 12 passengers aboard. Some were afraid to leave the ship."

Very understandable.

But ex-major Dedrick got off and tramped into the city alone—to the markets, stores and up and down the avenues.

"I didn't feel uneasy. There were lots of police and the people I talked to were awfully nice."

The next day she had a taxi take her to the neighboring city of Cholon where live two million Chinese, and then outside into the countryside.

And Mrs. Dedrick looks as American as Ma Kettle, too.

But not a gray hair on her head was harmed.

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The Flying Endeavor brought to Saigon 50 U.S. railroad cars and a station.

Besides the trinkets she purchased in that disturbed city, the ship sailed away with 100 huge pink pigs, each in a crate of its own.

And they didn't stink, she said. She was told each was injected with a shot of ginger to presumably keep them drugged during the trip to Hong Kong.

Also loaded aboard were 200 baskets of half-rotten duck eggs.

She said this is the way they like 'em. Two over easy, please—Yuuk!!

And, so with hardly an "oink" to break the mysterious Far Eastern mood, the Endeavor endeavored to scud its way into the sunset.

Oh, she could go on and on. Her voyage, which cost her \$1760, rewarded her with four months of travel.

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A funny thing happened. She took ill along the way and when the ship pulled up near Karachi, Pakistan, she went to a hospital for a checkup.

A woman came up to her at the hospital and said: "Aren't you Matilda Dedrick?"

When she nodded rather dumbfoundedly, the woman said: "I am Fern Colwell Rutherford. You were my music teacher in the fourth grade at Branciforte school back in 1937." She is with her husband missionary in the area.

Well, anyone for Saigon?

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MEDICAL SPECIALIST DIES

Dr. Colby