

OFFICERS AND SWAGGER STICKS



I haven't told anyone this story for years. In fact, I had forgotten about it until you mentioned Lt. Brown and I had this flash-back:

In late 57 I was in the company office talking with 1stSgt Alsop about something and Lt. Brown walks in . . . he was going to a Platoon Leaders meeting with Captain Bob Lyons. If you recall, the NCO's and Officers at this time carried swagger sticks and before the meeting Lt. Brown had been down to the main office (where Col Chapman's office was located) and had left his swagger stick down there.

He mentioned this to 1stSgt Alsop and Alsop looked at me and said, "Harris go down and pick up Lt. Browns Swagger stick".

I headed down the covered side walk, picked up Lt. Browns swagger stick and headed back down to the Guard Company Office. As soon as I started down the side walk, I thought to myself, I sure as hell hope no one spots me (I was a PFC) strolling down this side walk, carrying an officers swagger stick.

As luck would have it, out of the door pops Col Chapman walking straight toward me . . . I gave a big salute and of course, he stops me and says, PFC Harris, why are you carrying an officers swagger stick? After a lot of stammering and stuttering, I managed to say it was Lt. Brown's. He said, "take me to Lt. Brown," and of course, he followed me and the swagger stick to the Guard Company office.

We went in and everybody jumped to attention and he walked up to Lt. Brown and said, is this your swagger stick? Brown stammered, "yes," and Col Chapman said, "Harris, would you please give this Lieutenant his swagger stick?" and then he said to Lt. Brown, "the next time you forget your swagger stick, you go get it!"

The Colonel headed out the door and I held it open for him and as he walked by me . . . he actually gave me little smile! . . . it looked like he was just having a little fun and believe me, it may have been the only smile he ever gave anyone at 8th and I!

I had forgotten this little episode until you mentioned Lt. Brown in your recent E-mail to John Reim.

Semper Fi - Denny Harris (57 - 58)