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Tales of Vietnam

1964

by Altho A. Allen

1964, and we all held
 our secrets close -
 Intelligence gatherers - some knew
 more than others
 But our little special group
 held our own -
 And we policed our own men
 fearing a leak

Our mission was to save
 the lives of troops -
 Search out the enemy in his
 hideaways and caves,
 Lay out the lines to his men
 and arms cache
 And direct the fall of the
 carpet of death.

To most - a job - to some
 spiritual trial.
 Those who looked deep and
 saw the end
 Faced a trial of mind and
 only a self-judge
 To justify what they did
 day by day.

And then came a kid from the
 heart of Dallas,
 Open and honest, ready to learn
 all there was.

I had an opening for a pro in the
 "green door" gang.
 We took him in and sought
 to mold him.

A lighter air he brought to the
 small cramped room,
 Jammed with equipment too secret -
 secrets too secret.

Light moments - precious moments in
 the heavy work
 Of killing others - enemies
 we never saw.

But the tension was terrible -
 what we knew -
 What we did - could only
 be kept inside -
 An inside with finite space -
 with definite limits.
 That space inside Dallas was
 smaller than most.

Shortly after beginning to know
 our select knowledge,
 Dallas and teammates spent two
 hellish, successful days
 Solving a problem that would
 set in motion
 A rain of death upon
 our unseen foe.

Later, we partied to our own
 god of life,
 Drinking and laughing in
 our false bravado,
 Then going our separate ways to
 sleep or dream
 Of nothing at all if
 we were lucky.

Then from far away, not part
 of the dream,
 A phone ringing, "Come see
 your man Dallas"
 And inside our bunker home he hung
 beside the admonition
 "What you do here, what you see here,
 what you hear here - leave here!"