

*That night in March 1969 there was a clamour of chit chat and laughter as the chartered Qantas plane taxied away from the Sydney terminal. But much of that was just boyish bravado masking underlying uncertainties, as suddenly everything fell deathly silent when the aircraft launched itself down the runway. At that very moment, the question on everyones mind was "will I come back alive?"*

*In what would become common over the next 13 months the fears were soon pushed to the backs of our minds and the banter & joking resumed. That was our training kicking in. After all we were resilient, tough "Aussie Diggers", that era's Anzacs.*

*We knew that we could be killed or wounded and most dreaded becoming helplessly dependant on others. However we didn't know that on most days, for the rest of our lives, we would recall events from this upcoming "Tour of Duty".*

*But then the beers flowed, next stop Singapore and the first of many farcical experiences to which I would become accustomed. Some of those were definitely army SNAFUs (Situation Normal All F#@\*ed Up)*

*As you will see in this story we may have been "Born To Be Wild" and were certainly "looking for adventure" as in Steppenwolf's song*

*Often in 'Nam, longing to board a plane home, we would sing "Leaving on a Jet Plane" but its line "don't know when I'll be back again" was most appropriate right then, when it all began.*



**Steppenwolf - Born To Be Wild**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UWRypqz5-o>

**Peter, Paul & Mary - Leaving on a Jet Plane**

<https://youtu.be/IVEATF7VNTk>