

## **Brian's Bloody Hat**

by John Strange (aka strangles)  
Entertainer

The last time I toured Vietnam in 1969, I was working for a Pommie bloke named Brian Nolan, (and his wife EVE). Brian purchased a beaut hat through Sears & Roebuck on mail order that was a big, white, Stetson. It looked like something that Tom Mix would wear.

The first time Brian got to wear his new hat he came with us to a show in Phu Bai. We lived in Da Nang so we went to a heli-pad somewhere and were picked up by a Huey to fly to Phu Bai. With four of us, Gloria Purcell, Terry Wright, Bob Leppard and I, all our band gear and Brian with his hat, we filled the chopper with not much room to spare. Brian sat on the end and was a big hit with his beautiful big white cowboy hat and managed to turn heads everywhere.

The flight up the coast of course was out over the water and was quite uneventful until "Brian's Bloody Hat" blew off, and out the door of the chopper, spiralling down to the water below. Brian of course went into convolutions and shook the closest door gunner and pointed to his wayward head piece.

The gunner spoke on his radio (we couldn't hear him) to the blokes flying the machine and without hesitation the chopper banked around and headed back towards the hat which by this time was floating on the South China Sea. Was Brian relieved !!!!!!!

When we got close to the hat the door gunner opened fire with his M60 and blasted the hat to smithereens, using it as target practice. The look on Brian's face was priceless. One of the highlights of my time "In Country".

**Strangles (the Beaumarks)**